

Time for Change.

A Theory-driven, Corpus-based Study of Tense
and Aspect in La Paz Spanish.

Margrete Dyvik Cardona



Thesis for the degree for Philosophiae Doctor (PhD)
at the University for Bergen

2010

ISBN 978-82-308-0867-2
Printet in Norway, by
AIT AS e-dit, Oslo

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the process of writing this thesis, I have been fortunate enough to be surrounded by talented and supportive people without whose presence and help I would not have been able to finish it.

Firstly, my tutor, Miguel Ángel Quesada Pacheco, always encourages my ideas with unbridled enthusiasm. He is open to different points of view and consistently motivates his students to follow their own intuitions. At the same time, his knowledge of the dialectal varieties of Latin-American Spanish has been a continuous guiding light for the present study.

Secondly, my father, Helge Dyvik, has, throughout my whole life, been an enormous source of inspiration, both as a human being and as a linguist. The frequent linguistic discussions over dinner and breakfast have certainly contributed to my desire to enter into this field. Furthermore, he has taken the time to listen to some of my ideas for the present thesis, all the while making his faith in me apparent.

Thirdly, my fellow doctorate students have made this whole period thoroughly enjoyable. Our informal social gatherings have been at least as important as our linguistic discussions, and I know that I have made life-long friendships. There are many of you. You know who you are.

Furthermore, the research group *Forskerringsskolen i språkvitenskap og filologi* has provided all its members with an invaluable arena for the exchange of experiences and ideas. We have also been spoiled with a vast amount of conferences and courses, which undoubtedly make us stronger doctorate candidates than we would have been otherwise.

In the course of these last four years, I have needed a considerable amount of help with bureaucratic and administrative matters. Arve Kjell Uthaug, the head of administration, has always attended me expediently and courteously, and has made every organizational process run smoothly. This help has been invaluable to me, as I am extraordinarily clumsy in such matters.

The present thesis would not have been finished on time were it not for my mother, who tirelessly has looked after my little son so that I might have time to concentrate on Spanish tense and aspect.

Lastly, but not least, my husband, Mauricio Cardona, is my soft place to land, my champion, friend and partner. He continually shows me how genuinely happy and proud he is of every achievement that I make. I dedicate this thesis to him and to our beautiful son, Martin.

Scientific environment

Institutt for fremmedspråk, seksjon for spansk språk og latinamerikastudier; Forskerskolen i språkvitenskap og filologi.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Time is a concept which is notoriously difficult to grasp for the human mind. Nevertheless, our languages not only provide us with the implements needed to describe time and to speculate on it, they also systematically incorporate time into their very structure, and allow us to refer to events and situations that are temporally dislocated from ourselves. The grammaticalization of time is one example of how languages accomplish this, and it is the focal point of attention in the present thesis. Specifically, we will treat verbal tense in Spanish.

Hispanic linguists that investigate verb tense in Spanish can by and large be divided into two fairly detached groups, according to their manner of approach to the subject at hand; the empirically driven ones, and the theoretically oriented ones. The most prominent Spanish grammars (Alarcos Llorach; Bosque and Demonte; Bello; Real Academia; Alcina Franch and Blecuá) are not corpus based, nor are they based on any systematic empirical investigation. With the present thesis, I strive for an approach to the study of the Spanish verb tenses that weighs empirical findings up against existing theoretical accounts of Spanish tense and aspect on one hand and standard Spanish grammars on the other. In other words, my view is that the apparent polarization between the empiricist tradition, especially corpus linguistics, and the theoretical one, is less than beneficial for the study of language. Both sides should profit from drawing upon each other's findings. For this thesis I will avail myself of the following corpus, representing spoken Spanish from La Paz, Bolivia, as empirical evidence: El Habla De La Ciudad De La Paz: Materiales Para Su Estudio (Gutiérrez Marrone).

As pertains to the Spanish tense system as such, the present thesis will not consider the content of each individual form that makes up this system, rather, we will enquire into what categories and elements¹ are required to give an account of the semantic oppositions between the following three tenses: the simple past perfective, *canté*, the imperfective past, *cantaba*, and the composite past, *he cantado*. The reason why it is these tenses in particular that will be analyzed is three-fold: firstly, from a theoretical viewpoint, it is a debatable point whether it is temporal or aspectual distinctions that differentiate these three tenses. Guillermo Rojo and Alexandre Veiga maintain that the category of aspect is not required to account for the oppositions between the forms of the Spanish tense system as a whole, and that the semantic oppositions between them can be accounted for on a purely temporal basis. It is the inclusion of a reference point (R point) in the temporal composition of the imperfective past (*cantaba*)

¹ The most relevant categories are *tense* and *aspect*, while the elements are the ones some linguists use to formally describe the temporal composition of a tense form, such as *speech point*, *event time*, *reference point* etc.

and the composite past (*he cantado*) that allows Rojo and Veiga to exclude aspect as a distinctive category for these tenses. Hence, if it can be shown that aspectual distinctions are needed in order to account for the semantic difference between these forms, i.e. that the specification of a reference point for the imperfective and composite past is unwarranted, this has repercussions for the whole tense system; both temporal and aspectual distinctions will be required to account for the oppositions within the Spanish tense system as a whole.

Secondly, as pertains to the usage of the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the composite past (*he cantado*), for the Andes region, a certain semantic neutralization between these two forms has been observed. The scrutiny of corpus evidence should allow us to elaborate on the nature of this supposed neutralization, and whether it indeed exists.

The third reason why the three mentioned forms are the ones under scrutiny is that all of them are used frequently throughout the Spanish-speaking world. In other words, in the quest to account for necessary temporal and aspectual distinctions for the Spanish tense system, the study of frequently used forms is more fruitful than that of rare or marginal cases.

Hence, the objectives of the present thesis are the following, interrelated ones:

- a) To test the tense theory of one of our time's most prominent Spanish tense theoreticians, Guillermo Rojo, against corpus evidence. Specifically, to enquire into the need for an R point and/or aspectual oppositions between the three tenses under scrutiny.
- b) Examine whether the descriptions offered by standard Spanish grammars of these three tenses correspond to the results of the analysis of the corpus evidence.
- c) Describe how the three tenses in question are used in La Paz, Bolivia.
- d) Suggest prospective modifications or revisions of standard Spanish grammars based on corpus findings.
- e) As an over-arching objective: to allow empirical analyses and theoretical reflection to interact; test theories against corpus evidence.

The subsequent analysis starts from the following hypotheses:

- a) The category of aspect is indeed needed to account for the semantic distinctions between the three tenses at hand.
- b) Standard Spanish grammars and corpus studies alike define too many subsenses for each tense form.
- c) The neutralization between *canté* and *he cantado* in the Andes-region has not been sufficiently accounted for; it is only partial.

- d) The tense forms *canté* and *cantaba* are not used differently in La Paz from what has been described for other Spanish-speaking countries.

The thesis is organized in the following manner: In chapter two, we initially discuss the existential status of language, then examine how a linguist's perception of language affects his manner of approach to it as an object of study. We specify what we understand to be language's existential status, and why and how this incites us to use a corpus for the study of it. Subsequently, we review the state of the art of corpus linguistics. Chapter three specifies how we aim to approach corpus evidence and extract pertinent information from it. In chapter four, we present and discuss theories about tense and aspect, both for language in general, and for Spanish in particular. Here, the theories are compared to each other and scrutinized in their own right, with the aim of subsequently testing them against corpus evidence. Chapter five, which contains the analysis of the corpus evidence, starts with some preliminary considerations that are crucial for the mentioned analysis. Subsequently, the corpus cases of the three tenses at hand are analysed, as well as the relevant temporal and aspectual oppositions between them. Finally, chapter six constitutes a summary and the conclusions of the thesis as a whole.

2. STATE OF THE ART

Much of the corpus-based² research conducted on the Spanish language as spoken in Latin-American countries is of a highly empiristic³ and descriptive nature. What seems to characterize them all is that they aim to give an account of dialectal and regional particularities. The apparent lack of a fairly extensive theoretical reflection in connection with the interpretation of the corpus data seems to be among the factors that lead to a strong polarization between the theory-based⁴ descriptions of the Spanish grammar, and the corpus-based ones. I will argue that there are many reasons why these two seemingly divergent methods of research would benefit from drawing upon each other's findings.

First, however, an examination of language as an object of study and a brief introduction of corpus linguistics in general are necessary.

² Subsequently a distinction will be made between *corpus-based* and *corpus-driven* linguistic studies, but until then, the term *corpus-based* will be taken to represent both of these, i.e. it describes any linguistic study which makes use of a corpus.

³ Subsequently I will make a distinction between *empiristic* and *empirical*.

⁴ What is meant by 'theory' here will be specified later on. For now it will suffice to mention that I am not referring to theories about language change, language origins, languages in contact, or sociolinguistics, but pure synchronic, linguistic theory about the functions of the elements of the language system as such.

2.1 The ontological status of language

The purpose of this subchapter is to examine how a linguist's understanding of the ontological status of language might influence his line of action as he studies it. This examination will be a basis for the scrutiny of the polarization between the empirically and the theoretically oriented investigations within the field of Spanish linguistics. *Empirically oriented investigations* is taken to mean corpus based accounts of grammatical and semantic phenomena. *Theoretically oriented investigations* is taken to mean accounts of grammatical and semantic phenomena where one or several linguistic theories are taken as a starting point and where empirical evidence to a varying degree is taken into consideration in order to test the relevant theory. It seems that there is not necessarily full correspondence between the linguists' understanding of language's ontological status and their approach to it as an object of study. In other words, two linguists with corresponding views of what language is might draw different conclusions as to what implications this view has for their linguistic investigations.

2.1.1 Language as a cognitive phenomenon

It is likely that Chomsky's paradigm is the one that first occurs to most people when they consider schools that treat language as a cognitive phenomenon. Nevertheless, this linguist's view will not be subject to scrutiny here, rather, we will examine another, more recent paradigm which also starts from the idea that language is a cognitive phenomenon, albeit with different implications than for the generative paradigm. Even so, much of what will be treated in the following paragraphs will be relevant also for Chomsky's view of language.

The paradigm in question is *cognitive linguistics*, with George Lakoff and Ronald Langacker as two of the more prominent figures. These linguists postulate, as does Chomsky, that language and grammar are to be understood as something cognitive and that language therefore can only be studied on the basis of mental processes (Theil I, 52)⁵. As opposed to Chomsky, however, these linguists reject the idea that the brain is divided into separate modules of knowledge, one of which is linguistic competence (Theil I, 22). Langacker states: "...I do...subscribe to the general strategy in cognitive and functional linguistics of deriving language structure insofar as possible from the more general psychological capacities (e.g. perception, memory, categorization), positing inborn language-specific structures only as a

⁵ The quote is taken from a Power-Point presentation in three parts (published on line), therefore the numbers I, II and III are included.

last resort” (2). Cognitive-functional linguists also reject the idea that grammar is based on innate grammatical knowledge: ”Youn[g] children must learn the set of linguistic conventions used by those around them . . . ” (Theil I, 5), ”language structure emerges from language use. Language use is integral to our knowledge of language, our ‘mental grammar’” (Theil I, 26). In other words, cognitive linguistics views language and grammar as cognitive phenomena, but the structure of language and our ability to speak it are learned. The grammar of a language exists within the brain of each and every one of us, and we have acquired it by way of observations made continuously throughout our lives. The grammar does not exist as a separate module in the brain, but is derived from other, more general psychological capacities.

It is worthwhile to examine in greater detail what implications such a strong cognitive component has on linguistic theory. Rolf Theil mentions six different psychological terms that are vital for human cognition, and thus also for language. These are: *entrenchment*, *abstraction*, *comparison*, *composition*, *association*, and *embodiment* (I, 29). All the mentioned terms designate mental processes and states, and are thus part of the individual psyche.

Without scrutinizing the definitions of all of these terms, we may at least consider one which necessarily will manifest itself very differently from one brain to another: ”Association. The well-known phenomenon in which one kind of experience is able to evoke another” (Theil I, 48). An example of this phenomenon could be that the sound of mopeds reminds me of summer vacations in Italy. This is most likely an association that most people will not share with me, as it is a result of my personal experience. The cognitive linguists focus on one type of association in specific: ”The particular kind of association that concerns us is

symbolization: The association of conceptualization with the mental representations of observable entities such as sounds, gestures, and written marks” (Theil I, 49). This kind of association will also necessarily vary from one individual to another, among other things because the mental representations we have of observable entities most likely will vary from human to human, and depend on the different experiences we have had in the course of our lifetime. In other words, the cognitivist view of language inevitably entails that every individual has his own, exclusive understanding of the linguistic entities. Evidently, if that were true, we wouldn’t understand each other, and would not be able to communicate.

Hence, we obviously have *something* in common. What is it, where is it, and how do we identify it?

2.1.2 Language as a supra-individual phenomenon

Whether you include the cognitive element as a basic one for the definition of language or not, you cannot ignore the fact that language is used for communication. In order for this communication to be successful, the sender and the recipient must have a common understanding of the meaning of linguistic expressions. But the rules of the language and the meaning of linguistic expressions as they have been described here exist in the individual brain, and are a product of what this individual might have experienced throughout his or her life. Naturally, this will manifest itself differently from one human to another. Halliday points out: "While it is obviously true that adult speakers of a language have large resources of knowledge...it would be misleading to suggest that an individual's linguistic knowledge is a complete and adequate version of the language" (On Grammar 43). With this statement, Halliday calls attention to the fact that language is much more than the linguistic knowledge that exists in a human brain. If language indeed were the linguistic knowledge contained in a brain, at the very least one would have to assume that all brains contain the exact same linguistic knowledge as well as their understanding of the world. That is not the case, and certainly not if we assume that the grammar that each human possesses is a product of what he or she has learned in the course of his or her lifetime. And if all of us have our own unique understanding of linguistic forms, different from everybody else, we would not be able to communicate. Consequently, at some level we must have a common understanding of the structure and symbolism of language. Hence, it is this common ground, that which can be communicated, which in fact is language, or in the words of Wolfgang Teubert: "Meaning is what can be communicated verbally" (Halliday et al. 98).

In this connection we must call attention to an important distinction within linguistic studies, namely the one between *grammar* and *language*. Grammar, as understood here, are the rules which govern language use, whether they exist in the mental or the supra-individual sphere. As we shall see, there is also much disagreement as to the definition of *language*, but a tentative definition at this juncture is that language is the set of potential written and oral enunciations⁶ in a language community. Wallace Chafe mentions a similar definition: "... Mathesius (1975:13) duly pointed out the fact that language [is] 'the sum of the possibilities available to the members of a language community... for the purpose of communicating through speech...'" (63).

⁶ An enunciation is understood here as an utterance that the members of a language community will perceive as well-formed.

This thesis starts from the idea that grammar in its entirety exists in the supra-individual sphere, not in the brain of the individual. The rules that each and every one of us applies are conventional rules that are shared by all the individuals of a language community. Teubert says: "It is not Humpty Dumpty as an individual but the discourse community as a whole...that decides what a word means" (Halliday et al. 125). Hence, it is most likely the case that most of our specific individual associations as to the meaning of a word are irrelevant as we use the word to communicate. If Mr. Smith tells Mr. Johnson that he plans to build a house, Mr. Johnson will most likely understand the meaning of this enunciation even though he does not possess information as to the shape, size, or colour of the house as it exists in Mr. Smith's mind. Hence, language is a social phenomenon, as Teubert states: "Even if there are no two people for whom a unit of meaning means exactly the same, meaning is still a social and not a mental phenomenon" (Halliday et al. 157-58). One could in fact say that precisely *because* there are no two people for whom a unit of meaning means exactly the same, meaning must be a social and not a mental phenomenon. What is shared is what is communicated. This point of view does not entail the rejection of the idea that mental processes occur in the human brain when we use language. What is rejected is the idea that these processes constitute grammar as such, or that it is necessary to study mental processes in order to grasp the structure of language.

As we have seen, linguists that view language as a cognitive phenomenon may have different views of its existential status beyond this. The same situation is manifest among linguists that view language as a social phenomenon. When the cognitive element is disregarded in the analysis of language structure, the linguist must rely on already produced speech (written or oral) for his study of the language. Halliday refers to this entity as *text*: "The term 'text' refers to any instance of language, in any medium, that makes sense to someone who knows the language" (An introduction 3). This shared starting point, however, constitutes the grounds for various disparate perceptions of what language is.

Some linguists, as they use text instead of cognitive phenomena as the source for the study of language structure, go to the extreme of equating *language* with *existing enunciations*. In other words, they don't distinguish between language as such and the texts they study in order to unveil its structure.

Wolfgang Teubert defines language in part as the sum of all produced enunciations: "Language is a human faculty... It is also the sum of all texts in that language" (Halliday et al. 97). He expands on the latter point: "A language, a discourse, consists of the totality of verbal interactions that have taken place and are taking place in the community where this language

is spoken” (Halliday et al. 114). In other words, Teubert views language as a human capacity *and* as the sum of all oral and written enunciations which have taken place in a language community. In our view, it is not justifiable to reduce language to being the sum of all produced utterances; the rules that govern language use will always potentially yield utterances which do not yet exist or which might indeed never come to exist.

Although he does not disregard the mental sphere in his definition of language, he uses corpora in his study of it, and defines a fundamental distinction between two terms, namely *meaning* and *understanding*. He says: ”Corpus linguistics deals with meaning. Cognitive linguistics is concerned with understanding” (Halliday et al. 98). In accordance with what we have argued previously here, he comments on the meaning of cognitive *understanding*: ”My understanding of a unit of meaning is...private” (Halliday et al. 158). The *meaning* of a word is thus that which can be communicated.

Teubert’s perception of language as the sum of all produced utterances has problematic consequences. As pertains to the analysis of the semantic content of lexical entities, the mentioned point of view has the following consequence: ”... it is wrong to say that the text contains a meaning; the text is the meaning” (Halliday et al. 130). We will now see what concrete consequences this point of view has for Teubert’s view of language.

He clearly distinguishes between how a speaker acquires knowledge about a word’s meaning and how a linguist does it, but he places this distinction in a peculiar place. For a speaker, the meaning (not the understanding) of a word is composed by the sum of everything he or she has heard or read in the course of his or her lifetime: ”If we assemble everything that has been said, ...[from generation to generation, ever since there were schools], about schools, then we have the meaning of schools” (Halliday et al. 99). Furthermore, Teubert first and foremost takes the *explicit definitions* of lexical expressions into account when he aims to define their meaning: ”...we know what the word *school* means...because someone, or more probably, a number of people, must have told us, in the course of childhood, what it meant” (Halliday et al. 99). Since it is *meaning* he is talking about here, and not *understanding*, the distinction between these two concepts becomes unclear. He has previously given the impression that *meaning* is shared, while *understanding* is private, however, *meaning*, as defined here, is inevitably private.

One of the concrete consequences of Teubert’s view that language is the sum of all produced utterances is that we must have a complete overview of everything that has ever been said about a lexical entity in order to know what it means. It is obvious that no human being has such an insight into the words that he uses, but we are able to communicate

successfully anyway. To a certain degree, then, Teubert is contradicting himself, because the meaning of a word, as it is described here, could not successfully be communicated in a normal communication situation. It does not seem as if Teubert considers that the language user will make abstractions on the basis of what he or she observes. Furthermore, if *meaning*, not *understanding*, is to be understood as the sum of what we have heard expressed about a linguistic entity throughout the course of our life, it would be hard to distinguish it from the latter term; perhaps we would have to acquire our *understanding* of words by other means, such as association, non-linguistic sensory impressions or some other manner.

If the grammar of a language does not exist on the mental level, but in the supra-individual sphere, and if the definition of language as such is not limited to already produced utterances, then what kind of ontological objects are these phenomena? Where do they exist? It is clear that language is a human product, but what relation does it have to the group of individuals that use it? Language is not a consciously conceived invention, so what influence do we as language users have upon it?

In order to bring us nearer to a possible answer to these questions, I will place language and grammar within one of three possible ontological worlds as defined by Karl Popper in his book *Objective Knowledge*. Popper describes the three ontological worlds in the following fashion:

. . . the world consists of at least three ontologically distinct sub-worlds; . . . the first is the physical world or the world of physical states; the second is the mental world or the world of mental states; and the third is the world of intelligibles, or of *ideas in the objective sense*; it is the world of possible objects of thought: the world of theories in themselves, and their logical relations; of arguments in themselves; and of problem situations in themselves. (Objective 154).⁷

We will explore in some detail what the nature of Popper's third world is, but first, we will examine the two first ones, and how language and grammar relate to them.

The first world is that of physical entities and states. If we were to place language within this world, language as such would have to be perceivable by our senses, hence it would be reduced to being the physical (auditive or written) manifestations of the sum of all produced utterances. We have already argued why this definition of language is problematic. It is questionable to equate the physical manifestations of a phenomenon with the phenomenon itself. The rules that govern language use, which we use continuously as we produce

⁷ Popper also defines three parallel *epistemological* worlds, but it is the ontological level which is relevant for the issue at hand.

language, will always potentially yield utterances which do not yet exist or which might indeed never come to exist. It is the sum of these very utterances that is language as such. Whether or not these utterances have already been produced, is irrelevant in this connection. Grammar⁸ on the other hand, can under no circumstance be interpreted as existing in the physical sphere, so it cannot possibly be part of the first world. In other words, it is not an entity that we can perceive through our senses.

The second world is the world of mental states. Both the chomskyan linguists and the cognitive ones would place grammar and language within this world. This idea has also been rejected previously here. If any linguistic phenomenon exists in the mental sphere, it must be the linguistic competence of each individual, and not language as such.

This thesis starts from the idea that language and grammar, which are supra-individual entities, are part of the third world. In order to understand what this entails, it is necessary to systematically examine the characteristics of the third world, and what relation it has to the two other worlds that Popper defines. First, he specifies the difference between knowledge in the second world and knowledge in the third world: “On the one hand we have subjective knowledge, which is a mental state or inclination towards a specific behaviour or reaction. On the other hand there is objective knowledge, which is problems, theories and arguments *per se*” (Objective 108-09). In order to clarify what he means by this he quotes Frege: “...Frege wrote: ‘I understand by *thought* not the subjective act of thinking but its *objective content*’” (Objective 109). He adds: “Just as ordinary language unfortunately has no separate terms for ‘thought’ in the sense of the second world and in the sense of the third world, so it has no separate terms for the corresponding two senses of ‘I know’ and of ‘knowledge’”⁹ (Objective 110). He concludes: “. . . traditional epistemology with its concentration on the second world, or on knowledge in the subjective sense, is irrelevant to the study of scientific knowledge” (Objective 111). This is analogous to the study of language to the extent that there is a distinction between studying language on the mental, individual plane, and studying it on a non-mental, overindividual level.

One of the main elements in the definition of the ontological third world is that there is no contradiction between the fact that it is a human product and that it is autonomous. This is

⁸ It is important in this connection to distinguish between the grammar that continuously governs our use of language, which exists independently of the sundry representations of it offered by different linguists, and the latter, that is the individual grammars of various linguists. *Grammar* is understood here as the first of the two phenomena.

⁹ Popper also exemplifies what he means by 2. world knowledge vs. 3. world knowledge: 2. world knowledge: “«I *know* you are trying to provoke me, but I will not be provoked»” (Objective Knowledge 110). 3. world knowledge: “...«I certify that this thesis is an original and significant *contribution to knowledge*»” (Objective Knowledge 110).

also an important point in the definition of language, as it is understood in the present thesis.

Popper explains:

. . . I offer three supporting theses. The first of these is that the third world is a natural product of the human animal, comparable to a spider's web. The second supporting thesis...is that the third world is largely *autonomous*, even though we constantly act upon it and are acted upon by it: it is autonomous in spite of the fact that it is our product and that it has a strong feed-back effect upon us; that is to say, upon us *qua* inmates of the second and even of the first world. The third supporting thesis is that it is through this interaction between ourselves and the third world that objective knowledge grows (Objective 112).

The third world has two central characteristics which give it its autonomy. The first one is that many of its members are unintended by-products of other human activities: "A large part of the objective third world of actual and potential theories and books and arguments arises as an unintended by-product of the actually produced books and arguments" (Objective 117). Popper also mentions language specifically: ". . . language and other institutions which are useful may rise, and...they may owe their existence and development to their usefulness. They are not planned or intended, and there was perhaps no need for them before they came into existence" (Objective 117). The other characteristic is its members' ability to create their own new by-products. Popper explains: "...they may create a new need, a new set of aims . . ." (Objective 117), in other words: ". . . although the third world is a human product, a human creation, it creates in its turn, as do other animal products, its own *domain of autonomy*" (Objective 118). In order to clarify this argument Popper presents an example of the third world which is both partially an unintended by-product of human activity, and which in its turn creates new by-products, new members of the third world:

Let us look at the theory of numbers. I believe...that even the natural numbers are the work of men, the product of human language and of human thought. Yet there is an infinity of such numbers, more than will ever be pronounced by men, or used by computers. And there is an infinity of true equations between such numbers, and of false equations; more than we can ever pronounce as true, or false.

But what is even more interesting, unexpected new problems arise as an unintended by-product of the sequence of natural numbers; for instance the unsolved problems of the theory of prime numbers...These problems are clearly *autonomous*. (Objective 160).

The illustration offered by Popper here bears many parallels to language. Language is a product of the human thought process, and even so there exists a potential for an infinite

number of sentences which will never be pronounced by any human being. Furthermore, language inevitably creates new problems and theoretical systems as an unintended by-product. It is likely that logical relations as such, and even science, would not exist were it not for language. How could phenomena like cause and effect, conclusion, discussion, analysis, lies, and many many more, exist without language? They are all spinoffs of linguistic activity, so to speak. On the basis of observations such as these, Popper arrives at the following conclusion about the third world:

This explains why the third world which, in its origin, is our product, is *autonomous* in what may be called its ontological status. It explains why we can act upon it, and add to it or help its growth, even though there is no man who can master even a small corner of this world. All of us contribute to its growth, but almost all of our contributions are vanishingly small. (Objective 161).

Even though the third world is autonomous, we cannot escape the fact that there exists a relation between this world and at least one of the two others. Naturally, this is also the case for language; even though it, as we have seen, can be said to be autonomous, it has a connection to the people that use it. In other words, it is the relation between the third and the second world that is particularly interesting in this connection.

What characterizes this relation has partially been illustrated by the previous quotation, but Popper also comments specifically on the relation between the three worlds:

The three worlds are so related that the first two can interact, and that the last two can interact. Thus the second world, the world of subjective or personal experiences, interacts with each of the other two worlds. The first world and the third world cannot interact, save through the intervention of the second world . . . (Objective 155).

For language in particular this means that there is a mutual feedback-relation between language and its users. The language users are a *group* of individuals, a complex language community, where each individual has a minute contribution to the changes in the language, but where everybody on the whole must follow the same rules and must agree upon the meaning of linguistic expressions. No single individual can all of a sudden decide to fundamentally change the structure of the language or the meaning of the words, and still succeed at communicating. Some linguists maintain, partially in line with the previous argument, that the meaning of words is *negotiated* by the members of a language community (Halliday et al. 105). The idea of *negotiation* conveys that it is the group of language users, rather than unique individuals, that decides what a word means. On the other hand, the word

negotiate expresses a conscious intention, a planned activity with a concrete goal. But this is not the case for the evolution of linguistic expressions. The Spanish-speaking community does not sit down together and discuss the meaning of the word *promoción* in order to arrive at a concrete, joint definition, before each individual dares to use it. It is indeed the community that decides how language is used and what the meanings of its lexical entities are, but this is again an *unintended by-product* of communication itself, of the fact that we use language, of the circumstance that we strive to be understood and to understand each other. This state of affairs reinforces the idea of language as an autonomous entity.

Popper comments on another important characteristic pertaining to the relation between the second and the third world. This characteristic is also important for the study of language: "An objectivist epistemology which studies the third world can help to throw an immense amount of light upon the second world of subjective consciousness, especially upon the subjective thought process of scientists; but *the converse is not true*" (Objective 112). For the study of language this implies that we cannot gain complete insight into the language system as such by studying an individual's knowledge of it, but we can learn about the language capacity of humans by studying produced language. By studying language we are able to say something about what a human necessarily must know as he uses it, but his knowledge will always be incomplete, and does not encompass language as a shared entity.

Hence, the present thesis upholds a Saussurean way of defining language; language, a part of the third world, is a supra-individual conventional system of symbols. Evidently, it is also a means of communication, and the semantic content of its individual components emerges from this very activity.

2.2. Methodological repercussions of the linguist's view of language

As I have mentioned, a linguist's view of what kind of ontological object language is will influence his methodology as he studies it. In this section, we will briefly examine how the understanding of language as partially or wholly a cognitive phenomenon may affect the linguist's manner of approach to the study of it. Subsequently, we will present a detailed examination of corpus linguistics, an approach to the study of language which is not based upon the idea that it is a cognitive phenomenon.

2.2.1 Approaching language as a cognitive phenomenon

With the change of paradigms that Noam Chomsky introduced in the late fifties, he also introduced the idea of human language as a cognitive phenomenon. As I have mentioned,

Chomsky's theoretical framework will not be scrutinized here, but we will briefly examine how his view of language as a cognitive phenomenon, with the distinctions that this view implies, affects the methodology applied as he approaches language as an object of study.

He introduced the famous distinction between *competence* and *performance*, where the *competence* is what is accounted for when we study language, and *performance* is merely an imperfect manifestation of the competence which lies within the brain. Since the *performance* for different reasons inevitably is a deficient version of the language, for Chomsky it is unfit as a source of information about language as such, hence empirical evidence in the form of oral and written text are granted little value in the study of language as a system. Studies that have been conducted on the basis of this kind of view are thus theory-driven and deductive in essence, and the hypotheses that are posited are tested by way of native speakers' intuition about the adequacy of linguistic constructions. We will see that this approach is fundamentally different from the one adopted by corpus linguists, whose perception of language's existential status is of a completely different nature than the one championed by Chomsky.

First, however, we shall see that the idea of language as a cognitive phenomenon in and of itself does not exclude the possibility of using a corpus as a source of information about language as such. Earlier here, the cognitive-functional paradigm was introduced. Theil mentions four points that account for the essence of cognitive-functional linguistics: "1. The Cognitive Commitment 2. The Generalization Commitment 3. The functionalist Commitment 4. The Embodied Mind" (I, 21). Of these four elements it is *The Functionalist Commitment* that legitimizes the use of data extracted from linguistic corpora in the study of language. *The Functionalist Commitment* is based on the following standpoint about language and language use: "...Language structure emerges from language use. Language use is integral to our knowledge of language, our 'mental grammar'. The distinction between **competence** and **performance** is rejected" (Theil I, 26). Since the distinction between competence and performance is rejected, and the assumption is made that produced language reflects our linguistic competence, the study of corpus data is justified. Nevertheless, both the meaning of the corpus data, and the conclusions drawn on the basis of them, are of a different kind than those of traditional corpus linguistics, where no connection is made by the linguist between language and cognitive phenomena.

According to the cognitive-functional linguists, it is the psychological phenomenon *entrenchment*¹⁰ that accounts for the fact that language structure emerges from language use: “ENTRENCHMENT . . . The occurrence of psychological events leaves some kind of trace that facilitates their reoccurrence. Through repetition, even a highly complex event can coalesce into a well-rehearsed routine that is easily elicited and reliably executed” (Theil I, 30). Thus, entrenchment is, as are the other six previously mentioned psychological terms, a general psychological phenomenon which does not apply exclusively to linguistic processes. Theil describes how entrenchment works specifically for language: “Usage effects grammatical representation in the mind. Frequency of use correlates with entrenchment. Constructions that are more frequently processed become more entrenched in the language system” (III, 6). A corpus is a suitable source of information about the frequency of linguistic entities. But it is difficult to see what it is that a cognitive-functional linguist may conclude on the basis of a linguistic entity’s frequency in the corpus, when a corpus almost always represents the utterances of a multitude of informants, and not the grammatical representations in one single mind.

The term *image schema* is a central one within the cognitive-functional framework. It is a term which must be accounted for here before we can assess what role frequency plays within a cognitive-functional approach to language. The first word, *image*, signals among other things that we are dealing with a cognitive phenomenon: “The term ‘image’ is equivalent to the use of this term in psychology, where **imagistic** experience relates to and derives from our experience of the external world. Another term for this type of experience is **sensory experience**” (Theil I, 57). The last part of the word, *schema*, is meant to designate an abstract or coarse representation of something, versus its individual instances. The instances elaborate the *schema* in different ways. (Theil I, 137). There is, for example, the *image schema* ‘dog’, whose instances could be poodle, golden retriever, German shepherd, or any bastard pooch that in one or several instances is referred to as ‘dog’. Theil continues: “The entrenchment of a schema is governed by its number of instances” (III, 10). This entails that the *image schema* ‘dog’ is entrenched in the consciousness more firmly each time an entity is referred to as “dog”.

The state of affairs just described, however, implies that *image schema* cannot possibly be a universal entity, it cannot be something shared by the individuals of a language community. It is not likely that there exist two individuals in the world who, in the course of

¹⁰ This is one of the six basic psychological terms mentioned previously.

their lifetime, have heard the exact same linguistic expressions with the exact same frequency. Hence, the *image schema*, the abstraction made on the basis of the concrete instances, is individual, and as a result, it works poorly as a starting point for a linguist who studies a corpus in order to find a linguistic construction's meaning and use. This does not mean that a linguist must avoid starting from a priori categories and search for concrete instances that belong to these as he utilizes the corpus, but these a priori categories cannot be of a kind that most likely will vary from individual to individual. The abstraction or *image schema* a linguist will arrive at if he studies a corpus, then, is not a mental entity, but a conventionalized meaning inducible from the language use of multiple informants, and which is likely in many cases not to correspond to each individual's intuitions about the contents of the linguistic constructions. Furthermore, a speaker's conscious opinion about the meaning and use of a linguistic construction in many cases does not even correspond to the way in which he himself in fact uses it. A cognitive-functional linguist, then, would be hard-pressed to determine what he should take into consideration for the specification of a linguistic unit's meaning, i.e. whether it should be the intuition of the speaker or corpus evidence. The principles of the mentioned paradigm are of no avail in the determination of which of these would be the more reliable source of information about the speaker's mental grammar.

2.2.2 Approaching language as a social phenomenon

This thesis starts from the idea that the conclusions drawn on the basis of corpus evidence cannot be directly tied up to mental entities. If we view language as a social phenomenon, the linguistic expressions' content cannot be exclusively deduced neither on the basis of the speakers' mental concepts, nor on the basis of other extra linguistic entities.

As mentioned earlier, this understanding of the existential status of language can result in different ways of approaching the analysis of linguistic evidence. What the linguists with this understanding of language have in common is that it is the context in which a linguistic form appears that conveys to the language learner and to the linguist what the meaning of the linguistic form is. But some linguists (Collin, Firt, Yallop) go very far as they define the relation between the context and the expression they are studying. It seems that they feel that, the fact that a word does not have a consistent and precise denotation means that it is not at all possible to define a main- or core meaning for lexical entities. The context determines the semantic content of the word, which in the utmost consequence entails that the content of the word is completely unspecified. In other words, lexical entities are void of meaning unless they appear in a context. Because these linguists induce the meaning of a word on the basis of

the context it appears in, they conclude that the context in a manner of speaking *is* the meaning of the word: "At times Firth seems to equate meaning with use or with context itself. (A word's meaning is the range of contexts in which it occurs.)" (Halliday et al. 49). This understanding is problematic. Helge Dyvik points out: "The particular facts which the grammarian wants to explain . . . concern institutional, atemporal properties of linguistic expression seen in abstraction from concrete utterances of the expressions . . ." ("Data, Facts and Concepts of Language" 5). There is a difference between stating that one can induce a form's meaning on the basis of its context, and that the context alone gives the form its meaning. The latter perspective has logical flaws. If a linguistic form has no meaning on its own, but receives all of it from the context in which it appears it would hardly make sense to have different linguistic forms. That is to say, it would for example not be necessary to assign any specific form to the signification 'ingest; past tense' (normally referred to as 'ate' in English), because this interpretation would be entirely inducible from the context, and not from the form itself. Furthermore, a sentence like: "I am hungry" would make no more sense than: "Trask kift halpert", because the meaning of each word is based solely on the meaning of all the other words in the same context. Another logical consequence would be that the sentence: "My father came home last night and told me that he had bought a car" would mean the same thing as: "My father came home last night and told me that he had bought a banana." In other words, if the contents of the words 'car' and 'banana' are based solely on the context in which they occur, they must mean the same thing, because here they appear in the same context. Hopper points out: "A form must have a consistent value or else communication is impossible; we cannot have linguistic forms which derive all their meanings only from context" (4).

The view that a form's meaning equals the range of contexts in which it appears might stem from a failure to recognize that information is extracted from the context in different manners, depending on what kind of individual is extracting it (a linguist or a natural speaker/hearer), and on what kind of process this individual is engaged in (language learning, language research, or a normal conversation).

When a person is learning a language, he or she will discern the meaning of a new word by somewhat unconsciously identifying the range of linguistic and non-linguistic surroundings in which it appears. He is in other words completely reliant upon the context in order to understand the word. When this person knows the language fairly well, he is no longer depending upon the words' linguistic surroundings in the same way. He will have a sense of what a word means even when it doesn't appear in an informative context, and he is

not likely to adjust or alter his conception of the meaning of each word every time he hears it in a new context¹¹. This does not mean that he doesn't draw upon the context for information in a normal situation of communication, but he does it in a different way than when he was learning the language. Specifically, this means that, in a situation of communication, the word form's sense and the context interact to produce a certain interpretation. This interaction might partially consist in the context selecting one sense from a limited set of alternative senses for the specific word form (like for the word *banco*), and partially the context itself might contribute to the interpretation of the word with specifications of or elaborations on its vague or underspecified meaning (like the sense 'iterative' for the word *hablo*).

The corpus-driven linguist studying the properties of a linguistic form will approach the context in much the same way as an individual learning the language, but in a fully conscious and systematic fashion. He will identify a linguistic form's array of linguistic surroundings, but instead of maintaining that the form's meaning equals the range of different contexts in which it appears (which at any rate is infinite), he might induce what could be the primary defining characteristics of the form, for instance by observing its frequency of occurrence in different types of contexts. This line of attack might be less complicated when the object under analysis is verb tenses than when it is lexical semantics.¹²

Colin Yallop explicitly opposes the view that a form's array of different linguistic surroundings *is* its semantic content (Halliday et al. 49), yet he favours an approach to analyzing a word's semantic content that seems to stem from such a viewpoint. After calling attention to the fact that a linguistic form doesn't always make the same semantic contribution to every utterance or discourse in which it surfaces (Halliday et al. 26), Yallop concludes: "For reasons such as these, we should be cautious about the view that words have a basic or core meaning, surrounded by peripheral or subsidiary meaning[s]." (Halliday et al. 26). It is difficult to grasp the rationale behind this judgement if it is based simply on the fact that words in their natural occurrences do not always make the same contribution to different discourses. There is no reason why there should be a conflict between this state of affairs and the idea of the words having a core meaning, a meaning we arrive at precisely by studying the words as they appear in context. In order to maintain such a view one would have to attribute little or no importance to the fact that one semantic interpretation of a form might have a considerably higher frequency than another. For instance, a linguist studying the semantic

¹¹ This last point might be debatable, however, the main point, that a speaker/hearer will abstract a word's sense on the basis of its contexts, remains.

¹² And it may be even more problematic when the objects of study are discourse markers or other words with limited semantic content, such as articles.

contents of the word ‘dog’ in an American English corpus might find that in, say, 80% of the instances it means ‘animal of the canine family’, whereas in 5% of the instances it means ‘unattractive woman’. It would be hard to argue that one of the senses is not more central or prototypical than the other. Furthermore, if the researcher rejects the idea of words having a basic or core meaning, it would be practically impossible to explain the relationships between the various metaphorical interpretations of the form and its ‘central’ or ‘literal’ meaning. That is to say, one would have to assume that the different meanings ascribed to one and the same form would have nothing to do with each other. It would in other words be a total coincidence that a word like ‘bubbly’ is used both to describe a carbonized liquid (with bubbles) and a lively kind of personality.

In conclusion, the present thesis’ view of language as a supra-individual system is compatible with an approach to the study of it which treats it as a social phenomenon, as opposed to a cognitive one. And, by studying linguistic expressions in different contexts, it is feasible to specify core and peripheral meanings.

2.3 Making use of a linguistic corpus

By the term ‘corpus’ I understand: “... a body of text which is carefully sampled to be maximally representative of a language or language variety” (McEnery and Wilson 17). Jan Svartvik says: “... with the use of a corpus more objective statements can be made than introspective observation permits. Native speakers may say it very well but do not necessarily know what they have said or how they say it.” (8-9). With this affirmation Svartvik calls attention to the interesting relationship between speaker intuition and corpus evidence. When these two do not correspond, a corpus linguist would argue that the corpus evidence is the more reliable of the two sources and should have priority over the individual speaker’s or researcher’s intuition. Furthermore, if introspection is taken to be an indispensable means of arriving at an accurate description of a language, it would not be possible for a linguist to study any other language than his own: “To linguists who are non-native speakers ... introspection is strictly speaking ruled out.” (Svartvik 10).

An argument in favour of using a corpus as defined above as opposed to a less stringent accumulation of empirical data is presented by Josse de Kock: “Recurrir a un *corpus* sólo se justifica plenamente si se trata de un *corpus* cerrado y examinado exhaustivamente. Ir a buscar donde sea aquello que la demostración reclama, abre paso a cualquier tipo de

contraejemplo.”¹³ (*Gramática* 17). The data of a linguistic corpus is recollected independently of the linguistic features or theories it will later be used to support or refute¹⁴. If the researcher collects his evidence arbitrarily as he goes along with his study, his evidence is bound to be biased, and he can never be certain that he hasn't overlooked certain important features in his quest for a specific kind of observation. With a confined corpus, the researcher has the possibility to study it exhaustively. Charles Fillmore says: “The basic rule is that we make ourselves responsible for saying something about each example that we find.” (39).

McEnery and Wilson state that: “The corpus has the benefit of rendering public the point of view used to support a theory. Corpus-based observations are intrinsically more verifiable than introspectively based judgements” (17). As McEnery and Wilson identify this specific benefit of corpus-based research, they also touch upon one of the scientific limitations of this field. If the linguist is looking in a corpus for verifications of a general claim or hypothesis, such as “the imperfect of Spanish always denotes pastness”, none of these verifications can be taken to be a ‘final proof’ of the hypothesis, as all corpora are finite, and the possibility of counterexamples will always be present.¹⁵ Karl Popper comments on this very complication, adding another dimension to it as he calls attention to the fact that the observations that we make will always be *interpretations* of the facts that we observe. That is to say, we must never take our empirical evidence to be raw, unprocessed or objective data, a finding that is especially relevant when the empirical data we process comes from a text corpus:

... observations, and even more so observation statements and statements of experimental results, are always *interpretations* of the facts observed; ... they are *interpretations in the light of theories*. This is one of the main reasons why it is always deceptively easy to find *verifications* of a theory, and why we have to adopt a *highly critical* attitude towards our theories if we do not wish to argue in circles: the attitude of trying to *refute* them. (Popper *Objective* 90).

In other words, a defining feature of a scientific theory is that it must be *falsifiable*. Thus, a general statement such as the one described above can never be finally confirmed, but

¹³ **Translation:** “The use of a *corpus* is only completely justified if it is a closed *corpus* which is examined exhaustively. The act of looking anywhere for whatever it is your demonstration requires opens the possibility for all kinds of counter examples.”

¹⁴ This does not mean that corpus evidence should be taken to be purely objective in essence, since not only the analysis, but also the recollection of it, will follow certain specific guidelines and objectives. This is a circumstance it is hard to get around, if it is at all possible.

¹⁵ In this sense general claims differ from singular statements such as: “the verb form ‘hago’ appears in the spoken Spanish of Lima”, a statement which only requires one single observation in order to be irrefutably confirmed.

its probability (or in Popper's terms, its verisimilitude) can be increasingly strengthened by the verifications of it, and above all by the lack of counterexamples. Hypotheses that are based on the observation of corpus evidence are falsifiable (and verifiable) in the sense that they can be tested on a new corpus.

2.4 Corpus-based research projects on Spanish in Latin-America

Many of the linguistic research projects in Latin-America are based on empirical evidence of different sorts, and could thus be called corpus-based in a wider sense (Lope Blanch, Quesada Pacheco, Alvar, Lipsky, among others.)¹⁶. However, for the present purpose, 'corpus' is taken to have McEnery and Wilson's more narrow sense described above. What seems to characterize these research projects is that they are highly descriptive in nature, and aim to give an account of dialectal and regional particularities. They lack extensive theoretical reflection in connection with the interpretation of the corpus data.

Juan Diego Quesada comments on the relationship between empirical data and linguistic theory, attributing the nature of it to political factors: "En la lingüística hispánica se ha perpetuado de una u otra manera la relación metrópolis-colonias ..."¹⁷ (45). He makes a clear distinction between 'the south' (Latin-America) and 'the north' (Europe and the United States): "... en términos generales en el norte se procesa la materia prima, en este caso el proceso da como resultado las teorías lingüísticas, mientras que del sur provienen los datos ... Los del norte son los que desarrollan las teorías, son los editores, los investigadores"¹⁸ (46-47). While Quesada doesn't reflect upon the nature of the research conducted by linguists who 'process the raw material', i.e. the ones who analyze data retrieved from a corpus, his observations serve to shed some light upon one of the possible determinants behind the descriptive nature of the research tradition within the field of Latin-American linguistics.

I will focus on the purely linguistic aspects of the problem for discussion, and only on corpus-based projects, presenting both the reasoning behind some researchers' strong adherence to one of the two methodological polarities, and arguments in favour of an approach to the analysis of corpus evidence that hopefully marries the two traditions, allowing their most fruitful aspects to interact.

¹⁶ One of the more noteworthy of these projects is the one which is dedicated to creating linguistic atlases, consisting of maps indicating the geographical location of varying linguistic traits, specifically phonetic ones.

¹⁷ **Translation:** "Whithin Hispanic linguistics the relation metropolis-colony has somehow been perpetuated . . ."

¹⁸ **Translation:** "... in general, the north is where the raw material is processed, in this case the result of the process is linguistic theory, while the data comes from the south . . . The northerners are the ones that develop the theories, they are the editors, the researchers."

For the following discussion a few terminological clarifications are required. Throughout the exploration of the various corpus analyses, the terms ‘empirical’, ‘empiristic’, and ‘descriptive’ will be applied abundantly. ‘Empirical’ is taken to characterize any study, (including the theory-driven ones), where empirical evidence is a decisive factor in determining the conclusions arrived at. ‘Empirical’ is thus a wide term that does not reflect upon the specific methodology followed by the researcher. ‘Empiristic’ on the other hand, is taken to be an attitude to scientific methodology which states that the appropriate way of approaching empirical evidence (in our case a corpus), is to start from the observed individual instances, and on the basis of these to make generalizations, in an inductive fashion. Finally, ‘descriptive’ simply characterizes the type of studies that describe the various instances observed. Thus, a study which is purely descriptive will simply enlist and describe the various occurrences detected, without making any subsequent generalizations. A study can be both descriptive and empiristic, in which case the researcher makes generalization on the basis of the instances observed.

I will examine four publications in particular that treat verb forms in Spanish, for the purpose of illustrating the previously mentioned descriptive and empiristic orientation of the linguistic studies treating Latin-American Spanish variants: Moreno de Alba’s “Frecuencias de formas verbales en el español hablado en México”, published in Lope Blanch’s book Estudios sobre el español hablado en las principales ciudades de América, Moreno de Alba’s Valores de las formas verbales en el español de México, Marina Arjona Iglesias and Elizabeth Luna Traill’s El Infinitivo en el español hablado en la ciudad de México, and Petr Pitloun’s PhD-dissertation Los tiempos verbales de indicativo en el habla culta costarricense.

Both of Moreno de Alba’s works deal with verb tenses in Mexico. In the article “Frecuencias de formas verbales en el español hablado en México” he presents statistics and tables showing the frequency of the verb tenses in the spoken Spanish of Mexico. The studies in the collection from which this article is taken are characteristically descriptive in essence (Lope Blanch Estudios 8), as are the goals that Moreno de Alba defines for his article in particular (Lope Blanch Estudios 115). He doesn’t reflect at any length upon the descriptive nature of his study, nor does he specify in any detail how he approaches the data he retrieves from the corpus. That is to say, he doesn’t indicate what, if any, elements in the context of the verb forms are taken into account as he determines their semantic value.

In his book Valores de las formas verbales en el español de México, which is a contribution to Lope Blanch’s project El estudio del español hablado culto, Moreno de Alba does discuss the role of linguistic theory and specifies again that his study is purely

descriptive: “Es ... un simple estudio descriptivo, muy lejano de la lingüística teórica y de la gramática en general”¹⁹ (13). Again he doesn't specify what role the context plays in his analysis; however he describes his method of research as ‘semasiological’, as opposed to ‘onomasiological’ (Moreno de Alba 11-12). ‘Semasiology’ can be defined as follows: “**Semasiología** ... Estudio semántico de las designaciones que parte del signo y sus relaciones, para llegar a la determinación de un concepto”²⁰ (Blanco Rodríguez 1057). ‘Onomasiology’ is taken to signify: “**Onomasiología** ... Estudio semántico de las denominaciones que parte del concepto para llegar al signo”²¹ (Blanco Rodríguez 825). Moreno de Alba argues that, because he examines every verb form in isolation, which according to him is an indispensable preliminary step before one can study the oppositions of the verb system as a whole, the semasiological approach is the most appropriate one (11-12). What this would entail for his research in particular is that he would start from the instances of the verb forms found in the corpus, and proceed to inducing and determining a general concept, as opposed to starting from an a priori concept, such as for example ‘pastness’, and looking for specific verb forms expressing that content. Yet Moreno de Alba does not generalize on the basis of the verb forms he observes, but simply describes and lists their range of semantic contents.²²

Several comments can be made concerning Moreno de Alba's way of approaching the corpus evidence. Firstly, it can hardly be maintained that his method is purely semasiological. He clearly operates with a priori terms such as ‘presente’, ‘pretérito simple’, ‘antepresente’ etc., placing the various instances he finds in the corpus within these categories, thus implicitly accepting oppositions in the verb system which he states can only be reached after the preliminary semasiological research has been conducted. His study is semasiological only in the sense that he starts from the instances of the verb forms found in the corpus, subdividing each of the verbal tenses in various sub-categories according to the different semantic contents he ascribes to them depending on the various contexts in which they appear. Furthermore, his idea of studying each verb form in isolation in order to obtain its ‘true’ semantic content seems somewhat far-fetched since part of what defines a verb form's temporal value is precisely the oppositions that present themselves within the system of which

¹⁹ **Translation:** “It is . . . a mere descriptive study, far from theoretical linguistics and general grammar.”

²⁰ **Translation:** “**Semasiology:** . . . Semantic study of signs that starts from the sign and its relations in order to arrive at the determination of a concept.”

²¹ **Translation:** “**Onomasiology:** . . . Semantic study of denominations that starts from the concept in order to arrive at the sign.”

²² Since Moreno de Alba explicitly avoids making generalizations about his findings, leaving that to an onomasiological analysis, his work cannot be called empiristic, as this term implies a generalization on the basis of the evidence observed.

it forms part. For instance, it can be argued with considerable plausibility that part of what defines the present tense in many languages is that it is non-past.

It is in this connection that Moreno de Alba makes a brief comment on the role of linguistic theory in studies such as his: “Si a este estudio le sigue un ‘resumen onomasiológico’, su interés teórico se subraya, pero no creo que se añada mucho al conocimiento de los valores de las formas verbales en sí mismas”²³ (13). In other words, he states that an approach which would contribute to the theoretical interest of his study would not add to the understanding of the temporal values of the verb forms as such. It seems hard to grasp the idea that the mere description and enumeration of each verb form’s temporal and aspectual interpretations in a vast range of different contexts would constitute knowledge of the verb forms as such, when no attempt at a synthesis or incorporation into a system of oppositions is made. M.A.K. Halliday voices this very point of view: “... we cannot explain language by simply listing its uses, and such a list could in any case be prolonged indefinitely.” (On Grammar 173). This point will be explored in detail later on.

Lastly, Moreno de Alba seems to ascribe little importance to the fact that having an onomasiological approach to his data, or making generalizations on the basis of his descriptions of the verb tenses, identifying oppositions in the system as a whole, might add to our knowledge about how tense is expressed in general in natural languages.

Arjona Iglesias and Luna Traill’s publication El Infinitivo en el español hablado en la ciudad de México is another contribution to Lope Blanch’s project El estudio del español hablado culto. Like Moreno de Alba, they define purely descriptive objectives (17, 18, 97), but without any explicit reasoning behind the omission of a theoretical consideration in the course of analyzing the corpus evidence. Traill does dedicate four and a half pages to a sub-chapter called “Consideraciones teóricas” (9-13), however this chapter is aimed at little more than giving a rough overview of what some of the more prominent linguists have said about the topic under investigation (the absolute infinitive). The actual analysis of the corpus evidence advances along the same lines as Moreno de Alba’s analysis. Arjona Iglesias and Luna Traill define the various semantic interpretations given to the infinitive depending on its contexts, but unlike Moreno de Alba, they specify what elements of the context are relevant to their examination. They consider what syntactic part the infinitive plays in the various structures in which it appears. Yet like Moreno de Alba, they limit themselves to enumerating

²³ **Translation:** “If this study is followed by an ‘onomasiological summary’, its theoretical relevance is underlined, but I don’t believe that much will be added to the knowledge about the meaning of the verb forms as such.”

and describing the vast number of different interpretations ascribed to the form in question, with the concomitant tables and percentages.

The last work I shall consider is also the one with the strongest theoretical component of the four publications presented here. Petr Pitloun dedicates a substantial part of his doctoral thesis Los tiempos verbales de indicative en el habla culta costarricense to theoretical considerations, devoting 74 pages to the ‘marco teórico’. Nevertheless, this chapter makes for a large part the same contribution to the thesis as a whole as Traill’s “Consideraciones teóricas” makes to her analysis: “En el primer capítulo se hace un recuento de diferentes concepciones teóricas sobre la categoría del tiempo verbal, tanto de los conceptos tradicionales como de los contemporáneos, para tener un marco teórico como punto de referencia al analizar los datos obtenidos del corpus”²⁴ (Pitloun 4). While this chapter is vast and thorough, exposing in detail a wide range of concurrent and conflicting theories about verbal tense and aspect, little of it is reviewed in the subsequent part of the investigation, in the light of the empirical evidence extracted from the corpus. Having said that, it must be pointed out that, like the objectives of the other linguists that we have examined, the objectives Pitloun defines for his project do not call for a revision of linguistic theory about verbal tense and aspect (3). His objectives are fundamentally empirically driven and descriptive in nature, that is to say, his purpose is not primarily the testing of theories against corpus data, but describing and classifying the semantic content of the verb forms as they appear in the spoken language of Costa Rica. He does this much in the same way as Moreno de Alba classifies his verb forms, listing the numerous semantic interpretations they are given according to their context.

Pitloun does not designate any part of his thesis to explaining how he approaches the corpus or what elements of the context are taken into account in the analysis of the verb forms, although he does devote a sub-chapter to the temporal adverbials stating that their interaction with the verb forms is fundamental to the semantic interpretation of the latter (28-31).

²⁴ **Translation:** “The first chapter makes a recount of different theoretical conceptions of the category of verb tense, both traditional conceptions and contemporaneous ones. This is done in order to have a theoretical framework as a reference point for the analysis of the corpus data.”

2.5 The situation of the Latin-American corpus-based research in the landscape of corpus linguistics

In order to situate Latin-American corpus-based research in the landscape of corpus linguistics, it is necessary to introduce a fundamental distinction between two different methods of corpus research, the application of which more often than not relies on what kind of questions the linguist wants answered. These are the *corpus-driven* and the *corpus-based* approaches. Halliday explains the distinction: “Linguistic findings...are corpus-based if everything that is being said is validated by corpus evidence. Findings are corpus-driven if they are extracted from corpora, using the methodology of corpus linguistics, then intellectually processed and turned into results. This is a crucial distinction.” (Halliday et al. 112). Next, we shall see in detail what it entails to have a corpus-driven versus a corpus-based, theory-driven approach, and I’ll make an attempt at classifying the publications I have examined.

2.5.1 Corpus-driven linguistic research

The corpus-driven research is essentially inductive: the linguist starts from the corpus evidence and makes generalizations on the basis of it. The corpus-driven research method allows for some a priori categories in which to sort the evidence, or one might define all the categories on the basis of the analysis of the evidence. As for the works that have been presented in this chapter, they are all corpus-driven, and their authors operate with some a priori categories, such as ‘presente’, ‘pretérito’, ‘perfecto’, etc. This categorization is not challenged as such, rather, the nomenclature is taken for granted, and the aim of the studies is to specify the exact semantic content these verb forms have in the various variants of Spanish examined. For the studies mentioned, this endeavour results in a subdivision of each of the verbal tenses in a vast number of sub-meanings, like ‘pretérito momentáneo’, ‘pretérito terminativo’, ‘pretérito incoativo’ and the like (Pitloun ii). This subdivision however is not the basis for any kind of subsequent generalization, like for example a synthesis that would extract each verb tense’s principal defining features.²⁵ These studies are corpus-driven then in the sense that they take empirical evidence rather than a theory as their starting point, but there is no marked inductive process following the analysis.

²⁵ It should be noted that Pitloun dedicates three pages of his conclusion to a generalization of the verb forms’ content in a wider sense. He presents a schematic overview of the verb tenses that reveals whether their most characteristic features are of an aspectual or of a temporal nature, but he doesn’t enter into details as to what kind of aspectual or temporal features these are. Furthermore, the mentioned generalization does not constitute a significant part of his thesis.

Apart from Moreno de Alba, none of the authors specify why they do not proceed to make generalizations on the basis of their observations. One reason might be that they hold the view that the corpus linguist cannot make general claims that ultimately state something about linguistic features outside of his corpus: “Los resultados de la investigación son válidos únicamente con respecto al *corpus* examinado, pero reales, seguros y objetivos”²⁶ (De Kock *Gramática* 17). This view however seems to be the result of a kind of requirement that the corpus-based statements be absolute, irrefutable truths, as opposed to hypotheses or theories, which in turn might be tested on other corpus evidence. López Morales maintains that a theoretical artifice should be able to explain more than just the phenomena of the corpus used as the empirical basis: “... un artificio teórico que solo pudiera dar explicación a los datos empíricos en los que se apoya resultaría muy precario desde el punto de vista científico: es necesario que dé cuenta de los datos que le han servido de base para la inducción y de todos los datos posibles en el conjunto”²⁷ (13).

By taking a closer look at the four corpus-driven studies at hand it can be observed that the number of separate sub-meanings assigned to each of the verb forms is quite large. For example, Pitloun defines around 20 sub-meanings for the present tense form (the form *canto*), and around 10 for the simple past perfective form (the form *canté*) (i-ii). Moreno de Alba defines 7 sub-meanings for the present tense form (41). For each of the two simple preterite forms (*canté* and *cantaba*) he divides the sub-meanings into ‘fundamental senses’ (‘valores fundamentales’) and ‘secondary senses’ (‘valores secundarios’) (54, 77-78). The ‘pretérito’, *canté*, is assigned 5 fundamental senses and two secondary senses, while the ‘copretérito’, *cantaba*, is assigned 6 fundamental senses and 11 secondary senses (54, 77-78). Arjona Iglesias and Luna Traill also define a vast number of sub-types for the infinitive in Mexico City.

It will be illustrated that the subdivision of these tenses in so many subsenses is not always justified. Also, the need to exchange information and ideas in a reasonably unambiguous manner would seem to require that each linguistic form have a relatively consistent value. Distinguishing a number of senses for a linguistic form can be taken to amount to identifying a set of alternative contributions that the form may make to the interpretation of the texts in which it occurs. Mastering a language would then involve

²⁶ **Translation:** “The results of the investigation are valid only with respect to the *corpus* that has been examined, but they are real, reliable, and objective.”

²⁷ **Translation:** “... a theoretical artifice that could only account for the empirical data on which it is based would be very precarious from a scientific viewpoint: it is necessary that it account for the data which has been the basis for the induction as well as all the potential data pertaining to the relevant group.”

mastering such sets of alternatives. On that background it seems implausible, given the efficiency and smoothness of linguistic communication, to ascribe such a vast number of different meanings to a single form. However, if we take care to distinguish the semantic contribution of the form from the semantic contributions of its contexts, it is worth considering whether a smaller set of less specified senses might not still be sufficient to account for the range of textual interpretations. This does not mean that linguistic forms always make the same semantic contribution to the different contexts in which they appear, nor does it mean that it wouldn't sometimes be fruitful to assign more than one single meaning to an individual form. However, the linguist must be clear about what it is that determines the set of sub-meanings a form has, and also how fine-grained the semantic distinctions need be between the different meanings. Although it might be controversial to maintain that a certain kind of distinction is unlikely to occur in any natural language, I argue that, for Spanish at least, the distinctions made between the various sub-meanings of the different verb tenses in the publications mentioned are too fine-grained. It is not convincingly shown that the Spanish speaking community makes use of a word *hablo* that sometimes provides the interpretation 'I speak on a regular basis' and sometimes 'I speak repeatedly but not in a regular fashion'²⁸, in the way that they use the word *banco* to sometimes denote 'bench' and sometimes 'bank'. Also, time itself embraces an endless string of events and situations that conceivably could be subdivided infinitely into smaller stretches of time. A human language could not possibly have a tense system of forms that represented an infinite string of temporal distinctions. Thus, human languages divide time into discrete modules (aspectual or temporal or by other means) in order to be able to make sense of it, and to refer to specific events and situations. Logically then, there must be a limit to how fine grained these distinctions can be, and need be, in order for us to communicate successfully. Interestingly, it seems that theory-driven descriptions of verb tenses (Comrie, Rojo, Veiga, Reichenbach) assign far fewer senses to each verb form than the corpus-driven ones²⁹.

I have already mentioned that the corpus-driven linguists we have presented examine the contexts in which the verb forms appear in order to determine what semantic contents they will assign to them. For that reason it is important to examine how the context³⁰ is taken into account when a meaning is ascribed to an individual form.

²⁸ Pitloun makes a distinction between the iterative present and the habitual present. (94-95). In the examples offered, it is the context, and not the verb form itself that provides the interpretations mentioned.

²⁹ These theory-driven representations could in turn most likely be criticized by testing them against corpus evidence.

³⁰ Since it is corpus linguistics that we are dealing with, the context in question is the *linguistic* context.

Under the view of language as a social and not a mental phenomenon, a view adopted in the present thesis, it is quite evident that the context must somehow be explored in order to discover a form's semantic content.

Consequently, a more fruitful way of approaching a corpus for this kind of studies (corpus-driven, semantic) would be to study the range of (linguistic) contexts in which a form appears, making a conscious choice as to how fine grained the distinctions between the various interpretations need be, then tentatively induce the form's central and peripheral meanings. The objective would thus be to account for all the observed interpretations of the form in its contexts by way of a minimal set of semantic distinctions ascribed to the form as such. In order to do this, it is important to define what elements of the context are to be taken as prime factors in determining which of the linguistically given meanings of the form is relevant, and what elements simply evoke a context-specific interpretation of the form at hand. This might be more straightforward when the phenomenon under investigation is the semantics of verb tenses than when it is lexical semantics³¹. In order to illustrate this line of attack we shall return to the Latin-American publications previously reviewed.

The authors of these studies do not seem inclined to identify the kind of contribution the context makes to the semantic interpretation of the individual verb tenses. It is difficult to discern whether the unit of meaning they are describing is the temporal morpheme, or this morpheme in combination with certain lexical roots, or the whole word in combination with the contexts in which it appears. Generally it seems that semantic contributions of all the three kinds mentioned are given equal weight in the assessment of the verb form's inherent meaning.

Apart from certain grammarians (Rojo, Veiga), it is generally agreed upon that the Spanish past tense verb forms are distinguished by both temporal and aspectual qualities. With this in mind I will briefly examine part of the analysis of the past tense form 'imperfecto' (*cantaba*) in Spanish, as proposed by Pitloun (140-53). This will be done in order to illustrate the importance of specifying the role of the different linguistic components (morpheme, lexical root, context) in the assessment of a verb form's meaning.

The verb form *cantaba* ('pretérito imperfecto') is generally said to be distinguished in aspect (and not in tense) from the Spanish simple past perfective form *canté* (pretérito indefinido), the former denoting a durative and imperfect situation or event, and the latter denoting a perfect, terminated situation or event with no attention to its internal temporal

structure (Franch and Blecua, Alarcos Llorach, Acero). It is the morpheme *-aba* (or *-ía* for the second and third conjugation) that indicates the temporal and aspectual properties of the verb form, which in our example leaves *cant-* to be the lexical root of the verb. *-aba*, then, denotes past tense and durative aspect³². However, both Pitloun and Moreno de Alba define a vast array of additional denotations for this verb form. This is sustainable if they demonstrate that it is the indicated morpheme that adds these interpretations to the verb form. This, however, does not seem to be the case.

Pitloun states that in the majority of the cases, the ‘imperfecto’ is employed to underline a past event’s durative quality (146). This observation causes him to define the ‘Imperfecto durativo’ as a sub-meaning for this verb form. He goes on to defining quite a few other sub-meanings, two of which are the ‘Imperfecto iterativo’ (147), and the ‘Imperfecto como copretérito’ (148). The defining feature of the ‘Imperfecto iterativo’ is that it denotes a repeated event (in the past). When taking a closer look at the examples that are presented to illustrate the iterative quality of the ‘pretérito imperfecto’ however, it becomes clear that the verb form in question only has this interpretation when the temporal morpheme is combined with a certain kind of lexical root, or when elements of the context indicate that the event was repeated over a period of time. The kind of lexical root that would warrant an iterative interpretation in combination with the durative aspect indicated by the temporal morpheme, is the kind that denotes an event that is viewed intrinsically as occupying a point in time. Verbs like cough, enter, wake up, etc. are perceived as not having sufficient temporal expansion to facilitate a description of them that alludes to their internal temporal structure. This characteristic, then, in combination with a morpheme that indicates a durative aspect, leaves the only possible interpretation that the event is repeated over time. In other instances the iterative interpretation is given to the verb form by elements in the context, such as ‘every summer’, ‘always in March’, or an example presented by Pitloun, ‘los domingos’ (147).

The defining characteristic of the ‘Imperfecto como copretérito’ is that it denotes an event or situation that, at least for part of its duration, transpires simultaneously with another event in the past. (Pitloun 148). The only way of determining this kind of relation is to look in the linguistic surroundings for another past event that would be simultaneous to the one described by the ‘pretérito imperfecto’. It can hardly be maintained that this is a sense of the verb form as such.

³² Some linguists might argue that these are not necessarily the properties of the ‘pretérito imperfecto’, but whatever the case, it is the morpheme *-aba* that denotes the relevant temporal and aspectual properties.

What can be argued is that the ‘pretérito imperfecto’ *facilitates* the temporal and aspectual interpretations alluded to here. Furthermore, the observation of the different interpretations given to this form in the various contexts in which it appears is an indispensable step in the process of evaluating its inherent temporal and aspectual values. The questions the linguist must ask himself are: “What is it about the ‘pretérito imperfecto’ that allows for these particular interpretations?” “Do they have common defining features?” The answer in the majority of cases is most likely “yes”. It is these common features that define the ‘pretérito imperfecto’ as such. For the examples examined above, it is the durative aspect marked by the temporal morpheme that allows for the various interpretations presented. Thus, the ‘pretérito imperfecto’ indicates that something takes place over an extended period of time in the past. Specifically, it doesn’t stipulate whether it is one extended event or several repeated ones. This information is conveyed by the context or by the nature of the lexical root of the verb form. The fact that the events indicated by the ‘pretérito imperfecto’ are perceived as extended in time also makes it more likely for them to co-occur with other events. As we have mentioned, it might sometimes be justified to ascribe more than one subsense to a single form, so a third question the linguist should ask himself after having registered the different interpretations ascribed to a verb form is: “Is there anything in these alternative interpretations that does not follow fully from the context, so that alternative semantic contributions have to be attributed to the form itself?”

A corpus-driven approach such as the one suggested here, which makes generalizations on the basis of the instances observed, might come to have an even sounder basis for making claims if linguistic theory is somehow incorporated throughout the research process. If this is to be done however, it must first be specified what kind of theory is to be employed, and for what purpose. In a corpus-driven study linguistic theory will have a more limited part to play than in a corpus-based, but theory-driven, study, since a corpus-driven study ultimately only aims to state something about the empirical evidence or the particular language, and not about linguistic theory.

When employing the term ‘linguistic theory’, a researcher may be referring to one of a limited selection of different entities. The term can be employed simply to denote a system of concepts, a nomenclature, whose purpose is the classification of the incidents of the linguistic phenomena under investigation, and which then ultimately is a mere linguistic tool³³.

³³ ‘Linguistic theory’ is used in this sense in the publications examined in this section. The theoretical parts of these publications consist partly or wholly of presenting the nomenclature of the Spanish verb tenses and describing the semantic contents traditionally ascribed to them.

Concerning verb tenses, such a system of concepts might for instance be the classification of the tenses in present, perfect, pluperfect and the like. Such a classification might be upheld or challenged by the observations and generalizations conducted by the linguist in a corpus-driven analysis. When the a priori system of concepts is maintained or refuted in a corpus-driven study, this study will eventually have proclaimed something; principally about the language variety represented by the corpus, but also about the way tense and aspect can be expressed in natural languages in general. Furthermore, a corpus-driven linguist considering this kind of linguistic theory throughout his analysis might at an early stage detect significant discrepancies between non-corpus based grammars and empirical evidence, such as for example the number of subsenses ascribed to a single verb form. When the grammars assign only a few senses to each form, I would interpret it as a claim that further subsenses are not necessary; otherwise they would be specified in the grammar. The attempt to account for this discrepancy might cause the researcher to further explore the elements that are taken into consideration as he makes his classifications, allowing empirical evidence and linguistic theory to be guidelines for each other in the quest for an adequate description of the form at hand. The challenge lies in not compromising the theoretical independence of the corpus data.

Other linguists might state that only a theoretical construction that *makes claims* about a language variant or about language in general merits the denomination ‘linguistic theory’. This kind of linguistic theory can be of a general kind, making statements about language as such, or it can be language-specific, offering a theoretical account of a particular language or class of languages. An example of a linguistic theory that makes claims about a language variant is Guillermo Rojo’s theory about Spanish verb tenses, which claims that they are distinguished only by their temporal, and not by their aspectual qualities (“Relaciones” 41)³⁴. This theory can be tested by analyzing the verb tenses in a corpus representing a Spanish variant. An example of a theoretical statement that makes claims about human language in general could for instance be: “Languages with an extensive case system make use of prepositions to a lesser extent than languages without an extensive case system”, a claim that could also be tested by the analysis of corpus evidence.

Yet these kinds of linguistic theory might not be incorporated into a corpus-driven study in an uncomplicated manner, since this kind of study primarily seeks to say something about

³⁴ Some may argue that the type of theory described in the previous paragraph also makes claims about language; however, it seems more appropriate to say that a system of grammatical concepts *presupposes* rather than *claims* that a language has certain properties. The system of concepts itself is not true or false, but more or less *useful*. If the presuppositions behind it are to be made into testable claims, they would have to be formulated explicitly by means of some more elementary set of concepts

the corpus evidence or the particular language and not about language in general. The kind of theories that make claims about language or language variants would most likely be incorporated into a corpus study in order to be tested, and not simply to be a guideline for the linguist in his organization of the corpus data. The moment he sets out to test a theory on the basis of corpus evidence, his study becomes *corpus-based* but not *corpus-driven*.

Consequently he must make up his mind: "Do I want to describe this or that linguistic phenomenon in this language variety, or will I use the evidence of this language variety to test this or that theory?" and, "Is it possible to accomplish both of these?". In an attempt to answer the latter question I will examine what it entails for a research project to be corpus-based without being corpus-driven.

2.5.2 Corpus-based, theory-driven linguistic research

Karl Popper states: "In the field of empirical sciences ... [a scientist] constructs hypotheses, or systems of theories, and tests them against experience by observation and experiment." (*The Logic* 3). This strategy serves to describe corpus-based linguistic research in a wider sense. Geoffrey Leech identifies the individual steps that constitute this strategy, and specifically proclaims that it applies to corpus-based research. He presents the following scheme of scientific inquiry: " $P_1 \rightarrow TT \rightarrow EE \rightarrow P_2 \dots$ (P_1 = problem, TT = tentative theory, EE = error elimination, P_2 = new problems)" (Leech 120). He concludes: "This clear cycle of progression towards more adequate models seems characteristic of corpus-based research in general." (Leech 120).

This means that a linguist conducting corpus-based research on verb tenses in Spanish, for instance, might notice that a formula defining the oppositions between the different tenses as purely temporal does not seem to adequately describe the use of at least some of these tenses in Chile (P_1). He then puts forth a tentative theory alleging that a scheme representing the oppositions between verb tenses in Spanish must include aspectual features (TT). He then proceeds to analyzing the verb tenses in a corpus from Chile (EE) whereupon he might notice that the aspectual features he claimed were indispensable for their description only apply to some of them (P_2).

Hence the process described above is a cyclic one, where the results of the examination of a corpus give rise to new problems and tentative theories which in their turn can be tested on another sample of the language in question. Corpus-based language models and hypotheses are thus verifiable in the sense that they can be tested on a new set of empirical evidence.

Previously I mentioned Popper's claim that a scientist must look for *falsifications* of a theory, and not for corroborating evidence to it, since the latter is deceptively easy to find. Thus, a hypothesis is strengthened by the lack of contradicting evidence. However, not all theories are constructed in such a manner that corroborating evidence seems deceptively easy to find. Consequently, the scientist must adjust his search for verifications or falsifications in accordance with the type of theory he is testing. The more likely a hypothesis is, the more pertinent it becomes looking for contradicting evidence. When a scientist puts forward a seemingly unlikely hypothesis on the other hand, it is appropriate to look for corroborating evidence in order to strengthen its plausibility.

However, some empirically driven linguists are sceptical to any approach to language research that starts from a theory, 'reducing' the role of the empirical evidence to one of refuting or corroborating that theory:

En las Facultades de Letras, en las que se incluye tradicionalmente lingüística, se ha implantado una enseñanza en la que se concede el primer puesto a la teoría ... a expensas de la observación, en la que se antepone el modelo al análisis, en la que el estudiante sólo aprende a reconocer lo que se conforma o no a la definición, y a pasar de la regla a la aplicación. En los casos extremos ... los datos están tan seleccionados y escardados, tan manipulados o incluso silenciados que ya no se intuye de qué la teoría podría ser la abstracción o la síntesis. El razonamiento avanza según una lógica interna ... [las teorías] no abarcan necesariamente la diversidad o complejidad de la realidad. (De Kock Gramática 16).

What Josse de Kock calls attention to here, are some instances of theoretically driven linguistic research in which the symmetry and internal logic of the axioms and hypotheses have a significantly higher priority than their ability to adequately describe the language they are supposed to represent. He also expresses the view that a linguist having a specific theory or hypothesis as his starting point is likely to compromise the independent nature of the empirical evidence. That is to say, when he observes the evidence in the light of a theory, he is bound to present them in a biased manner instead of letting them 'speak for themselves': "Se puede poner en duda si los ejemplos producidos intencional y posteriormente para dar respuesta a una pregunta precisa tienen un valor probatorio tan grande como los que surgen independientemente de la cuestión"³⁵ (De Kock Gramática 17). But the empirical evidence

³⁵ **Translation:** "It can be questioned whether the examples that are produced afterwards and intentionally to provide an answer to a precise question have the same degree of proof value as those that arise independently of the question."

that De Kock is referring to here is not specifically corpus data. What he describes are examples of the language in question which are produced intentionally and subsequent to the hypothesis at hand, to provide an answer to a specific question. Corpus data on the other hand is gathered independently of the linguistic theories it will later be used to test, and since it constitutes a confined sample, the researcher is able to study it exhaustively, and this is a prerequisite if he wishes to maintain the independence of the evidence. That is to say, he can successfully ban himself from considering only the examples that serve to prove his point, as he takes into account every single occurrence in the corpus of the linguistic phenomenon under investigation.

Geoffrey Leech underlines the benefits of a linguistic corpus but points out a circumstance which it might be virtually impossible to avoid for corpus-based research: “The data of a corpus ... are independent of the tenets of the theory they are required to test ... however ... the way we construct our theory determines the way we categorize and interpret our data.” (111). The latter would hold true whether the linguist is looking for corroborating evidence or for contradicting evidence to his theory. The question is what an attempt to steer clear of this circumstance would entail for the linguist’s approach to the study of language. If we take ‘linguistic theory’ to mean statements or sets of statements that make claims about language, and we set out to test them, it is clear that the analysis of the linguistic evidence will be conducted in light of this theory. However, avoiding the latter would entail avoiding the former, that is, the linguist would have to refrain from proposing any kind of hypotheses about language. If he wants to avoid altogether an a priori hypothetical claim’s influence upon his organization of the corpus evidence, he simply cannot make one. And if a linguist cannot make claims about language, what is there left for him to do? Even the claims that are made on the basis of corpus-driven research, which is inductive in essence, must be taken to be hypotheses that could be further tested³⁶. If they are not taken to be hypotheses, they must be irrefutable truths. They can not be irrefutable truths about the language variant in question, among other reasons because the basis for the investigation is but a limited sample of that language variant. Consequently they would have to be irrefutable truths about the linguistic occurrences in the corpus and nothing else. But what scientific interest does a statement have that says something about a random language sample and nothing about the language variant this sample is taken to represent? Furthermore, it can hardly be maintained that a linguist approaching the corpus data without doing it in the light of a specific theory does not interpret

³⁶ This holds true even in the cases where ‘linguistic theory’ is taken to mean a ‘system of concepts’, a proposed categorization of language data.

this data in some way. Whether he has a specific theory as his starting point or not, he will always need to categorize his evidence in one way or another. It is the only way to make sense of it. The linguistic evidence cannot step forward on its own, and thus it must never be considered to be objective.

Consequently the idea of using data taken from a linguistic corpus to test theories, an approach adopted in the present thesis, should not be rejected. Nevertheless, polemics such as the one presented in the previous paragraph might be part of the reason why a substantial part of linguistic research using corpus evidence rarely incorporates linguistic theory, a tendency noted by McEnery and Wilson: “The linkage of corpora and linguistic theory has been slow to emerge to date.” (193).

To my knowledge there does not exist a corpus-based grammar for Spanish. The grammars that account for the rules of standard Spanish³⁷ are thus theoretically based, sometimes with examples taken from random text material in order to illustrate a point (Bosque and Demonte, Alarcos Llorach, Franch and Blecua, Rojo, Kovacci, Onieva Morales, Gómez Torrego). Furthermore, the rules described in these grammars, which represent standard Spanish, are consistent principally with the rules of peninsular Spanish (Spanish as spoken in Spain). The corpus-driven research that has been conducted on Latin-American variants of Spanish thus far has not offered the kind of results that would be amenable to an inclusion into a revised grammar of standard Spanish, or at least no consistent effort has been made to alter or adapt the grammar and its theoretical framework. Lope Blanch comments on the fact that the peninsular variants of Spanish have been more rigorously studied than the Latin-American ones:

Los lingüistas españoles - muchos de los cuales han prestado reiterada atención a las hablas hispanoamericanas - están naturalmente más familiarizados con la modalidades dialectales de la Península Ibérica - las cuales, además, han sido más y mejor estudiadas y descritas - que con las de Hispanoamérica - menos y peor estudiadas que aquéllas ("La falsa" 65).³⁸

He concludes: “Es imprescindible, pues, seguir estudiando rigurosa y sistemáticamente la realidad lingüística de América, con objeto de poder llegar algún día a contar con los

³⁷ The term 'standard Spanish' will be explained in detail subsequently.

³⁸ **Translation:** “The Spanish linguists – many of which have given repeated attention to the Hispano-American variants – are naturally more familiar with the dialects of the Iberic peninsula, which have been more rigorously studied and described – than they are with the Hispano-American dialects, which have been less rigorously studied.”

elementos de juicio necesarios para hacer una evaluación precisa y realista”³⁹ (Lope Blanch "La falsa" 65).

In conclusión, in chapter 2 we have specified that our view of language’s existential status is that it is a social, supra-individual system whose structure (including the semantic content of its units of meaning) emerges as a product of its use. This way of understanding the ontological status of language has much in common with Saussurean structuralism. Furthermore, when we approach language as an object of study, its status as a social, supra-individual entity allows us to use a corpus as empirical basis for our scrutiny of it. Finally, we favour, and will apply, a corpus based, theory-driven method where the corpus data is analyzed in view of existing theories about the phenomenon in question. This is one possible way of bridging the distance between the empirical and the theoretical fields within linguistic research, which traditionally have been disconnected in studies of Latin-American Spanish.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 A theory-driven, corpus-based approach to the analysis of the Spanish verb tenses

William E. Bull states: “An analysis of the combinatory potentials of a form, rather than a description of its actual combinations, requires the exploration of horizons previously explored only by the theoretician. The major task is to bridge the chasm between theoretical and applied linguistics.” (Bull Time). I have already argued that corpus-driven research might benefit from incorporating linguistic theory to a larger extent. Correspondingly, corpus-based research could be considered a way of incorporating empirical evidence into theory-driven research. Since this approach allows for the application of a wider range of linguistic theories than does the corpus-driven one, one might advocate an increase in corpus-based, theory-driven research, particularly for Latin-American Spanish, since the theoretical contributions of Latin-American corpus studies to Spanish linguistics traditionally have been scarce. The present thesis can be regarded as a suggestion as to how to include linguistic theory in the analysis of the Spanish verb forms found in a corpus.

Whether the corpus-based approach is taken to be a fruitful way of combining linguistic theory and empirical evidence or not, there seems to be a fair degree of consensus among a variety of linguists that a combination of these two scientific sources would indeed be

³⁹ **Translation:** “It is thus imperative that we continue studying the American linguistic reality systematically and rigorously, so that we one day may possess the elements necessary to make a precise and realistic evaluation.”

beneficial to linguistic research: Josse de Kock says: “La experiencia demuestra ... que una combinación acertada de reflexión teórica y observación pragmática principia una feliz conclusión”⁴⁰ (*Gramática* 16). López Morales states: “La teoría y los datos no son en modo alguno conceptos opuestos, sino interdependientes: se apoyan y se explican mutuamente”⁴¹ (13). McEnery and Wilson also advocate the union of theory and empirical evidence, favouring corpus-based research in particular:

There has since the 1950s been a division in linguistics between those who have taken a largely rationalist view of linguistic *theory* and those who have carried on *descriptive* empirical research with a view to accounting fully for all the data in a corpus. Often these approaches have been presented as competitors but they are in fact not always as mutually exclusive as some would wish to claim: there is a further, though not at present very large, group of researchers who have harnessed the use of corpora to the *testing* of essentially rationalist grammatical theory rather than to pure linguistic description or the inductive generation of theory. (110).

They add: “We hope that in the near future a full marriage of corpus linguistics with a wide range of linguistic theories will occur...” (194).

In order to accomplish the kind of results that would be amenable to an inclusion into a revised grammar of Spanish, I propose an approach to the examination of the verb tenses that consistently consults non-corpus based grammars throughout the analysis of the corpus data. However, one might wonder what will be attained by way of a corpus-based study of Spanish from a Latin-American region; a fair description of the variant of Spanish spoken there, or a revision of a specific theory based on evidence from that corpus? Or can both be accomplished? Fortunately it might be conceivable to achieve both of these objectives, although a corpus-based, theory-driven study will provide a different kind of description of the variant in question than a corpus-driven one would. A corpus-driven approach would seek to give an exhaustive account of a specific linguistic phenomenon occurring in the corpus and will thus often have an intrinsically descriptive objective. A corpus-based, theory driven approach might provide a more indirect description of the variant in question by way of the revision(s) of specific theories and grammars. That is to say, the defining characteristics of a certain dialect will be recognized as deviations from a pre-existing grammar or the refutation of a specific theory about Spanish, a theory and a grammar which consequently might be

⁴⁰ **Translation:** “Experience shows us ... that an adequate combination of theoretical reflection and pragmatic observation makes for a happy ending.”

⁴¹ **Translation:** “The theory and the data are in no way opposite concepts, rather, they are interdependent: they lean on each other and explain each other mutually.”

revised. Furthermore, even a theory-driven approach will require that the linguist describe the language variant at hand, since the description, or at least the classification, of the occurrences in the corpus is an indispensable preliminary step if he wishes to test them against theory.

The next doubt that might present itself to the linguist is whether it is justifiable to require of a theoretical account of standard Spanish that it explain all existing regional varieties of the Spanish language. Why should linguistic evidence from La Paz in particular be taken into account? The answer to this might not be so straightforward.

Firstly, it must be clear what we mean by the term *standard language*. The aim of this section is not to give an exhaustive account of this concept, but it must be clarified to some extent how the term is used in the present thesis. Bussmann defines it thus: "Since the 1970s this term has been the usual designation for the historically legitimated, panregional, oral and written language form of the social middle or upper class. . . . Because it functions as the public means of communication, it is subject to extensive normalization . . ." (451). According to Milroy and Milroy, ". . . it seems appropriate to speak . . . abstractly of standardisation as an *ideology*, and a standard language as an idea in the mind rather than a reality - a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent" (19). They specify that strictly speaking, standardisation does not tolerate variability (Milroy and Milroy 19). However, this is a rather strict definition of the term, and in reality it is often used more loosely: ". . . a label like 'Standard English' is a rather loose and pre-scientific label. What Standard English actually is thought to be depends on acceptance (mainly by the most influential people) of a common core of linguistic conventions, and a good deal of fuzziness remains around the edges" (Milroy and Milroy 22). This description of standard language conforms more closely to the concept of standard Spanish as understood in the present thesis. Milroy and Milroy elaborate: "Its chief characteristic . . . is intolerance of optional variability in language" (22).

When it comes to standard Spanish, there has been a tendency to accept the peninsular variant, and specifically the one from the Castilla region, as the basis for the standard language (Alcina Franch and Blecuá 11-12). This state of affairs is due to historical factors:

. . . la extensión del español, que lo llevará a convertirse en la lengua de muchas naciones, se inició a finales del siglo XV en el gran movimiento histórico de las navegaciones y descubrimientos geográficos de fines de la Edad Media. . . .

América, en particular, quedó casi totalmente europeizada en este proceso (Guitarte 66).⁴²

On the other hand, Guitarte points to the fact that recent years have seen an increasing acceptance of at least the *idea* of a standard Spanish that includes variants from all regions of the Spanish speaking world, a view consistent with the notion of a standard language as a panregional entity: "Desde [1944] el concepto de la *lengua común*, o sea de un conjunto de naciones que poseen en común la misma lengua (no de un dueño y prestatarios de ella), es el instrumento de la unidad del idioma en reemplazo de la unidad imperial de antaño"⁴³ (Guitarte 81). However, the process that Guitarte alludes to here, of a standard language that to an ever increasing degree includes a collection of regional varieties, seems to clash with the very definition and purpose of a standard language, namely that "The process of standardisation . . . is based on the idea of aiming, by any means possible, at uniformity" (Milroy and Milroy 23). In other words, ". . . standardisation aims to ensure fixed values for the counters in a system. In language, this means preventing variability in spelling and pronunciation by selecting fixed conventions uniquely regarded as 'correct', establishing 'correct' meanings of words, . . . uniquely acceptable word-forms . . . and fixed conventions of sentence structure." (Milroy and Milroy 19). Guitarte himself seems to be aware of the aforementioned conflict, as he mentions that absolute linguistic uniformity is not possible in vast territories without extensive mutual contact (82). Nevertheless, this observation does not prevent him from speaking of a standard Spanish which includes regional varieties.

Contrary to Guitarte's observations, the vast majority of current grammars of standard Spanish are based upon the conventions of peninsular Spanish, at least when it comes to the description of the tense system. A select few express a desire to include American variants in their accounts, among them, the authors of the *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*:

En su introducción, se lamentan los autores de no haber podido dedicar mayor atención al español de América; en efecto, ese punto puede suscitar alguna objeción, que deberá atenuarse si se piensa en el enorme espacio geográfico que

⁴² **Translation:** ". . . the expansion of Spanish, which would convert it to the language of many nations, started at the end of the fifteenth century, with the large historical movement of the navigations and geographic discoveries of the middle ages America specifically was almost completely "europized" in this process."

⁴³ **Translation:** "Since [1944] the concept of a *common language*, that is, a group of nations that possess the same language (not an owner and borrowers of the language), has been the instrument of unification for the language instead of the imperial unity of the old times."

cubre nuestra lengua, y la heterogeneidad de variantes culturales a que sirve de vehículo (Carreter XIV).⁴⁴

On the one hand, it might seem somewhat 'unfair' that a so-called *standard language* should be based upon one specific regional variant, on the other, this seems to be a direct consequence of the very creation of a standard language: "A variety is . . . *selected* as a standard . . . ; this variety is now *accepted* by influential people, and then *diffused* geographically and socially by various means . . ." (Milroy and Milroy 22). However, the process of standardisation is an ever-ongoing one which is always in progress in the languages that undergo it (Milroy and Milroy 19), so the current state of affairs of the grammars of standard Spanish is not necessarily unchangeable.

The question is what an attempt to modify them so as to include American variants would entail. If a grammar is to be adjusted so that its rules account for many different regional varieties, it has to be done in one of two different manners. One option is that each rule has an 'either/or' configuration, including the different varieties as alternative options. If there are many varieties however, and they differ greatly, the uniformity would be lost and hence the whole purpose of a standard language would be defeated. The grammar would not be very functional, as its rules would be inconsistent. The other option is to make the original descriptions and rules less specified so that they might allow for additional interpretations. This is only conceivable if the forms of the different varieties indeed can be regarded as alternative sub-interpretations of a superordinate category or feature. If the various interpretations differ too much, the superordinate category (if one is at all conceivable) would have to be so vague that it would be less than informative, and possibly include features that do not belong to it. If we are to talk of a *modified* grammar, however, the second option is the most natural one, as the first one simply would produce an *expanded* or *additive* grammar.

It was mentioned previously here that a linguist might ask himself whether it is justifiable to require of a theoretical account of standard Spanish that it explain all existing regional varieties of the Spanish language. Why should linguistic evidence from La Paz in particular be taken into account? My solution is the following: Subsequent to the testing of theories against the tense forms of the corpus from La Paz, I will determine whether they differ from the standard variant to such an extent that a modification of the grammar is impossible. If it is possible, different corpus-based projects of regional varieties in Latin-

⁴⁴ **Translation:** "In the introduction of this book, the authors lament not having had the possibility to pay more attention to American Spanish. Indeed, this point may give rise to objections, which in turn should be attenuated when we take into account the vast geographical space that our language covers, and the heterogeneity of the many cultures for which it is a vehicle."

America that challenge the composition of the standard Spanish grammar, might conjunctively be taken into account in a systematic fashion to revise the original grammars.

3.2 The Corpus - *El habla de la ciudad de la Paz*

The corpus that will be used as empirical basis for the analysis of the Spanish verb tenses is El habla de la ciudad de La Paz: Materiales para su estudio, compiled in 1992 by Nila G. Marrone. It contains the recorded speech of 83 informants. Forty of these are engaged in a semi-guided interview, while twelve of them are secretly being taped as they are having a conversation, with the questioner present. The last 31 are engaged in formal speech, such as lectures, conference presentations etc. These latter informants will be disregarded for the present purpose, as I aim to limit the scope of the analysis to spoken language, and formal speech often is based on some kind of manuscript. The exclusive focus on spoken language makes the data as homogenous as possible, giving better grounds for making generalizations about that particular language variant.

This corpus was compiled in connection with the research project Proyecto de estudio coordinado de la norma lingüística culta de las principales ciudades de Iberoamérica y de la Península Ibérica, administered by La Asociación de Lingüística y Filología de la América Latina (ALFAL) (Gutiérrez Marrone 9). As the title indicates, the research project aims to give an overview of the so-called ‘cultivated speech’ (habla culta) found in the principal cities of the Spanish speaking countries. Thus the informants whose speech has been recorded in the different corpora have been chosen on the basis of social factors such as education and profession. All the informants represented in the corpus from La Paz have Spanish as their native language⁴⁵, they have finished the equivalent of high school, and most of them have had some university education. Other variables, such as their profession and the frequency with which they read, have also been taken into account in the assessment of the informants as cultivated (Gutiérrez Marrone 11)⁴⁶.

The present thesis should nonetheless not be regarded as a contribution to the above mentioned project, mainly because the aim of the present study, and therefore also the method applied in the analysis of the corpus evidence, are of an entirely different nature than those adopted in the project headed by the ALFAL. The latter is distinctly descriptive in essence, and does not concern itself with linguistic theory to any large extent (Lope Blanch Estudios

⁴⁵ There is one exception, which is a young woman whose first language is Aymara, a Native American language. She possibly learned Spanish after her puberty (Marrone 11). Consequently, this informant will be disregarded for the present analysis of Spanish verb tenses.

⁴⁶ Marrone does not specify these criteria any further.

8). Furthermore, as I have already described, their method of analysis is characteristically inductive, with considerable emphasis on the quantitative approach to data analysis.

At first glance, it might seem far-fetched to maintain that the findings of the present analysis pertain to a pre-conceived language variant called 'cultivated speech', a variant that would apply to a social class whose individuals are selected according to fairly vague criteria that supposedly hold across national and cultural boundaries. At the same time, there is some sense in identifying a specific speech-community whose speech will be recorded, as the sample must be limited somehow. Furthermore, since part of my aim is to relate my findings to the grammars of standard spoken Spanish, the analysis of so-called cultivated speech is pertinent, as it is the basis of standard language, and less likely to exhibit substantial variation geographically than popular speech. On the other hand, for the corpus of La Paz, the criteria for the sampling of informants are quite vague, and according to McEnery and Wilson: ". . . the first step in corpus sampling [is] the need to define as clearly as possible the limits of the population which we are aiming to study before we can proceed to define sampling procedures for it" (78).

This discussion calls for a scrutiny of the subject of a corpus' *representativeness*. According to Biber, for the representativeness of a corpus, "two major factors must be considered: size and composition" (251). As for size, a smaller corpus is adequate for frequently occurring items or phenomena:

A corpus must be large enough to adequately represent the occurrence of the features being studied. In grammatical studies, this is generally not a problem for common features, like the overall frequencies of nouns and verbs. Because these features occur frequently and regularly, they can be studied in a small corpus (Biber 251).

Hence, with regards to the previous discussion, it is the issue of the corpus' *composition* that is material. As specified by Biber, "A corpus must be sampled deliberately from particular registers, since linguistic features vary systematically across registers. . . . A corpus that disregarded register would produce misleading findings regarding the frequency and use of [certain] grammatical features" (252). The corpus from La Paz complies with this requisite albeit in an imprecise manner (the criteria for delimiting the population are vague).

A corpus represents ". . . a **sample** of a much larger **population**" (McEnery and Wilson 78). According to Meyer, a useful way of selecting the individuals of your *sample* (a selection of texts or informants) from the pre-defined *population* (all existing individuals or texts with

specified characteristics) is by way of sampling methodology, which can be divided into two types: the *probability sampling* and the *non-probability sampling* (42-43). He explains:

In probability sampling . . . the researcher very carefully pre-selects the population to be sampled, using statistical formulas and other demographic information to ensure that the number and type of people being surveyed are truly representative. In non-probability sampling . . . this careful pre-selection process is not employed. For instance, one can select the population to be surveyed through the process of '*haphazard, convenience, or accidental sampling*' . . . that is, one samples individuals who happen to be available. Alternatively, one can employ '*judgment, or purposive, or expert choice*' sampling . . . that is, one decides before-hand who would be best qualified to be sampled (e.g. native rather than non-native speakers of a language, educated vs. non-educated speakers of a language etc.). Finally, one can employ '*quota sampling*' . . . and sample certain percentages of certain populations (43).

Although Meyer is less than clear about the distinction between *sample* and *population* here, it seems that he is talking about how to select the individuals of a *sample*. The compilers of the corpus from La Paz have used non-probability sampling for the selection of the individuals of the sample as well as for the establishment of the population. They have established the population from which the sample is to be extracted by way of the *judgment, purposive, or expert choice* sampling, targeting native speakers that are educated. They seem to have selected the individuals of the sample by way of *haphazard, convenience, or accidental* sampling, selecting individuals who happened to be available. According to Meyer, probability sampling is the more reliable one of the two methods, but because it involves considerable logistical challenges, the non-probability techniques are quite common (43-44).

Consequently, the corpus from La Paz is deemed adequate in size and composition for the present purpose. Its major drawback is the vaguely defined criteria for the pre-establishment of the population. I will, however, assume that it represents an educated or cultivated speech, and that this population is sufficiently homogenous so as to warrant valid general observations about the verb tenses' frequency and use.

3.3 Quantitative and qualitative analysis

The corpus exists only in a printed version, necessitating a manual analysis of the data. This does not, however, constitute any great impediment for the present study, as it will only

concentrate on frequency of occurrences for a limited number of oppositions where it is deemed relevant. Furthermore, the obligatory scrutiny of the linguistic context in which the different verb forms appear would compel me to review the data manually at any event. Moreover, the size of the corpus is not such that it prohibits manual scrutiny.

In spite of this, I will have a largely, although not entirely, quantitative approach to the analysis. I use the term *quantitative* as defined by McEnery and Wilson: “. . . in quantitative research we classify features, count them and even construct more complex statistical models in an attempt to explain what is observed . . .” (76). They elaborate: “. . . the quantitative analysis of a sampled corpus does allow for its findings to be generalised to a larger population and, furthermore, it means that direct comparisons may be made between different corpora . . .” (76). My analysis is quantitative only in the sense that I will take frequency of occurrences into account when it is deemed relevant, and that I aim to make semantic classifications on the basis of what I observe, and venture to make generalizations about the language variant. I deem this approach to be suitable in spite of the relatively small size of the corpus, because, as McEnery and Wilson state: “. . . frequent items are stable in their distributions and hence small samples are adequate for these.” (80). The verb forms that I study all appear in the corpus with a high frequency, and there is not a great deal of semantic variation in their usage. Furthermore, as I already mentioned, frequency of occurrences will not be taken into account merely for frequency’s sake, but only where it is deemed to be relevant. Comrie maintains:

. . . it is possible that frequency may indeed be less valuable as a criterion in dealing with categories, like aspect, that are closely linked with meaning, in contrast to phonological segments, for instance, where there is no direct relation with anything semantic. Clearly the choice of aspect is very closely connected with what the speaker wants to say . . . (Aspect 117).

In other words, the relative frequency of the two simple past tenses, for example, will not be recorded or taken into account, as it does not provide information about their semantic content, and does not offer any clues as to how they ought to be classified semantically. Frequency will briefly be taken into account in cases of suspected neutralization, such as with the simple vs. composite past (*canté-he cantado*), and to some extent in the quest for core - and peripheral senses for each verb form.

McEnery and Wilson describe *qualitative* research thus: “. . . in qualitative research no attempt is made to assign frequencies to the linguistic features which are identified in the data.” (76). They specify: “. . . in qualitative research the data are used only as a basis for

identifying and describing aspects of usage in the language and to provide ‘real-life’ examples of particular phenomena.” (76). My analysis will be qualitative in the sense that I scrutinize the theoretical accounts of the relevant verb tenses in depth, and use the occurrences in the corpus as real-life examples to confirm or refute them.

The analysis of the past verb tenses in La Paz will consequently be one that combines the quantitative and the qualitative approach. McEnery and Wilson state: “Corpus linguistics could . . . benefit as much as any field from such multi-method research, combining both qualitative and quantitative perspectives on the same phenomena.” (77).

3.4 The interaction between form and context

My approach to the analysis of the verb forms found in the corpus will be theory-driven, thus partially deductive in essence. The analysis will not, however, be conducted exclusively in a deductive fashion. I will observe the instances of the verb forms in the corpus, paying particular attention to the contexts in which they appear (the elements of which will be specified subsequently), and see if it is possible to categorize them into the temporal and aspectual meanings previously defined by both empirically and theoretically oriented Hispanic linguists. This process will hopefully reveal whether the pre-existing descriptions are justified or not, and whether they indeed should be upheld or rejected.

It must be noted that the aim of the present study is not to examine how tense and aspect in general is expressed in Spanish, since these distinctions can be expressed by a variety of different elements in an array of different combinations (Smith 213-14). The aim is merely the identification and inclusion in a theoretical framework of the aspectual and temporal contents of the verb forms mentioned. However, one cannot reach a conclusion about the latter without also examining the former. Thus, I will examine contextual elements denoting aspectual and temporal features in so far as they interact with the examined verb forms to specify or produce specific interpretations. In other words, I aim to determine what contribution the verb forms make to the contexts in which they appear. Kamp and Reyle allude to a similar approach: “By specifying what contribution each sentence constituent makes to the truth of the many different sentences in which it occurs as constituent, it tells us also something about the meaning of these constituents.” (12).

There is a variety of different contextual features that will be taken into account as I conduct the analysis. The first one is the temporal adverbials, which frequently accompany the verb forms, and may express both temporal and aspectual distinctions. As will be shown

in detail later on, they often delimit the temporal scope of the eventuality expressed by the verb form, and help locate it with respect to the moment of utterance.

The second contextual feature I will be examining is co-occurring verb forms. An examination of the relations between them will be helpful for revealing oppositions between the verb forms within the Spanish tense system, and it might also help detecting possible neutralizations between some of the forms. As I have mentioned, it has been claimed that the Spanish variant spoken in Bolivia among other countries in the Andes-region, seems to exhibit neutralization between the simple past form *hablé* and the composite form *he hablado* (Quesada Pacheco 81). An examination of how these two forms alternate might reveal in greater detail to what extent this neutralization is present in the spoken Spanish of La Paz. Another reason for examining other verb forms in the context is that the reference point of the eventuality expressed by one verb form may at times be given by another verb form in the preceding context. This situation is common when one of the verbs appears in an embedded clause.

The third contextual feature that must be taken into account is the nature of the syntactic structures within which the verb forms appear. Different syntactic structures might, together with the verb form, produce different aspectual interpretations of the utterance as a whole. In English and Norwegian, which only have one simple past tense form, the syntactic structure alone might at times specify the aspectual content of the utterance as perfective or imperfective, as with the sentences: “She ate.” vs. “She ate the cake.”, the latter expressing the perfective aspect, and the former (when taken out of context), being unspecified with respect to this distinction. It might be useful to study the nature of the different syntactic structures in which the two Spanish simple past tense verb forms (*hablé* and *hablaba*) appear. If, for example, a plural direct object (“Visitábamos muchos países”⁴⁷) yields an iterative interpretation for *both* forms, and not only for the imperfective, this might be an indication that iterativity is not expressed by the latter verb tense as such. In other words, the scrutiny of the verb form’s surrounding syntactic constituents might reveal the presence or absence of intrinsic aspectual values for the verb form at hand.

However, further distinctions must be made before we can determine how a specific verb form interacts with the different elements of the contexts. The verb form itself is composed of different parts, so before we can venture to answer the question “What are the temporal and aspectual values of the Spanish past imperfective verb form?” we must

⁴⁷ **Gloss:** “We visited [past imp.] many countries.”

determine whether the Spanish imperfective is expressed solely by the grammatical tense morpheme or by this morpheme in combination with the lexical root of the word. As I have discussed previously, it is generally accepted that the combination of the morpheme and certain lexical roots can produce specific aspectual interpretations (such as the iterative interpretation of the imperfective), and hence it is important to identify what semantic contribution each of the elements separately makes to the word as a whole. Since the aim of this study is not primarily to explore how tense and aspect in general is expressed in Spanish, but rather what temporal and aspectual contents the Spanish verb tenses exhibit, I will attempt to identify what content the grammatical morpheme expressing these distinctions exhibits. This approach is justifiable because the aspectual features intrinsic to a lexical root are independent of the tense morpheme it might be combined with, and hence not part of the semantic content of the verb tense as such. (For example, the eventuality expressed by the word 'cough' is most likely perceived as a point-like event in itself, and will conserve this semantic value for all the verb tenses with which it is combined).

In order to single out the semantic contribution of the grammatical morpheme however, it is indispensable also to register what semantic contribution the lexical root makes to the form as a whole. A description of the lexical root's contribution to the word will thus be presented when it is deemed necessary.

The subsequent issue that must be addressed is the nature of the final description that will be presented here of the verb tenses' basic temporal and aspectual contents. This kind of description can be presented in various manners, for instance by way of logical formulas, graphs, or lists of features. In the latter case, it must also be decided whether the list of features should be understood as an exhaustive list of sufficient and necessary features, or as a list of prototypical features, where only the presence of one or more of them is required for the unequivocal identification of a specific verb tense. Since part of the aim of the present study is to test specific theories about verbal tense and aspect, both for Spanish and generally for natural languages, the specific tools used by the relevant linguists will be applied to the description of the contents of the verb forms in the corpus. I will, however, arrive at a conclusion about the mentioned theories in a step-by-step fashion, and thus, preliminary to the various theoretical descriptions, I present a list of temporal and/or aspectual features for each verb form. Specifically, I will analyze the verb forms using terminology that makes them relatable to the assumptions of the theories I aim to test. The features mentioned are not to be understood as prototypical, but rather as sufficient and/or necessary features where some are perceived as more basic and general than others. The less general ones are regarded as

alternative specific manifestations of the superordinate feature. This way of understanding the make-up of a linguistic form's content does, however, not stand undisputed.

Binnick (1991) calls attention to the two opposing views the *monosemanticist* position and the *polysemanticist* position, and describes them thus: "The "monosemanticist" position holds that categories have one central or core meaning . . . while the "polysemanticist" position holds that categories may have many meanings." (108). He goes on to explain: "For the monosemanticist, if a category has different meanings or uses, these proceed from context; for the polysemanticist, the role of context is to select out one or more of the meanings adherent to the category." (108). The attempt to categorize the approach adopted in the present thesis into one of these two stances, makes it apparent that it is not always justified to present them as two irreconcilable opposites of a deeply entrenched dichotomy. Although the procedure adopted for the analysis at hand conforms more strongly to the monosemanticist position, the idea that ". . . each form or construction, except in cases of homonymy . . . has precisely one meaning . . ." (Binnick 108) seems too extreme. Binnick, quoting Hermerén, points out that: "«the danger in assigning a unitary meaning to each [verb] seems to be that the definition . . . has to be so vague and general that it becomes anything but informative.»" (104). A definition that is too vague or general might inadvertently end up describing the content of more forms than just the one it was designed to characterize. In some cases, it might prove fruitful to identify more than one basic meaning for a single form, although these will be fewer and less specified than the multiple senses recognized by a hard-line polysemanticist. Paul J. Hopper remarks: "A form must have a consistent value or else communication is impossible; we cannot have linguistic forms which derive all their meanings only from context." (4).

The last matter that needs to be dealt with in this section is the question whether to interpret the verb forms' content primarily as their discourse function or as their events' temporal properties. Thelin (1990) remarks: ". . . there have hardly been any attempts to explore more closely the conceptual-semantic correlation between the aspectual function of defining events, on the one side, and organizing discourse, on the other." (5). The present thesis does not aim to explore this particular relation in itself, but takes one of the factors (discussed directly below) to be more decisive than the other in the selection of a verb form's temporal and aspectual content. Hopper opts for the second factor, the discourse function, and describes the perfective aspect like this:

Perfective aspect functions at its core to sequence events in chronological order. If autonomous meanings of 'completed action' or the like accrue to it these are

synchronously additive meanings; however much they may increase the discourse range of the ‘perfective’ form, they do not undermine the characteristic discourse sequencing function. (15).

Hopper’s argumentation here does not convincingly show that the ‘completed action’ of the perfective aspect is an additive meaning, as opposed to its sequencing function, and not vice versa. The fact that these so-called autonomous meanings do not undermine the discourse sequencing function is not in itself a reason to discard them as less central than the latter. As regards the perfective aspect, if its aspectual meaning is taken to be ‘completed action’, or ‘global event’, and another event is presented subsequent to it in the discourse, the most logical interpretation is that it happened sequentially, and not overlapping. Correspondingly, an event that is being described with an imperfective verb, emphasizing the internal temporal duration of it, is more likely to be presented as simultaneous with another one. Hence, it can be argued that the discourse function of these verb forms are their additive meanings, derived from the aspectual functions of the events. Robert I. Binnick argues a similar standpoint:

...the use of the preterite (perfective) to express sequences of events and to present the events in a narrative is ascribed to its representing events as complete wholes, whereas the imperfect(ive) is used rather to describe or present circumstances because it represents action as ongoing and hence incomplete; consequently the Greek aorist is more common in narration per se, the imperfect in description. (373).

William E. Bull upholds the same view with regards to the relation between discourse function and semantic properties: “It is self evident that when the serial structure of objective events is synchronized with the serial pattern in which morphemes are spoken, there is only one possible order in which the communication can be expressed.” (*Time* 53). The subsequent analysis of the verb forms in La Paz will not emphasize the forms’ discourse function, although it may be observed when it is deemed relevant for the determination of the forms’ temporal and aspectual content.

4. THEORY

4.1 Tense and Aspect

It is generally accepted, with a few notable exceptions⁴⁸, that the Spanish verbal temporal forms express both temporal_{ts}⁴⁹ and aspectual oppositions. Consequently, it becomes

⁴⁸ These will be scrutinized subsequently.

critical to carry out a fairly thorough examination of the grammatical categories *tense* and *aspect*, both from a general perspective and for Spanish in particular. Bernard Comrie defines tense and aspect in the following manner: "Tense is taken . . . to refer to the grammaticalization of location in time." ("On Reichenbach's" 24), ". . . aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation." (*Aspect* 3). Norbert Hornstein describes the difference between the two categories thus: "Tenses . . . locate the events that sentences represent in time. This is to be contrasted with the internal 'temporal contour' of the event, which is specified within the aspectual system." (9). Lauri Carlson offers the following definitions of the two categories at hand: "Operations in the temporal domain which are defined in terms of temporal order (before, after) I call TENSES, whatever their morphology." (32), "I restrict the term 'aspectual' to properties or sets of properties which essentially involve the concept of (initial, internal, final) subperiod." (32). Guillermo Rojo, who excludes the category of aspect as distinctive of the Spanish tenses, defines tense thus: "La temporalidad lingüística . . . es una categoría gramatical deíctica mediante la cual se expresa la orientación de una situación, bien con respecto a un punto central . . . bien con respecto a otro punto que, a su vez, está directa o indirectamente orientado con respecto al [punto central]" ("Relaciones" 25-26).⁴⁹

Thus, both categories pertain in essence to the notion of time, albeit in different ways; tense is a deictic category⁵¹ which has to do with the order relation between points in time, the central one of which is the speech point, while aspect in turn is not a deictic category, and does not describe the order relation between points in time; rather, it describes the internal temporal_{tm} configuration of events or situations. The locations in time specified by a tense category may thus be viewed as abstractions, because their durativity is irrelevant, whereas for the category of aspect, the events or situations' durativity, or lack of it, is essential, while their temporal_{tm} anchoring, or location, is irrelevant for their aspectual categorization.

⁴⁹ The word *temporal* is ambiguous in the sense that it can refer to both *tense* and *time*. In the first case, the adjective *temporal* has as its opposite *aspectual*, whereas in the second case *temporal* embraces both of the notions of *tense* and *aspect*, since both of these have to do with time; its opposite in this case would be *non-temporal*. Consequently, a distinction will be made henceforth between the two meanings of *temporal*: When it refers to *tense*, it will be marked thus: temporal_s, and when it refers to *time*, it will be marked like this: temporal_{tm}.

⁵⁰ **Translation:** "Linguistic time [tense] . . . is a deictic grammatical category with which the orientation of a situation is expressed. This orientation may be expressed either respective of a central point . . . or respective of a point which in turn is directly or indirectly oriented with respect to the [central point]."

⁵¹ "**deictic expression** . . . linguistic expressions that refer to the personal, temporal, or spatial aspect of any given **utterance act** and whose designation is therefore dependent on the context of the speech situation." (Bussmann 116). It is the temporal aspect which is of interest to the present study. In this quote the term *aspect* is not taken to stand for the grammatical category discussed in this chapter; rather it is used in the general, non-technical sense of the word.

Consequently, *tense* and *aspect* are, at least for descriptive purposes, two separate categories. Nevertheless, they function in Spanish, and probably in numerous other languages, as two interdependent semantic groups. Salaberry Comments: "Recent theoretical accounts on the notions of tense and aspect have recognized that tense and aspect are interrelated in various ways. . . . This entails that a theory of aspect cannot be developed in isolation from other temporal phenomena." (16). Carlson remarks: ". . . the definitions of tense and aspect are not intended as exclusive. In fact, it is quite likely that languages have expressions for mixed temporal operations." (32). As we shall see, the Spanish temporal_{tm} morphemes express both temporal_{ts} and aspectual oppositions.

4.1.1 Time and tense

Is it possible to arrive at a determination of the physical properties of time? Can we conceive of an adequate definition of it, and is that at all necessary for the delimitation of a linguistic category of tense? Kamp and Reyle comment: "What are the logically necessary properties of the structure of time? This . . . question is a very hard one, and it may well be that there is no unique answer to it." (489).

Despite its complex and abstract nature, countless attempts have been made to arrive at a description of time. Ronald Langacker makes the following remark about it: "...time and reality are relativistic in that we can either view reality as unfolding through time or define time in terms of the flow of reality." (300). Carlson offers a solution to this relativity problem by way of a description of time that is based on the *chronology principle*: "The Chronology Principle allows time to be articulated, instead of by a clock, by, say, a series of successive experiments in dam building. In that case, the partition of the period of experimentation meant by *the time* may simply be the set of experiments themselves." (62). This principle may also be seen as an attempt to solve one of the core problems we encounter if we aim to describe the objective features of time as such; namely how to define a point or an interval. Can a point in linguistically conceived time have physical duration? What distinguishes it from an interval?

Guillermo Rojo and Alexandre Veiga, in accordance with Benveniste's distinctions, specify three different 'tiempos': *el tiempo físico*, *el tiempo cronológico*, and *el tiempo lingüístico* (2871). *El tiempo físico*, or physical time, is a uniform, infinite and linear continuum which is exterior to man. (Rojo and Veiga 2872). *El tiempo cronológico*, or chronological time, is the time which consists of occurrences. These are located with respect to each other in such a manner that we are able to establish relations of anteriority, simultaneity, and posteriority between them. (Rojo and Veiga 2872). Finally, *el tiempo*

lingüístico, or tense, is based on chronological time, without coinciding completely with it. (Rojo and Veiga 2873). According to Rojo, tense is based on the specification of a point zero which is mobile. This point habitually coincides with the moment of utterance, and is the centre of temporal reference with respect to which the different events are located as anterior, simultaneous, or posterior.⁵² (Rojo and Veiga 2873).

It might, however, be questioned whether it is at all justified to identify a third time labelled *tiempo cronológico*. Chronological time is highly reminiscent of the *chronology principle* mentioned earlier, and may thus simply be viewed as one possible way of dividing time into intervals. If it is to be singled out as a separate entity which is different from physical time, it is difficult to see how it may at all be labelled *time*. Would it not simply be a partially ordered assemblage of events? Consequently, the present treatment of time and tense will not take into consideration a separate *chronological time*.

It is often the case that the most adequate description of time is determined, not by the objective physical properties of time itself, but by the aim of our description, that is, by what is more useful to us for the purpose at hand. Kamp and Reyle remark: ". . . the times relevant to our experience never are punctual in any absolute sense. But we can *treat* certain times as indivisible within a given experimental or conceptual setting." (514). The tense (and aspect) systems of natural languages may to some extent be seen as representations of time, but where the only temporal_{tm} properties at play are the ones necessary for reporting a limited set of events and situations, and their relative chronology. Consequently, many of the specifications that seem vital for the description of time are redundant as we aim to give an account of grammatical tense. In my view, there are four factors in particular which reveal the substantial difference between the quintessence of time and the nature of tense.

Firstly, and foremost, they differ as to their very ontological status: time exists independently of our presence and activities, and is not a human product; tense, on the other hand, is, as is language, a human product, and would not exist were it not for our life and work. In Popper's terms, time is part of the first world, while tense, an element of language, is part of the third world.

Secondly, time can be infinitely divided into a string of ever smaller intervals (onto which events and situations could be mapped), and there is an unlimited number of chronological relations between these points in time. Rationally, the tense systems of natural languages can express only a limited set of temporal moments and relations. It would be both

⁵² Rojo's theory of verbal tense will be reviewed in detail later on.

unnecessary and impossible for human beings to operate with a tense system with an infinite set of temporal_{tm} oppositions. It is for example highly unlikely that there exists a language which has a tense morpheme or particle that expresses an event that took place before an event that took place before an event that took place simultaneously with an event that took place posterior to an event that took place anterior to the moment of speech. Consequently, there must be a limit to the temporal_{tm} complexity of tense expressions in human languages.

Thirdly, when we identify moments or events in time, it may be philosophically relevant or interesting to specify whether they have duration or not, or what would constitute the difference between a point and an interval. This is an irrelevant distinction within the domain of grammatical tense. The tense categories limit themselves to specifying the relative chronology between events or situations in time, without paying attention to their internal temporal_{tm} configuration. Kamp and Reyle make a similar observation:

In our daily commerce with events this underdeterminateness [of our pretheoretical conception of what events are] does not pose too much of a problem. It becomes clearly noticeable only when we start asking the general questions a linguist or philosopher is bound to ask, but which rarely disturb the average citizen. (505).

In other words, the entities that underlie many of the linguistic expressions and grammatical categories are only specified to the extent that is necessary for our daily commerce.⁵³ The neglect to differentiate between time and tense compel some linguists to search for exact definitions of moments in time even when they are dealing with tense. Johnson is one of them:

I will follow Bennett and Partee in working with the higher order concepts, INTERVAL OF TIME and MOMENT OF TIME, in place of Reichenbach's single notion of a point in time. An interval of time is to be defined in a standard set-theoretic way, as a set of times with no "gaps" between members of the set. . . . A moment of time is defined as a set of times with just one member; thus, a moment is, by definition, a special type of interval. (149).

In my view, Reichenbach's single notion of a point in time is adequate for the category of tense⁵⁴. These points in time, whether they be events, reference points, or the speech point,

⁵³ This does not mean that language does not have a way of specifying an event's internal temporal configuration, but this is properly the function of aspect or aktionsart, not of tense. Furthermore, as we shall see, it can be argued that even aspectual categories are underspecified abstractions.

⁵⁴ Reichenbach's theory is not designed to describe aspect: ". . . Reichenbach has little if anything to say about aspect, properly speaking, and his system is not designed to accommodate it" (Binnick 113).

are most appropriately conceived of as *abstractions*. Görel Sandström states about the speech point: "I use the term speech *point* rather than speech *time* to highlight the fact that I do not view it as simply the actual time when a sentence is uttered. . . . S is an abstraction away from the temporal extension of the utterance event, at which the truth of a tensed proposition can be assessed." (93). The present thesis takes as a starting point that all the time points within the category of tense are abstractions.

Finally, when we deal with physical time and observe or conceive of occurrences in its course, it is frequently necessary to pinpoint an exact moment in time, often by way of dates or clock-time. Tense morphemes or particles merely specify the relative chronology of events, specifically to the moment of speech. In other words, a tense form may express that an event occurred anterior to the moment of speech, but it will not stipulate whether it was last year or last week, or whether it was at five o'clock or at five thirty. Binnick makes a similar observation:

Kamp has two arguments that events must be more primitive than times. First, events are vague. We do not know in most cases over what precise intervals of time events occur, nor do we care. We can interpret a statement such as 'someone invented the wheel' without knowing precisely when this event occurred (395).

Bull also comments on this phenomenon: ". . . He came neither defines the position of come in terms of other events in an objective series nor indicates the amount of time between the action and PP⁵⁵. All that it says is that the action is anterior to PP." (Time 18).

The next question that might arise is what the most satisfactory way to account for grammatical tense is. What are the basic elements needed for a representation of it? Norbert Hornstein maintains that: ". . . the tense system constitutes an independent linguistic level, with its own sets of primitives, its own syntactic rules of combination, and its own rules of interpretation." (9). While Hornstein's view of the tense system's independent status may be a valid starting point for a linguist who seeks to determine the basic components needed for a description of it, the notion that the tense system *in and of itself* constitutes a separate linguistic level, regardless of our identifying it as such, seems somewhat far-fetched. It is a well-known fact that the temporal_{tm} morphemes of many languages (including Spanish) express both temporal_{ts} and aspectual oppositions, and that the two semantic categories interact intimately to produce specific interpretations for the expressions they are part of. In other words, tense and aspect are not independent categories, and appear in context with

⁵⁵ PP = point present, i.e. the equivalent of the speech point.

various other elements to generate particular temporal_{tm} meanings. For linguists, the conceptual separation of tense and aspect is a useful strategy when we aim to account for the way that language expresses time, just like it is a useful strategy to distinguish between syntax, semantics, and morphology when we want to describe the structure of language.

Verbal tense is a category which is expressed by a limited set of grammatical morphemes, and it should be feasible to identify the primitives that are essential for its description. The representations of tense configurations presented by different linguists may vary according to his or her specific scientific viewpoint; a linguist who perceives language as a mental entity might identify other elements than one that views it as a social phenomenon. Nevertheless, it seems that the vast majority of basic elements coincide across the different branches, and this makes a comparison between the models possible.

4.1.1.1 Theories about tense

Binnick comments: "The problem with much earlier research into tense and aspect is the lack of any objective theory against which the ideas of individual theorists can be judged." (215). Frequently theorists will differ as to what they perceive to be the ontological status of language and hence to the necessary elements required to account for tense structures. However, as I mentioned, there is a large degree of correspondence between the elements of many of the theories. The present thesis starts from the notion that the temporal_{ts} distinctions of a language should not be taken to reflect an objective reality, but rather what is necessary to communicate the message at hand. The theories that will be reviewed subsequently have different understandings of the reference and significance of the temporal_{ts} elements they define, nevertheless, it is possible to align and modify their most basic components and use them to describe the Spanish tense structures within the perspective of language as a social, supra-individual phenomenon.

4.1.1.1.1 Hans Reichenbach

It is practically obligatory for any study that touches upon the subject of tense to give some kind of account of the theory of Hans Reichenbach. His ideas have been taken as the basis for numerous succeeding descriptions of tense in natural languages. Comrie states: "The brief formal account of tense given by Reichenbach (1947: 287-298) . . . has been enormously influential on subsequent linguistic work on tense" ("On Reichenbach's" 24). One of the reasons why Reichenbach's ideas have been so influential on a diverse group of linguists might be that his theory is so readily adaptable to a variety of different doctrines. Juan José

Acero offers a rendition of Reichenbach's theory in his article "Las ideas de Reichenbach acerca del tiempo verbal," where he adapts Reichenbach's theory to the Spanish tense system. He states: "Visto desde la perspectiva actual, *este análisis es neutral entre diferentes formas de ser lógica o semánticamente presentado*"⁵⁶ (50). Norbert Hornstein, a generative grammarian who takes Reichenbach's formulae as a starting point for his own interpretation of verbal tense in English, asserts: "Reichenbach's assumptions yield a family of possible tense theories" (82).

Reichenbach's formulae offer tangible and formal criteria for identifying a verb tense's temporal_{ts} content. His theory constructs ". . . natural-language tenses as having a fine structure" (Hornstein 87). Specifically, he represents the temporal_{ts} configuration of each verb tense as a timeline with three distinct points. These points are located on the timeline relative to each other in different chronological orders, depending on what tense the configuration is meant to illustrate. Two of the three time points mentioned are intuitively easy to grasp: E is the event time, and S is the moment of speech (Hornstein 10). The third point, the R point, is the most distinctive feature of Reichenbach's theory (Hornstein 12), and it might be more difficult to comprehend than the two other points, as it is more abstract in nature. Acero offers the following description of it: ". . . *el punto de referencia* . . . resulta imprescindible para poder situar temporalmente un evento (o acontecimiento) no sólo respecto del tiempo del habla, sino sobre todo con relación a otro u otros eventos"⁵⁷ (46). In other words, one of the main features of the R point is that it accounts for the way the tense forms interact with the contexts in which they appear. A second, equally important feature of the R point is its function within each tense configuration: it is the point via which the relationship between S and E is mediated (Hornstein 12).

⁵⁶ **Translation:** "Viewed from a contemporary perspective, *this analysis is neutral with respect to different ways of being logically or semantically presented.*"

⁵⁷ **Translation:** ". . . *the reference point* . . . is indispensable for the temporal_{ts} ubication of an event, not only with respect to the speech point, but above all with respect to other event(s)."

Thus, the present tense (*Jorge llega*)⁵⁸, for example, would have the following configuration:

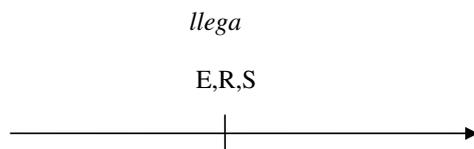


Fig. 1. The temporal_{ts} structure of the present tense.

Here, the three points are located together, signalling that they are simultaneous, and there seems to be little more to observe about their mutual relations. In order to illustrate the function of the R point, it is beneficial to present the temporal_{ts} specification of a tense whose R point does not coincide with E or S, as is the case with the pluperfect (*Jorge había llegado*)⁵⁹:

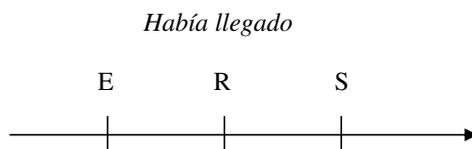


Fig. 2. The temporal_{ts} structure of the pluperfect.

Here, the R point signals that there is a moment, anterior to the speech point, before which the event occurred. A temporal phrase which coincides with R can be added to the sentence: "*Cuando salí, Jorge (ya) había llegado*"⁶⁰:

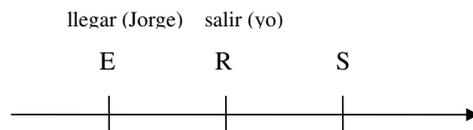


Fig.3. The corresponding constituents of the temporal_{ts} elements in a specific sentence.

⁵⁸ **Gloss:** "Jorge arrives."

⁵⁹ **Gloss:** "Jorge had arrived."

⁶⁰ **Gloss:** "When I left, Jorge had (already) arrived."

The sentence mentioned above is one that exemplifies a *sequence of tenses* (SOT). Binnick remarks on Reichenbach's system's ability to account for this phenomenon:

The major advantage of Reichenbach's system is that a very simple account of sequence-of-tense rules can be given . . . Reichenbach observed: 'When several sentences are combined to form a compound sentence, the tenses of the various clauses are adjusted to one another by certain rules which the grammarians call the rules for the *sequence of tenses*.' . . . he says: 'We can interpret these rules as the principle that, although the events referred to in the clauses may occupy different time points, the reference point should be the same for all clauses . . . ' (113).

The aforementioned sentence contains two tenses: the pluperfect (Jorge *había llegado*), whose temporal_{ts} structure has already been illustrated, and the simple past (Yo *salí*), for which Reichenbach suggests that R coincides with E (Acero 49), thus:

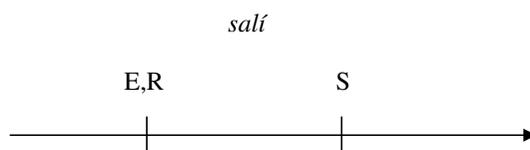


Fig. 4. The temporal_{ts} structure of the simple past.

If we apply Reichenbach's SOT rule to the compound sentence exemplified in the previous paragraphs, we find that it is upheld:

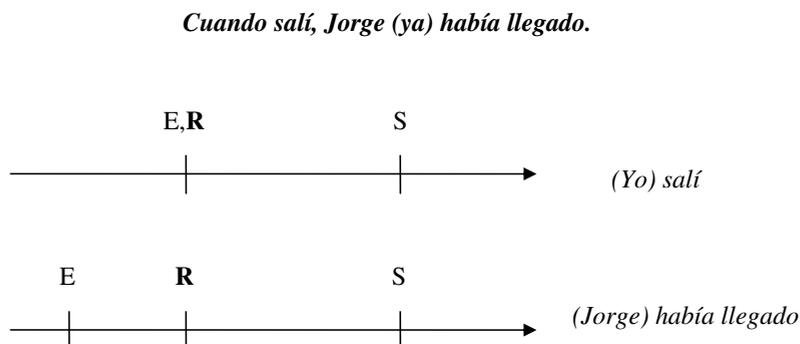


Fig. 5. The application of Reichenbach's SOT rule to a sentence.

The R points of the two tenses that appear in the sentence coincide, making it an acceptable one.⁶¹

Reichenbach's requirement that all tenses be a unique combination of all three points yields twelve possible tenses (Acero 49). These are to be interpreted as the potential tenses of natural languages. Binnick remarks: "...while Reichenbach's theory supplies a specification of possible tenses, *in itself* it provides none for the tense system of English, let alone any other language" (116). In the following chapters, we will briefly examine some linguists' proposed modifications of Reichenbach's theory, and then review in detail how his specifications apply to the Spanish tense system and to the theories put forth by Spanish linguists.

4.1.1.1.2 Bernard Comrie on Reichenbach

In his article "On Reichenbach's Approach to Tense", Comrie identifies five drawbacks of Reichenbach's theory, and proposes subsequent modifications. Three of these drawbacks are relevant for the present thesis, and will be presented here, and included again in relevant chapters to come.

Comrie explains:

The essence of Reichenbach's system is that the specification of the three time-points E, S, and R and of the pairwise temporal relations among them is both necessary and sufficient for the specification of any tense. . . . this set of specifications is neither necessary (in all cases) nor sufficient (in all cases) . . . in some cases where it might seem to be necessary and sufficient it is in fact incorrect. ("On Reichenbach's" 25).

The first modification, the inclusion of a vector with direction and magnitude, which is made necessary by a few languages such as the Bantu language Luganda and the Australian language Yandruwandha (Comrie "On Reichenbach's" 25), could also be required to account for the temporal_s opposition between the simple and the compound past tense of peninsular Spanish. Luganda and Yandruwandha have, according to Comrie, ". . . different grammatical forms for different degrees of remoteness of past and future" ("On Reichenbach's" 25). Rojo describes the content of the Spanish compound past thus: ". . . las acciones expresadas con la forma *he llegado* están o se sienten como psicológicamente más cercanas al hablante"⁶² ("La temporalidad" 105-06). Alcina Franch and Blecua give the following description of it: "El

⁶¹ Correspondingly, the rule accounts for the unacceptability of sentences like *"When I left, Jim will arrive".

⁶² **Translation:** ". . . the actions expressed by the form *I have arrived* are, or are perceived as, psychologically closer to the speaker."

pretérito perfecto expresa una acción recientemente concluida"⁶³ (802). In other words, in peninsular Spanish, the use of the compound past might signal that an event is (perceived as) closer to the moment of speech than does the use of the simple past. Comrie maintains that Reichenbach's system can be easily modified to accommodate this distinction, for example by way of a vector with direction and magnitude ("On Reichenbach's" 25). On the other hand, the degree-of-remoteness distinction is not one that manifests itself systematically throughout the Spanish tense system, and even the forms that are said to express this distinction do not do so invariably. Furthermore, it is a distinction which has been observed exclusively in peninsular Spanish, and the mentioned modification may thus prove to be irrelevant for the analysis of the tense forms in the corpus from La Paz.

The second relevant modification of Reichenbach's system is one that pertains to the internal relation between the three points E, R, and S. As will be shown later on, the problem that Comrie points to is one that is effectively avoided by Guillermo Rojo's vector formulae, designed to illustrate the contents of the Spanish tense forms. Comrie presents Reichenbach's proposed formal rendition of the Future perfect (*will have eaten*) to illustrate the problem: "Reichenbach's account of the Future perfect effectively claims that this form is three-ways ambiguous, rather than vague" ("On Reichenbach's" 26). Thus, according to Reichenbach's system, a sentence like "John will have finished his paper by tomorrow" is ambiguous with respect to these three temporal_{ts} structures:

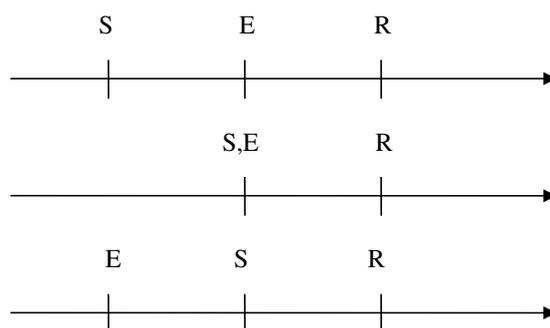


Fig. 6. The formal representation of the Future perfect as three-ways ambiguous⁶⁴ (Comrie 1981b: 26).

⁶³ **Translation:** "The present perfect expresses a recently concluded action"

⁶⁴ In the first case, John finishes the paper between the utterance of the sentence and tomorrow, in the second case, John finishes the paper as the sentence is uttered, and in the third case, John has in fact already finished the paper when the sentence is uttered (Comrie 1981b: 26).

Comrie argues that ". . . use of the Future perfect to express a known situation involving E--S or S,E⁶⁵ is pragmatically excluded . . ." ("On Reichenbach's" 26). Consequently, his claim is that English does not provide any evidence of ambiguity here, and to his knowledge, neither does any other language ("On Reichenbach's" 26). In other words, Comrie's point here is that this tense is *vague* or *underspecified*, as opposed to *ambiguous*, with respect to the order relations between the mentioned points.

Comrie's solution to the problem is that in the specification of any tense involving S, E, and R, there is no direct temporal relation allowed between S and E. The R is specified relative to S, and E is then specified relative to R ("On Reichenbach's" 26). Thus, the Future perfect entails only S--R and E--R; the order relation between E and S remains unspecified. Accordingly, for the pluperfect (described above) we deduce that E precedes S solely on the basis that R precedes S and E precedes R. No direct relation is allowed between S and E in this case either.

The third modification that will be presented here claims that there are some instances where we need no point of reference (Comrie "On Reichenbach's" 27). This modification is the most substantial one, and it has repercussions both for Hornstein's generative analysis and for Rojo's vector formulae. Comrie uses Reichenbach's inept rendition of the English present perfect (*has come*: E--R,S) as an argument in favour of removing the R point from this and other tenses. He argues that

. . . Perfect and Past do not differ primarily in terms of location in time, rather both locate a situation in the past; they differ, however, in that the Perfect includes as part of its meaning that this past situation continues to have present relevance - this clearly goes beyond tense as the grammaticalization of location in time, and is therefore not strictly relevant to our present concerns ("On Reichenbach's" 29).

As will be shown later, this argument also holds for the Spanish formal equivalent of the present perfect (*he cantado*), although this form does not necessarily entail present relevance. Comrie takes his claim further, and asserts: ". . . it . . . becomes quite generally unnecessary to specify a point of reference if this overlaps either S or E: for the basic tenses (Present, Past, Future), we can thus dispense with point of reference altogether, and have the representations S,E, E--S, S--E respectively" (Comrie "On Reichenbach's" 29). This is intuitively more pleasant, as it allows a direct relation between S and E for a tense such as the simple past ("George *saw* the bear"), which merely locates the event prior to the moment of utterance, as

⁶⁵ Comrie disposes of the horizontal arrow as he presents the different tense structures, and simply separates the points with dashes when they are not interpreted as contemporaneous.

opposed to the pluperfect ("George *had seen* the bear"), for which the main point is that there is a time in the past before which George saw a bear.⁶⁶

At first glance, it seems that Comrie ignores the second, very important purpose of the R point as he proposes this last modification; namely its function as the element which signals how the verb tense interacts with other temporal_{tm} components (adverbials and/or other tenses) in the context. But Comrie argues that, for the English Present perfect and Pluperfect, the R point does not successfully fulfil this purpose.⁶⁷ Be that as it may, there are other tenses for which the R point does perform this role successfully, even when it overlaps with E or S. In spite of this last fact, the present thesis takes Comrie's third modification as a valid one, and a solution to the last mentioned problem will be proposed in the subsequent chapter.

4.1.1.1.3 Norbert Hornstein

Hornstein remarks: ". . . Reichenbach's theory of tense provides an answer to the question 'What is a possible tense?'" (6). Hornstein himself revises Reichenbach's theory and uses it to give an account of the English tense system. His theory is nevertheless relevant for the present study, as his revisions of the Reichenbachian tense configurations are not language specific, but based on a desire to accommodate them to a generative framework. As will be shown later, some of Hornstein's claims are directly relevant to the interpretation of Guillermo Rojo's account of the Spanish tense forms. He states: "The aim of this book is to elucidate the structure of the English tense system and to use it to throw light on the tense systems within natural languages more generally" (Hornstein 8).

One of the traits that Hornstein shares with many other linguists within the Chomskyan tradition is that he treats the theoretical tools used in the description of linguistic phenomena as if they were real entities, or objects of study in their own right. In other words, the representations that many of these linguists generate are not conceptually distinguishable from what they are designed to represent (Dyvik "Språk" 29). This way of dealing with formal representations is apparent in Hornstein's treatment of verb tense.

Two phenomena in particular seem to stem from such a manner of treating the formal tense models: one is the claim that the time points are linearly ordered even when they are semantically contemporaneous (*extrinsically ordered*) (Hornstein 14), and the other is the

⁶⁶ This is a typical example of the difference between *absolute* and *relative* tense, a distinction that will be discussed later on.

⁶⁷ The present perfect can be combined with temporal_{tm} adverbials which do not limit themselves to including exclusively S (the moment of utterance), as in: "I *have always liked* Spaniards", while the pluperfect can be combined with adverbials that refer to either R or E, hence the ambiguity of the sentence "At two o'clock, George *had died* at the hands of the bear."

postulation of an R point for all the tenses of the system (Hornstein 112). Hornstein's explicit reasoning for treating the formal representation of verb tenses as he does is the following: "My claim is that within the domain of tense, just as in other parts of natural language, semantic interpretation underdetermines syntactic structure" (5). In other words, in terms of explanatory adequacy, Hornstein gives a verb form's syntactic "behaviour" in context a higher priority than its intrinsic semantic content.

His rationalization for postulating extrinsic ordering of the time points is that it accounts for the way in which the tense forms combine with temporal adverbials, among other things. For English, Hornstein proposes six basic tenses, each of which has a tense structure (BTS)⁶⁸ made up of the three Reichenbachian time points. These three points appear in specific orders according to the tense, even in the cases where two or more of the points are contemporaneous (15). When these basic tenses combine with other temporal_{tm} elements in a particular context, complex derived tense structures (DTSs) arise. There are certain constraints on the derivation of complex tense structures:

Derivations of complex structures must preserve certain aspects of basic tense structure. Defining these constraints on the reordering of basic tense structures to yield complex derived tense structures (DTSs) requires the definitions in (12)-(14).

(12) X associates with Y =_{def} X is separated from Y by a comma.

(13) BTSs preserved iff

a. No points are associated in DTS that are not associated in BTS.

b. The linear order of points in DTS is the same as that in BTS.

(14) **Constraint on DTS (CDTS):** DTS must preserve BTS.

(Hornstein 15).

These rules adequately account for the unacceptability of the following sentence:

(1) *"I left *tomorrow*"

They also account for the acceptability of sentences like:

(2) "I leave *tomorrow*"

The following illustration shows how the derivation of DTSs works:

⁶⁸ BTS = basic tense structure

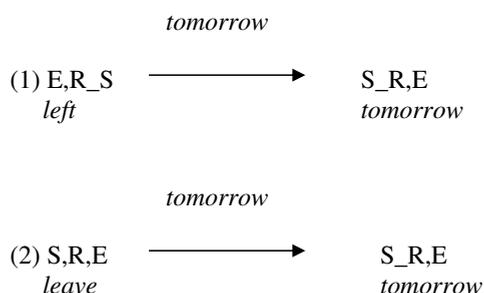


Fig. 7 Two examples of DTSSs.⁶⁹

According to these rules, sentence (1) is unacceptable because it violates requisite b, which means that it doesn't preserve BTS. Sentence (2) complies with both requisite a and b, and is acceptable. In order to effectuate these rules and derivations, however, one must assume that there are specific order relations between the points even when they are contemporaneous.

Thus, Hornstein's theory is a *strongly ordered* one: "... strongly ordered theories accept that basic tenses might have syntactic structure that does not reflect the temporal interpretation of the tense" (Hornstein 103). The view adopted in the present thesis, however, is that Hornstein does not convincingly show that extrinsic ordering is a trait of the verb tenses *per se*, despite the fact that it adequately accounts for the possible combinations of tense forms and adverbials. This view will be argued in detail subsequently, in connection with the rejection of an R point for all tenses.

Hornstein's account of the R point is the second and last phenomenon which will be scrutinized in this section. According to the theories exposed in the previous passages, the R point seems to have two main functions: a) it has an *internal* function within at least some of the tense configurations, where it mediates the relationship between S and E, and b) it has an *external* function, and signals how other temporal_{tm} elements in the context might combine with the individual tense.

Hornstein argues for the R point, as he does for the extrinsic ordering of the points, that it is present even when it is not required for the semantic interpretation of the tense form: "The R point is not merely introduced to facilitate the interpretation of complex tenses; rather, it is one term in a syntactic relation that obtains even when not semantically visible" (13). He

⁶⁹ S,R,E = present, E,R,S = past, S,R,E = future (Hornstein 15). These three are all BTSs.

presents three reasons for postulating an R point, all of which pertain to its external function as a marker for the tense form's combinatory potentials (90-91). The first of these three also includes a comment about the R point's internal function, but only for the past perfect *had left* (E_R_S) and the future perfect *will have left* (S_E_R) (90).

Inevitably, the inclusion of an R point for all tenses has an effect upon the relation between the three time points internally within each tense. That is to say, if you are to include this point in all the formulae, even if it is for syntactic purposes, you have to collocate it relative to the other two points, and determine how it relates to them. Consequently, Hornstein claims that ". . . S and E are not directly related to one another. Any relationship that obtains between the two points holds in virtue of SR and RE relations that obtain independently" (109). This statement, however, seems to obliterate the fundamental distinction between absolute tense and relative tense, or, in Comrie's terms, absolute vs. absolute-relative tense: for absolute tense, ". . . a situation is located at, before, or after the present moment . . ." (Comrie Tense 64); whereas ". . . the . . . absolute-relative tenses are determined by a reference point being before or after the present moment, and by the situation being located before or after that reference point" (Comrie Tense 65). As mentioned previously, this observation, amongst other things, causes Comrie to propose that the R point be removed from the formulae where it overlaps with E or S. He elaborates: "A reference point coinciding with the present moment simply gives absolute time reference, not absolute-relative time reference; a situation being located at a reference point in the past or future is likewise not distinguishable in terms of time location from absolute time reference" (Tense 65). In other words, the R point has no linguistic or conceptual referent within the temporal structure of an isolated tense form, unless it is separate from S or E. It is intuitively uncomfortable to prohibit a direct relation between S and E for the simple past, present, and future (both for English and for Spanish), a manoeuvre that ultimately grants the R point the same function within the absolute tenses as it has for the absolute-relative tenses, i.e. the measuring of the relation between E and S. For these reasons, the view adopted in this thesis is that the R point must be eliminated from the Reichenbachian tense configurations when it overlaps with E or S.

But what of the R point's external function? In my view, for the tenses in whose structure this point overlaps with E or S, it should be perceived as a mere linguistic tool for the description of the form's syntactic behaviour, and not an intrinsic feature of the tense itself. The same can be said of the extrinsic ordering of the points. Indeed, as Comrie points out: ". . . X,Y and Y,X may be treated as equivalent . . ." ("On Reichenbach's" 26). Thus, these are examples of how Hornstein treats linguistic representations as if they were objects

of study in their own right, present independently of a linguist's definition of them. His contention is that the R point *exists* within the structure of each tense: "It is a principle of universal grammar that an R point exists even when its presence has no interpretive reflex" (Hornstein 112). He argues that a child that is learning a language assumes that every tense has an R point (112). He has the same view of extrinsic ordering: "I will assume that tenses are ordered linearly as well as interpretively" (14).

There is a certain circularity in Hornstein's argumentation. That is to say, he proposes the existence of an R point on the basis of observations of a verb form's syntactic behaviour, and goes on to postulating that this R point is intrinsic to the tense as such. Then, instead of searching for confirmation of the presence of this point *within* the semantic structure of the tense, he looks for it, and inevitably finds it, by way of testing it against the very structures that caused him to tentatively postulate it in the first place. He tests the existence of extrinsic ordering in the same manner. This procedure will, most likely, lead to a confirmation of one's hypothesis. It is a kind of tautology, and cannot possibly lead to a valid confirmation of the existence of an entity.

In conclusion, the present analysis starts from the idea that the tense structures as such are not extrinsically ordered, and that only the absolute-relative tenses include an R point.⁷⁰ If an R point is to be defined for a tense where it overlaps with E or S, it is to be understood as a mere linguistic tool for describing the verb form's interaction with contextual elements. One way of distinguishing the linguistic tool from the R point which is required for the temporal interpretation of a tense, is by symbolizing the latter in the traditional fashion: R, and the former thus: *r*. The same is true of the extrinsic ordering of the three points, i.e. it must be understood as a linguistic tool. The linguistic tool *r* always coincides with the R point when one is present; otherwise, it is associated with either E or S. It is only a tool, as opposed to an element with intrinsic semantic significance, because it is not required to account for the relations between the other points in the tense structure. Again, it is imperative to distinguish between the information that is provided by the context, and the information with which the tense form itself contributes. This point will be elaborated further in the section where Rojo's theory is examined. For the absolute-relative tenses, it is the internal function of the R point that justifies its identification, though its external function, *r*, (as well as its internal position within the tense structure) can be identified by way of a corpus study, where the tense form's interaction with other temporal_{tm} elements is registered and analyzed.

⁷⁰ *Relative tenses*, as defined by Comrie, also include an R point, but these 'tenses' correspond to the non-finite forms of the verbs, and as such they are not relevant to the present study.

4.1.2 Aspect

4.1.2.1 Why is it problematic to define aspect?

It appears that a general description of the category of aspect is somewhat less straightforward than what is the case for tense. M. Rafael Salaberry points to one possible reason for this state of affairs: "Tense has been studied for over two and a half centuries, whereas the modern concept of aspect has only recently been established since the 1930s . . ." (14). Binnick elaborates: "Just as an understanding of tense requires the more sophisticated structural and semantic tools of modern linguistics, and could not adequately be undertaken before the present century, given the naive view of language held, it is plain that informal consideration of aspect can only delineate the problems" (214). He concludes: "No complete aspectual description of any language exists. Nor does current aspectological theory provide an adequate theoretical base for such description" (213).

What's more, it seems that the historical factor is not the only one that contributes to the apparent lack of unity and consensus on the subject of the categorization of aspect. Firstly, aspectual distinctions are not to be understood as descriptions of an event's *objective* temporal_{tm} configuration. The aspectual distinctions reflect how the speaker wishes to present the event or situation in question. In other words, a speaker can choose to present one and the same situation in different manners, depending on what he wishes to communicate. For example, a Spaniard who simply wants to convey the idea that he lived in Madrid at one time, might say, "*Viví en Madrid durante tres años*". But the same Spaniard, speaking of the same state of affairs, might wish to describe this situation in its course, perhaps as a background for other intervening events: "*Yo vivía en Madrid cuando mi padre se enfermó*". This relatively subjective nature of aspect might be one of the obstacles for identifying a specific semantic content for this category. In other words, it is less of a challenge to define the semantic content for a category that can be paralleled to something that is conceptually objective, such as the order relation between points in time, than it is to define one for a category that ultimately describes a speaker's specific perspective or attitude towards the temporal_{tm} contour of an event. Consequently, and as I have mentioned, aspectual oppositions, like the points in the tense configurations, may be viewed as *abstractions*, as they are not to be understood as descriptions of an event's objective temporal_{tm} contour.

Secondly, by all accounts, the delimitation of aspectual categories is more language-dependent than that of tense categories. Chatterjee states: ". . . neither the semantics nor the morphology and syntax of aspect seem to transport well from one language to another" (148).

There seems to be great disparity between languages as to the manner in which aspectual oppositions are expressed. This state of affairs results in a rather disorderly overview of the general characteristics of the category of aspect proposed by different linguists. But is it possible to extract something universal from all the different proposals, and if it is, is this common trait specific enough to have any real applicability? It will be argued in the following sections that it is indeed possible to extract some common notion of the category of aspect from the various proposals put forth by different linguists, and that this notion is precise enough to be useful for the analysis of aspectual oppositions in different languages. However, there are many factors that must be taken into account if one is to accomplish this. Chatterjee points to one dilemma:

The linguist's dilemma is that either his category is notional and the search for its expression in a progressively larger group of languages affects his description of those languages, or he concentrates on the specificities of each language and loses his notional category. Only a precarious balance between these two enables any dialogue at all cross-linguistic categories (336-37).

Finally, one might ask oneself what the nature of a category such as aspect is, if it is not for its position in a system of oppositions. In this connection, Chatterjee points to Saussure's notion of a category: "When [categories] are said to correspond to concepts, it is understood that the concepts are purely differential and defined not by their positive content but negatively in their relations with the other terms of the system. Their most precise characteristic is being what the others are not" (337). In other words, aspect is quite straightforwardly defined when we contrast it to the category of tense, as was done in section 4.1. Both categories are concerned with time, one is deictic, the other one is not; one does not concern itself with a situation's internal temporal_{tm} composition, the other one does. While the present thesis takes Saussure's idea of negatively defining linguistic categories as a valid and useful one, for the notion of aspect, it is not entirely uncomplicated to define it simply as what the other members of the system are not. As will be shown, it is not always clear what the other members of the system are, or where the boundaries between them are to be drawn. Chatterjee states: ". . . a semantic or grammatical category is only one in relation to other 'neighbouring' categories, yet we have not yet succeeded in isolating or defining a tense/aspect category . . . in most studied languages" (337).

4.1.2.2 Defining aspect

The most common understanding of the significance of aspect is perhaps also the vaguest one. Comrie states it quite plainly: ". . . aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation" (Aspect 3). Quite a few linguists (some of which have already been mentioned in section 4.1) propose different variants of this definition, each with their own elaboration of it. Coseriu presents Jakobson's definition: "Jakobson considera el aspecto exclusivamente como una cuantificación de la acción comunicada . . . Según Jakobson, es la categoría que señala la acción llevada hasta el fin, esto es, como conclusa o inconclusa"⁷¹ (82). Johnson defines verb aspect thus:

I propose to use this term with the following semantically based definition: Verb aspect involves reference to one of the temporally distinct phases in the evolution of an event through time. The key point here is that an event is said to evolve through a series of temporal 'phases'. One of these temporal phases is the actual time of the event itself, inclusive of its end-point (152).

However, Johnson specifies that his definition differs somewhat from Comrie's:

The essential difference between [Comrie's definition] and my own is that, according to Comrie, aspect only involves times that are INTERNAL to an event . . . my definition involves the idea of temporally distinct PHASES of an event, which are to be understood broadly as encompassing the whole sequence of an event's evolution through time (152).

He elaborates: ". . . [an event] lasts until the latest time that the event continues to affect the shape of later events" (152). But how do we delimit an event, or even determine what it is, if it is presumed to last until whatever time it might still have an effect upon other events? An event might then theoretically last eternally. It is essential to distinguish between an event in itself, and the effects it has upon subsequent situations. This is a distinction that Johnson himself implicitly makes as he differentiates between times that are INTERNAL to an event and times that are external to it. Thus in a sense, he is contradicting himself. Johnson's specifications might be an attempt at modifying the definition of *aspect* so as to accommodate the English present perfect, which is said to denote an event that continues to have present relevance. However, for the reasons presented here, this should not strictly speaking be viewed as an aspectual distinction. Binnick alludes to this idea: "Comrie, among others . . .

⁷¹ **Translation:** "Jakobson views aspect exclusively as the quantification of the communicated action . . . According to Jakobson, it is the category which signals the action brought to its end, that is, as terminated or not terminated."

points out that - unlike aspects, which represent 'the internal temporal constitution of a situation' - the perfect 'relates some situation to a preceding situation'⁷² (64). The present thesis starts from the notion that aspectual distinctions concern times that are internal to an event or situation.

Some linguists propose the use of more tangible criteria for identifying the aspectual content of verbs, and in fact make use of the Reichenbachian time points in their explanations. Binnick quotes Johnson: ". . . aspectual distinctions 'involve relations between episode-time and reference-time' . . ." (209). He clarifies: "One of the advantages of a neo-Reichenbachian approach, in which his analysis of the various tenses⁷³ are factored out into separate tense (R, S) and aspect (E, R) relations . . . is that it allows simple definitions of possible tense and possible aspect . . ." (Binnick 268). Be that as it may, it seems that these linguists' search for an adequate formal description of aspect might have caused them to oversimplify the category somewhat.

The first problem that arises is that such a definition of aspect would require *all* tenses to include an R point, an approach that has already been rejected in a previous section here.

Secondly, the kind of relation that is portrayed between E and R is not the kind that is normally understood by an aspectual relation. In other words, "the relationship of a predicate⁷⁴ to the time interval over which it occurs" (Binnick 211) usually indicates that an event might for example be imperfect at an interval, or it may be perfected, or it may be iterated or progressive etc. The relations described by Binnick, on the other hand, are not distinguishable from tense relations, i.e. they are simple order relations between time points. He presents only three possible aspects, the labelling of which reveals the blurring of the distinction between temporal_{ts} and aspectual relations: ". . . the three possible aspects are E<R (perfect or anterior), E=R (imperfect), and E>R (prospective or posterior)"⁷⁵ (268). For consistency's sake, Binnick might have labelled the E=R relation 'imperfect or simultaneous'. Thus, Binnick seems to conflate the aspectual relations *perfect*⁷⁶, *imperfect*, and *progressive*

⁷² The perfect will be studied in detail later on, in connection with the analysis of the Spanish form *he cantado*.

⁷³ Binnick uses the term *tense* here to indicate a form with both temporal_{ts} and aspectual distinctions. This is a common practice. Comrie offers a possible explanation for this: "The fusion of the morphological markers of aspect and other categories in such forms as the Aorist and Imperfect of the Indo-European languages, together with the restriction of this particular aspectual opposition, in most cases, to the past tense, may explain why forms which are differentiated aspectually . . . are traditionally referred to as tenses . . ." (1976: 97).

⁷⁴ Strictly speaking, one cannot claim that it is the *predicate* that occurs over a time interval, so one might suggest that this word be replaced with *event* or *situation* in this quotation.

⁷⁵ He labels the three tense relations *past* (R<S), *present* (R=S), and *future* (R>S).

⁷⁶ For argument's sake, we shall accept the idea that *perfect* is an aspectual category here, although we have argued previously that it cannot be so. The main point is that Binnick includes strictly temporal_{ts} terms and relations in what he explicitly labels aspectual relations.

with the temporal_{ts} relations *anterior*, (*simultaneous*), and *posterior*. The amalgamation of these relations might stem from a view that one relation entails the other, i.e. that for example the perfect entails anteriority. However, there is not always a mutual relationship of implication between these relations, and even if there were, that would not justify the conflation of the two types of relation into one (in order for a relation to entail another, the two must be distinguishable). The tense structure of the pluperfect exemplifies a kind of relation where anterior does not necessarily entail perfect. The following structure: E_R_S (or E<R, R<S, in Binnick's terms) indicates that the event is anterior to a point that is anterior to the moment of speech, as in "At noon, I *had* already *eaten*". In this case, the pluperfect might be interpreted as a "backshift" of the present perfect, where the event continues to have relevance at R (noon). However, that is not an obligatory interpretation of the pluperfect, which might also be used for example with an imperfect event: "Mary *had danced* all night". In other words, the aspectual interpretation of the pluperfect (and by extension, of any tense), is not given by the order relation between the time points, as this simply illustrates the temporal_{ts} configuration of the tense.

The relation between the three points in connection with aspect will be explored further in the chapter that treats Rojo's description of the Spanish verb tenses.

Aspect, as it is understood in this thesis, has to do with the internal temporal_{tm} constituency of an event or situation. However, this definition is rather broad, and there are still quite a few problems to be solved.

4.1.2.2.1 Aspect as a grammatical category

Since the present thesis is concerned with the aspectual (and temporal_{ts}) distinctions of the verbs of the Spanish tense system, it might seem fruitful to delimit the category of aspect by restricting it to oppositions expressed by the grammatical morphemes of verb forms. This is also an efficient way of distinguishing aspect from other semantic categories which are semantically similar to it, but not identical. One major drawback with this way of defining aspect is that it is highly language-specific, and consequently, the aspectual categories identified might not be universal, and it may become difficult to compare them across languages. Binnick remarks: ". . . [aspectual] distinctions can be defined in either morphological or semantic terms. For a universal theory obviously the latter is crucial, for otherwise it would be impossible to compare aspects across languages or to define aspects other than in a language-specific way" (144). In view of this fact, I will also discuss whether a semantic definition of aspect is feasible. Some sort of semantic definition will be required in

any event, since it must be made clear what kind of semantic opposition the morphemes in question express.

The preliminary definition of aspect as a distinction that has to do with the internal temporal composition of an event is so vague that it includes in its scope other categories such as *Aristotelian aspect*⁷⁷, and the more notable *Aktionsart*. Indeed, many linguists disagree on where to draw the line between these categories, and offer various criteria for distinguishing between them. Comrie presents two alternative ways of discriminating between aspect and *aktionsart*, the first of which, presented here, is the most relevant one for the present concerns:

In addition to the term 'aspect', some linguists also make use of the term 'aktionsart' . . . : this is a German word meaning 'kinds of action', and although there have been numerous attempts to coin an English equivalent, none of these have become generally accepted. The distinction between aspect and *aktionsart* is drawn in at least . . . two quite different ways. The first distinction is between aspect as grammaticalisation of the relevant semantic distinctions, while *aktionsart* represents lexicalisation of the distinctions irrespective of how these distinctions are lexicalised . . . (Aspect 6-7).

This definition will be used as a basis for the singling out of the aspectual properties of the Spanish verb forms in the present thesis. The second definition that Comrie alludes to is one that is used by Slavists, and is not directly relevant for our present concerns. Apart from these two specifications, Comrie explicitly avoids the category of *aktionsart* in his book (Aspect 7).

Bertinetto and Delfitto present a similar definition of the two categories, but replace the word *aktionsart* with *actionality*: "While the notions of temporal reference and aspect (although ultimately of a semantic nature) are primarily anchored to the inflectional specifications available in each language, actionality is essentially rooted in the lexicon. Thus, the last category normally lacks an overt morphological marking, but it may have one" (190).

Binnick suggests a third semantic category in addition to aspect and *aktionsart*, and calls it *Aristotelian aspect*: "Aspect, Aristotelian aspect, and *Aktionsarten* are distinct (albeit interactive) phenomena" (148). He explains: "The Aristotelian categories are like the *Aktionsarten* in that they are purely lexical and nongrammatical, and also unsystematic. But the categorization is obligatory, in the sense that all verbs are classified by it. It is broader

⁷⁷ This is a semantic category defined by Binnick (148), which will be presented subsequently.

than the *Aktionsarten* (though narrower than the aspects)" (171). The following table exposes the formal oppositions between the three categories, as introduced by Salaberry:

Table 1

The Formal Properties of Aspect, Aktionsart, and Aristotelian Aspect

Grammatical aspect	Aktionsart	Aristotelian Aspect
grammaticalized	lexical	lexical
systematic	unsystematic	unsystematic
obligatory	optional	obligatory
language specific	language specific	universal
overt	overt	covert

Source: M. Rafael Salaberry. The Development of Past Tense Morphology in L2 Spanish.

Studies in Bilingualism. Ed. Kees de Boot and Thom Huebner. Vol. 22. Amsterdam: John Benjamin's Publishing Company, 2001. Table 2.1.

Aspect, as it is described by Binnick and presented in this table, is grammaticized, systematic, and hence *language specific*. But is it possible that the semantic distinctions expressed by the grammatical morphemes could occur across language boundaries?

Evidently, this is not a question that can be answered by studying the aspectual oppositions of a single language, but it is possible to look for aspectual distinctions that are claimed to be universal in the grammatical morphemes of specific languages.

4.1.2.2.2 Aspect as a semantic category

In his extensive treatment of aspect (Comrie 1976), Comrie proposes universal semantic oppositions pertaining to the category of aspect:

In the present book we shall speak of semantic aspectual distinctions, such as that between perfective and imperfective meaning, irrespective of whether they are grammaticalised or lexicalised in individual languages. However the noun 'aspect' will normally, and in the plural 'aspects' always, be restricted to referring to particular grammatical categories in individual languages that correspond in content to the semantic aspectual distinctions drawn (Aspect 6-7).

The major problem with availing oneself of purely semantic criteria for the establishment of a category of aspect is how to delimit the diversity and multiplicity of possible aspectual distinctions. Linguists differ considerably as to the amount of semantic oppositions they include in this category. Carlson offers one criterion for delimiting the

category which is fairly broad and basic: ". . . I want to exclude from aspect proper any morphological modifications of verbs that perform no operation at all in the temporal domain. One may imagine, for example, a marker of intentionality, forcefulness, or the like" (32). In other words, aspectual oppositions must be of a temporal_{tm} character, a criterion which has been indicated in previous chapters here. However, there exists a massive amount of temporal_{tm} distinctions that are expressed linguistically, and not all of them are aspectual. The various attempts at distinguishing temporal_{tm} distinctions that are aspectual from those that are not have resulted in a rather disorderly panorama of aspectual categories. In spite of this, one semantic opposition appears to be a constant throughout. This opposition is most commonly referred to as the *perfective/imperfective* distinction. Dahl states: "The most common inflectional tense-aspect gram types⁷⁸ in the world's languages are imperfective, perfective, past and future" (14). Bertinetto and Delfitto claim that the mentioned opposition is typical of aspect: "*Aspect*: the specific perspective adopted by the speaker/writer. Typically, the event may be considered from a 'global' or a 'partial' point of view. This is the basis for the distinction between 'perfective' and 'imperfective' aspects" (190). Kensington alludes to a parallel opposition that he labels *integrative vs. fractionative*:

There are two possible attitudes which a speaker may assume toward a given action or state (or aspect of an action or state): (1) the action or state may be regarded as a whole; this attitude we shall call 'integrative'; (2) the action or state may be regarded as a series of parts; this attitude we shall call 'fractionative' (164).

The perfective/imperfective opposition is so central that some linguists even include it in their very definition of what aspect is. Hedin defines aspect thus: "The functional description of aspect proposed in this paper is based on the view that the Imperfective and the Perfective represent two ways to refer to situations" (228). According to Coseriu, Jakobson defines it like this: "Jakobson considera el aspecto exclusivamente como una cuantificación de la acción comunicada . . . Según Jakobson, es la categoría que señala la acción llevada hasta el fin, esto es, como conclusa o inconclusa"⁷⁹ (Coseriu 82). MacLennan offers a similar definition of aspect: "El aspecto del verbo, según la acepción más general, es la expresión de la acción en cuanto terminada o en progreso"⁸⁰ (18). In view of the fact that the *perfective/imperfective*

⁷⁸ The term *gram type* will be explained later on.

⁷⁹ **Translation:** "Jakobson views aspect exclusively as the quantification of the communicated action . . . According to Jakobson, it is the category which signals the action brought to its end, that is, as terminated or not terminated."

⁸⁰ **Translation:** "The verb's aspect, according to the most general meaning, is the expression of the action as terminated or in progress."

distinction, practically without exception, is included in treatments of aspect, this distinction will be the focal point of attention in the present chapter.

The attentive reader might have noticed that the distinctions that are claimed to be parallels of the perfective/imperfective distinction here are not all truly semantic equivalents, i.e. not all of them mean the same thing. This state of affairs is a faithful reflection of the epistemological reality of the perfective/imperfective opposition. Bertinetto and Delfitto state:

One reason for the frequent difficulty of communication between scholars active in this field [aspectology] lies in the fact that some of the terms most commonly used may mean quite different things, sometimes even in the writings of one and the same scholar. The most obvious example . . . is provided by the pair 'perfective/imperfective' (192).

Dahl presents a list of terms, (including perfective and imperfective), that on occasion are used alternately, and sometimes loosely, to refer to the same, or similar, oppositions. When the terms are associated with a specific author, Dahl offers the name in brackets:

Table 2

Terms Frequently Associated with the Perfective/Imperfective Opposition

A	B
energeia	kinesis (Aristotle)
imperfective	perfective
cursive	terminative
irresultative	resultative
durative	nondurative
nonpunctual	punctual
nonconclusive	conclusive
nontransformative	transformative
noncyclic	cyclic (Bull, 1963)
atelic	telic (Garey, 1957)
nonbounded	bounded (Allen, 1963)
activity	accomplishment (Vendler, 1967)
activity	performance (Kenny, 1963)
nepredel'nyj	predel'nyj [Russian]
nicht-grenzbezogen	grenzbezogen [German]

Source: Östen Dahl. "On the Definition of the Telic-Atelic (Bounded-Nonbounded)

Distinction." *Tense and Aspect*. Eds. Philip Tedeschi and Annie Zaenen. Syntax and Semantics 14. New York: Academia Press, 1981. 80.

Arguably, some of the semantic distinctions on the list are not aspectual distinctions at all, and some of these may, on a language-specific level, be derived as an interpretation when a linguistic unit with a certain aspectual meaning is combined with specific lexical roots or contextual elements. Others yet may ultimately be analyzed as subcategories of the perfective or the imperfective, and finally, some have been offered explicitly as definitions of the

perfective and imperfective. The present thesis will concentrate mainly on the oppositions that can be claimed to be aspectual⁸¹, although some of the non-aspectual oppositions may be touched upon in the argumentation. How these distinctions do, or do not manifest themselves linguistically will be reviewed in detail in the analysis of the corpus evidence. At the end of this section, I will propose a tentative definition of the perfective and the imperfective, and indicate what constitutes an aspectual distinction vs. what does not.

Initially, and for reasons that will be presented subsequently, the present thesis takes Comrie's definition of the opposition between the *perfective* and the *imperfective* as the most adequate one: ". . . perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; while the imperfective pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation"⁸² (Aspect 16).

It is necessary to scrutinize further what is meant by these definitions, and why they typically are confused with other semantic distinctions.

Let us start with the notion of perfectivity. Kensington explains what is meant by viewing a situation as a single whole: "We may look upon the action or state as a complete whole, considering our subject by a process of memory, reflectively, rationally, summing up its elements into an inherent or arbitrary unity" (165). Comrie offers a similar explanation: ". . . we may consider the view that the perfective represents the action pure and simple, without any additional overtones" (Aspect 21). Hence, it seems that the perfective aspect is used when an event or situation is presented as a simple fact, and where the manner of its execution is irrelevant. In Spanish, the perfective past is expressed by the so-called *pretérito indefinido*. Thus, with the following statement: "Y *tuve* que trabajar tanto para encontrar hasta el último documento, que eso me *sirvió* de lección"⁸³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 19), the informant simply presents the facts that she had had to work hard, and that that fact had been a lesson to her. These events' manner of development through time is irrelevant, and is consequently not linguistically addressed. Comrie offers a further elaboration of the definition of the perfective: ". . . perfectivity involves lack of explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation, rather than explicitly implying the lack of such internal temporal constituency" (Aspect 21). The linguists who, like the present thesis, adhere to this definition of the

⁸¹ The criteria for defining this will be discussed subsequently.

⁸² At first glance, it might seem problematic that the definition of *aspect* is almost identical to that of *imperfective aspect*; they are both distinguished by attention to the *internal temporal composition* of an event or situation. However, in the first case, *internal composition* is taken to mean "not indicating temporal relation to other time points", while in the second case this expression is taken to mean "as opposed to presenting an event as a single, terminated whole, or specifically disregarding the situation's internal temporal composition".

⁸³ **Gloss:** "And I *had* [simple past perfective] to work so hard to find every single document, and that *became* [simple past perfective] a lesson to me."

perfective do not offer subsequent semantic subdivisions of the category, probably because one would be hard-pressed to find different ways of "lacking explicit reference to the internal temporal constituency of a situation". Alternative definitions of perfectivity have been proposed however, and these will be presented and discussed later on.

The imperfective aspect, as opposed to the perfective, is frequently subdivided into more specified semantic distinctions. This is most likely due to the very fact that it signals explicit reference to the internal composition of an event or situation. In other words, it would be unnecessary to explicitly describe an event's temporal_{tm} configuration if there were only one kind of configuration.

Comrie presents the most traditional subdivision of the imperfect, namely that between habituality and continuousness: ". . . one is told that the imperfective form expresses either a habitual situation or a situation viewed in its duration . . ." (Aspect 26). Thus, an informant conveys that the situation is habitual when she states: "Vamos a ver cómo *funcionaba* la hacienda en la época colonial . . ." ⁸⁴ (Gutiérrez Marrone 79), and she conveys a situation viewed in its duration when she says: "Cuando llegué no *había* nadie en el aeropuerto." ⁸⁵ (Gutiérrez Marrone 170). Comrie himself rejects this subdivision on the basis of how these distinctions generally are expressed in different languages:

This approach, unlike that adopted in the present book, fails to recognise that these various subdivisions do in fact join together to form a single unified concept, as is suggested by the large number of languages that have a single category to express imperfectivity as a whole, irrespective of such subdivisions as habituality and continuousness (Aspect 26).

From the examples presented above, we can observe that Spanish is one of the languages that have a single category to express both habituality and continuousness. Consequently, it might seem appropriate to state that the "imperfecto" of the Spanish language conveys one single unified concept of "reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation". Traditionally, however, linguists describing the Spanish language specify not only habituality and continuousness, but also various additional sub-categories for the "imperfecto". Whether or not this is justified will be determined on the basis of the analysis of the corpus data. For now it seems the most appropriate approach is to state that a universal, language-independent category of imperfectivity simply expresses that there is explicit

⁸⁴ **Gloss:** "Let us see how the hacienda *functioned* [past imp.] in the colonial age."

⁸⁵ **Gloss:** "When I arrived [simple past perfective], there *were* [past imp.] nobody at the airport."

reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation. Any subsequent subdivisions of the category should be left to language-specific analyses.

Before I go on to discussing different terms that the perfective and imperfective traditionally have been confused with, I shall present a formal approach to the definition of the dichotomy at hand.

The approach is Marion Johnson's, which avails itself of the Reichenbachian time points to express aspectual content. According to Johnson, "three principal categories of verb aspect form have been identified in various languages" (153). As previously mentioned, Johnson includes the perfect among the aspectual categories, but this is a category that will be disregarded in the present section. The two other aspect categories that Johnson defines are *completive aspect* (i.e. perfective aspect as understood here) and *imperfect aspect*: ". . . completive aspect [allows for reference] to the time of the whole event itself; imperfect aspects [allows for reference] to times in the developmental phase which are prior to the end of the event . . ." (154). She proposes the following formal representations of the two aspects at hand: "Completive: $R = E$, Imperfect: For some t in E , $R (<) \{t\}$ (De Kock "Pretéritos")⁸⁶" (154). Both of these renditions are inadequate, for the following reasons.

For the completive aspect, there are two main motives for stating that its representation is deficient. Firstly, if we accept the necessity of an R point for the description of this aspect, i.e. the one that views the event as a whole, we would expect a rendition that does not allow for a portion of E to be posterior to R, and vice versa. That is to say, there must be 100% overlap between E and R. Indeed, this seems to be the interpretation that is intended by Johnson. However, the symbol she uses to indicate this relation is the same one that she uses to indicate the temporal_{ts} relation of simultaneity: "The function of a tense category is to locate the position of the speaker's reference time, by relating it to the position of the time of speaking" (151). She offers the following rendition of the present tense: $R = S$ (151). The temporal_{ts} relation of simultaneity however, does not stipulate to what degree the two intervals overlap, i.e. they may or may not be completely coincident. The $R = E$ relation on the other hand, does not simply define the order relation between R and E as simultaneous, but states that the beginning and end of the two time intervals coincide. Therefore, this symbol: " $=$ " is inadequate for the description of this relation. Again, Johnson seems to conflate aspectual and temporal_{ts} notions.

⁸⁶ The reason why Johnson puts t between curly brackets is that she defines time in a standard set-theoretic way (149), where $\{t\}$ is to be understood as a singleton, i.e. as a set with only one member. In this case $\{t\}$ is an interval, a set of times with only one member, one time point. The main point for our present concerns, however, is that the imperfect expresses that there is a time point in E which is posterior to R.

Secondly, it can be argued with considerable plausibility that the identification of an R point is unnecessary and indeed erroneous for the definition of the completive aspect (or any aspect category for that matter). According to Johnson, ". . . in an aspect category, reference time is the point of view from which the situation at event time is considered . . ." (148). If this is indeed the definition of the R point, this relation: $R = E$ cannot possibly signal completive aspect. At the moment in time that is R, i.e. the moment at which E is considered, E is by necessity *imperfect*. It is only in retrospect that we can decide to regard it as completive. Thus the stipulation of an R point, and E's relation to it, is unnecessary and erroneous for the definition of an event as completive. This is why the completive aspect is incompatible with the present tense, because an event can only be viewed as a whole, i.e. as a time with a beginning and an end, if it is terminated. Kensington points to the same fact: "In the present (present time), [the 'integrative' attitude] is impossible" (164). In other words, at the moment that we observe an event unfolding, the event can never be completive or terminated.

For the imperfect aspect, Johnson proposes the following representation: For some t in E , $R (<) \{t\}$ (154). This translates roughly to: "For some time t in E, R precedes t ", in other words: "The imperfect involves reference to an event that goes beyond the speaker's reference point" (Johnson 155). Again, if we are to accept that the rendition of the imperfect aspect requires the specification of an R point, it seems that the formula needs a small modification. The imperfect aspect disregards not only the end-point of an event; it also does not indicate or include the event's starting point. Thus, if a rendition such as the one above is to be applied, it might look something like this: For some t_i, t_j in E , $R (<) \{t_i\} \& R (>) \{t_j\}$. This representation is consistent with one traditional view of the imperfective. Kensington explains: "It serves to expand our consideration of a particular action or state into the periods immediately preceding and following the moment of observation" (171). Thus, at this juncture it seems that we have two different yet related definitions of the imperfective aspect: a) explicit reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation, and b) it involves periods immediately preceding and following the moment of observation. Definition a) does not require the identification of an R point, while definition b) does. So which of the two definitions is the basic one? A linguist that states that it is b) must find further justification for the existence of an R point, that is, evidence for the explicit presence of a moment of observation for the imperfect aspect, regardless of its being past or present. If a form in the imperfective aspect necessarily indicates an R point, one would expect there to be a time point that corresponds to it in at least the majority of contexts in which such a form is used. For the

past imperfect of Spanish, for example, this does not seem to be the case. A past vantage point simultaneous to which the event transpires is not required: "Enrique bailaba toda la noche"⁸⁷ does not necessarily entail "Vi que Enrique bailaba toda la noche"⁸⁸. Furthermore, as I have argued previously, the R point is certainly not required for the temporal_{ts} collocation of E respective of S for the absolute tenses, even when they are imperfective: The E is simultaneous to S in the present tense and anterior to it in the past tense. The R point is also not required to account for definition a) above. This seems to indicate that this definition is the most adequate one for the imperfective, otherwise one would have to include an R point for absolute tenses that are imperfective, but not for those that are perfective, rendering the system inconsistent. What definitions a) and b) have in common is that they state nothing about a situation's starting-point or end-point. This is an entailment of referring to the *internal* temporal contour of an event, which is maintained here as the essence of the imperfect aspect. Consequently, Johnson's formal renditions of the completive and imperfect aspects are rejected.

As I have already mentioned, the terms *imperfective* and *perfective* have been replaced with numerous other terms on different occasions. In the present section I will review some of the most important ones, leaving a more detailed scrutiny of several other terms that have been proposed specifically for the Spanish tense forms to the analysis of the corpus data.

Bertinetto and Delfitto, having commented on the opaque nature of the terms *perfective* and *imperfective*, propose to replace the two terms mentioned in the aspectual domain, and instead let them be cover terms both in the aspectual and in the aktionsart-domain (192). For the aspectual domain, they want to replace them with the terms *terminative/nonterminative*, and for lexical oppositions, *bounded/unbounded*. The suggestion mentioned will not be heeded in the present thesis for two reasons mainly.

Firstly, Bertinetto and Delfitto rely heavily upon the lexical oppositions of Slavic languages in their argumentation for replacing the aforementioned aspectual categories. Since the present thesis aims to say something primarily about tense and aspect expressed by Spanish verb forms, the terms *perfective* and *imperfective* are deemed adequate.

Secondly, the two terms that are suggested as a replacement for the traditional terms in the aspectual domain are not satisfactory. *Imperfective* is replaced with *nonterminative*, which seems to indicate that an imperfective form signals that a situation or event has not been terminated. This is erroneous. The imperfective simply refrains from stating anything about

⁸⁷ **Gloss:** "Enrique danced [past imp.] all night."

⁸⁸ **Gloss:** "I *saw* [simple past perfective] that Enrique danced [past imp.] all night."

an event's end-point, and does not specifically indicate that it has not been reached. Thus, a sentence like "Juanita *vivía* en Argentina, pero ya no vive allí"⁸⁹, where the situation expressed by the imperfect verb indeed is terminated, is perfectly acceptable in Spanish.

As for the term *terminative* as a replacement for *perfective*, Bertinetto and Delfitto declare: "For us, terminative is nothing else but a handy way to designate a "global" aspectual perspective whereby the event is viewed in its entirety" (193). While the definition of the mentioned term corresponds to the definition that is proposed here of *perfective*, the term *terminative* in itself is inadequate. Kensington explains why: ". . . I find Curme's term 'terminate' inadequate to express the notion of 'indicating a whole,' since 'terminate' inevitably suggests the terminus or end . . ." (164). In other words, although an event that is viewed in its entirety inevitably has a termination, this is not the main ingredient of its semantic interpretation. Comrie states: ". . . the use of the perfective puts no more emphasis, necessarily, on the end of a situation than on any other part of the situation, rather all parts of the situation are presented as a single whole" (Aspect 18).

Comrie points out two other terms which are frequently employed as definitions of the two terms at hand, namely *punctual* and *durative* respectively. According to Comrie, neither term is adequate. A perfective event is not necessarily punctual, because ". . . it is quite possible to have perfective forms of verbs describing situations that must inherently last for a certain period of time . . ." (Aspect 41). He does however offer a possible reason for this frequent confusion: "While it is incorrect to say that the basic function of the perfective is to represent an event as momentary or punctual, there is some truth in the view that the perfective, irrespective of its objective complexity, has the effect of reducing it to a single point" (Aspect 17-18). As for defining an imperfective event as durative, Comrie states:

We may . . . make a distinction between imperfectivity and durativity, where imperfectivity means viewing a situation with regard to its internal structure . . . and durativity simply refers to the fact that the given situation lasts for a certain period of time (or at least, is conceived of as lasting for a certain period of time) (Aspect 41).

Consequently, I propose that the following definitions be accepted as descriptions of the preliminary universal contents of the *perfective* and the *imperfective*: *Perfective*: indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; *Imperfective*: pays essential attention to the internal structure of the

⁸⁹ **Gloss:** "Juanita lived/used to live [past imp.] in Argentina, but she doesn't live there anymore."

situation. Distinctions such as *punctual*, *durative*, *terminative*, etc. are not to be understood as equivalents of the perfective or the imperfective, but rather as possible additional meanings of forms that have perfective or imperfective value.

4.1.2.2.3 Delimiting the category of aspect

As for the delimitation of a category of aspect as such, the situation is far more difficult. The main problem is whether to delimit the category on a grammatical, language-specific basis, or on a semantic, cross-linguistic basis. An ideal definition would combine both of these facets, but is such a definition at all possible? Dahl proposes a different approach to this problem by way of the identification of a pair of linguistic entities, namely the *gram* and the *gram type*:

. . . the basic units of description are not 'the category of tense' and 'the category of aspect' but rather what we call **grams**, i.e., things like Progressive in English, the Passésimple in French etc. Notions like tense, aspect, and mood are seen as ways of characterizing the semantic content of grams, or domains from which their meanings are chosen, but do not, in the typical case, represent structurally significant entities in grammatical systems (7).

He elaborates: "The term 'gram' is intended to be used on a language-specific level, that is, a gram belongs to the grammar of an individual language rather than to the general theory of human languages" (7). He goes on to defining the *gram type*, which is a cross-linguistic entity:

An important tenet of [this] approach . . . is that tense-aspect grams can crosslinguistically be classified into a relatively small set of types. In a universal theory of grammar, then, the relevant unit is the **crosslinguistic gram type**, the manifestations of which at the language-specific level is the individual gram. Such gram types should not be thought of as absolute entities - characters chosen from a universal 'gram alphabet' - but rather as the statistically most probable clusterings of properties in 'grammatical space' . . . (7).

Dahl subsequently presents a figure that defines the *imperfective*, *perfective*, *future*, and *past* as 'core gram-types' that are mainly inflectional (15). He also describes a category of 'peripheral gram-types', which are mainly periphrastic, and includes the following semantic distinctions: *resultative*, *perfect*, *habitual*, *iterative*, and *progressive*. Dahl's specifications represent a way of unifying semantic categories and grammatical expressions cross-linguistically. Thus, it seems that the aspectual distinctions that typically are expressed

inflectionally across languages, is the *perfective* and the *imperfective*. Nevertheless, we are still stuck with the problem of how to semantically delimit the aspectual distinctions which are not expressed inflectionally. Under the heading 'Aspect and inherent meaning', Comrie lists the following aspectual categories: punctual and durative, telic and atelic, and state and dynamic situation (Aspect 41-48). He does not, however, specify why it is exactly these categories that are taken into account, and not additional ones, or fewer. It may well be impossible to semantically delimit the category of aspect in an unambiguous and absolute way, but I will venture to suggest that aspectual oppositions are fewer and more underspecified than oppositions within the domain of aktionsart or Aristotelian aspect. Furthermore, they are part of a closed group of systematic oppositions, which makes them likely to be expressed by inflectional morphemes in various languages. Ultimately, however, the optimal definition of the category of aspect might by necessity be partially language-specific. As concerns the present thesis, the relevant aspectual distinctions are the ones to be found in the inflectional morphemes of the Spanish verb forms. My aim is to describe the temporal_{ts} and aspectual oppositions of the Spanish tense system, and not the way that aspect in general is expressed in Spanish. Specifically, the forms that will be scrutinized, for reasons mentioned previously, are the three past tense forms *el imperfecto* (imperfective past) "cantaba", *el indefinido* (simple past perfective) "canté", and *el pretérito perfecto compuesto* (composite past) "he cantado. Consequently, the relevant aspectual distinctions at play are most likely the perfective and the imperfective. As regards *el pretérito perfecto compuesto*, which is the formal equivalent of the present perfect, its aspectual content is so different from that of the English present perfect that the existing descriptions of the perfect aspect are all but irrelevant. Its temporal and aspectual content will be thoroughly examined in the analysis chapter.

4.2 Tense and aspect of the Spanish verb forms

In this section we shall review the theories of two linguists in particular, namely William E. Bull and Guillermo Rojo. They both describe the temporal_{ts} and/or aspectual contents of the Spanish tense system formally, by way of vector formulae. Numerous other grammarians (Alarcos Llorach; Bello; Cartagena; Coseriu; Alcina Franch and Blecua; Real Academia), offer semantic descriptions of the temporal_{ts} and aspectual contents of the Spanish verb tenses. However, these descriptions comprise for a large part assorted detailed verbal accounts of each form's temporal_{ts} and aspectual senses, and do not constitute formal, theoretical and systematic structures that are amenable to theoretical scrutiny in their own

right. Consequently, these descriptions will be reviewed in chapter 5, in connection with the analysis of the verb forms in the corpus.

The theories of Bull and Rojo will be compared and examined on a theoretical basis, but they will also be tested against corpus evidence.

4.2.1 William E. Bull

Bull's proposed formal rendition of the semantic oppositions of the tense system is to be understood as universal (Bull Time 14), and is therefore not designed to accommodate the Spanish tenses in particular. Nevertheless, in his book Time, Tense, and the Verb. A Study in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, with Particular Attention to Spanish, he applies his vector formulae to the Spanish tense system. The result is a complete formal rendition of the temporal_{ts} content of the Spanish verb forms and a sound basis for the theoretical scrutiny of this system in particular. As will be shown in section 4.2.2, it is possible to compare the basic elements of the vector formulae to the Reichenbachian time points, although, according to Binnick, "[Reichenbach's] system is assertedly a referential one, grounded in a theory of times and points in time, whereas Bull's is ideational, grounded only in the rather subjective 'point of view'" (117). The latter circumstance can easily be recognized in Bull's description of the four axes of orientation of the tense system.

The aim of the present section is not to enter into detail about the contents of the individual tense forms of Spanish; rather, I will attempt to identify which elements are redundant, and which are necessary, to give an account of the oppositions of the Spanish tense system as a whole. This approach might, however, require that some individual tenses be scrutinized for illustrative purposes.

Bull proposes to represent the three possible order relations between time points by way of vectors, such that -V symbolizes anteriority, oV simultaneity, and +V posteriority (Time 14). The axes of orientation respective of which these vectors are oriented are described as follows:

The axes of orientation which are of greatest importance to the present study are objective events which are so commonplace that, to this writer's knowledge, they have never been accurately described as the universal axes of orientation of all peoples and the prime axes of all tense systems. These are the events which take place inside human beings: the act of speaking, seeing, hearing, feeling, reacting, recalling, anticipating, and so on. (Time 7).

He elaborates: "The act of speaking is the only 'personal' event which can actually be observed and used by another person" (Time 7). This fact causes him to identify the act of speaking as the prime point of orientation for all tense systems (Time 8). He does, however, identify three additional axes of orientation. Of the resulting four axes, the first two are considered as prime (Time 23): PP (prime point): ". . . any act of observation, the actual experiencing of any event . . ." (Time 17), RP (retrospective point): "[PP] has moved backwards in time . . . it can be recalled as a retrospective axis of orientation" (Time 21), AP (anticipated point) (Spanish 155), and RAP (retrospective anticipated point) (Spanish 155). He elaborates the significance of the two last axes thus: "These two . . . do not stand for actual events performed by the speaker. AP and RAP are projected from PP and RP respectively" (Time 23). Thus, the mentioned axes are placed relative to each other in the following fixed order: RP is anterior to PP, RAP is posterior to RP, and AP is posterior to PP (Time 72). Bull alludes to the fact that there actually exists an infinite number of possible axes of orientation (Time 23), but states: "There is an exceedingly high probability, however, that the number rarely, if ever, exceeds four" (Time 23). Thus, every verb tense is composed of one of the four axes combined with one of the three vectors. The following four Spanish tenses each exemplify a vector formula with one of the four axes: *vendemos* ("we sell"): E(PPoV), *vendimos* ("we sold"): E(RPoV), *habremos vendido* ("we will have sold"): E(AP-V), and *habríamos vendido* ("we would have sold") E(RAP-V) (Time 42).⁹⁰

These formulae symbolize exclusively order relations; hence, they are not designed to accommodate aspect. This does not mean that Bull rejects that aspectual oppositions are distinctive of the Spanish verb tenses: "The fact that the tense forms are concerned with both aspect and order creates a situation in which only one logical solution of the terminological problem is possible. Both features have to be described" (Time 42-43). The specific aspectual oppositions added to the formulae will be reviewed in connection with the corpus data. The main point at this juncture is that some of the tenses of the Spanish system as presented by Bull cannot be differentiated solely on the basis of the vector formulae:

<i>vendemos</i> (we sell)	PPoV
<i>hemos vendido</i> (we have sold)	PP-V
<i>venderemos</i> (we will sell)	PP+V
<i>habremos vendido</i> (we will have sold)	AP-V
<i>vendíamos</i> (we sold)	RPoV

⁹⁰ E symbolizes the event, which is the equivalent of the lexical root of the verb (Bull Time 23).

<i>vendimos</i> (we sold)	RPoV
<i>habíamos vendido</i> (we had sold)	RP-V
<i>venderíamos</i> (we would sell)	RP+V
<i>habríamos vendido</i> (we would have sold)	RAP-V

(Bull Spanish 156).

As we can see, the two tense forms *vendíamos* and *vendimos* cannot be distinguished solely on the basis of the vector formulae, hence another category (most likely *aspect*) is required to account for the difference in meaning between these two tense forms.

The present thesis rejects the idea of a tense system for Spanish that operates with four separate axes of orientation. There are four main reasons for this.

Firstly, Bull makes extensive use of arguments that are based upon the morphological composition of the verb forms as he posits the elements of the vector formulae. But, contrary to what Bull suggests, some of these arguments seem to support the idea of positing only PP as an axis of orientation. Several times he states that all the axes, with the exception of PP, are morphologically marked (Time 27, 55). In other words, PP is the only axis that is implicitly given. This state of affairs not only distinguished PP from the other axes, but it raises the question of whether it is at all justified to recognize additional axes of orientation. That is to say, if no morphological marker is necessary to identify PP, how do we know that it isn't also the axis of orientation for the tenses that according to Bull are marked for another axis, and that these morphemes aren't markers of something else?

Secondly, if we take care to distinguish between information given by context, and the semantic content provided by the verb form in isolation, we are again forced to reject at least some of the other axes of orientation. For example, when Bull proposes this formula: E(RPoV) for the simple past perfective *canté*, he signals that the event is simultaneous with an axis of orientation in the past. However, in order to identify such an axis, we are forced to turn to the context in which the form appears. The verb form in isolation simply indicates that the event took place in the past (anterior to PP). This problem will be dealt with in detail in section 4.2.2.

Thirdly, the three axes RP, AP, and RAP all depend, directly or indirectly, on PP for their collocation. In other words, they would be semantically empty were it not for their relation to PP. This is an indication that the latter axis is present in the semantic specification of all the finite tenses, but this is a circumstance that Bull does not seem to recognize: "Meaning can be conveyed in terms of only one axis of orientation at a time." (Time 22). At the same time, he doesn't completely escape the idea that PP must somehow be present also

for the tenses that, according to him, have a different axis of orientation: ". . . RP must be anterior to PP and may, consequently, be treated as the equivalent of the minus vector." (Time 65). As a result, RP seems to have more characteristics in common with an event than with an axis of orientation.

The latter state of affairs leads us to the fourth reason for rejecting the identification of other axes of orientation than PP. At any moment in time, there is a potential for an infinite number of RPs, APs, and RAPs, but there is always only one PP. Consequently, the latter axis is conceptually different from the other three, and this is a particularity that should be formally reflected in the composition of the vector formulae. In other words, the four axes should not occupy the same hierarchical position. For these reasons, the present thesis starts from the idea that there is only *one* axis of orientation.

Bull himself alludes to another drawback of his vector system: "The prime weakness [of the aspect-vector system] is its redundancy and elaborateness." (Time 32). Specifically, this means that the description of some of the tenses requires one constituent that accounts for the temporal order of the elements (the vector formulae), and another that accounts for their aspectual content. The redundancy manifests itself in a partial overlap between the temporal_s and the aspectual spheres of the Spanish tense system: ". . . in terms of a single axis of orientation, *anterior*, *past*, and *perfected* may all describe the same order relation to the axis." (Bull Spanish 13). This problem will be reviewed in detail in chapter 4.2.2.

Guillermo Rojo's theory is an elaboration of Bull's system, and initially his propositions seem to solve the two problems that have been mentioned in this section, (four axes of orientation, and the redundancy of the aspect-vector system).

4.2.2 Guillermo Rojo

Although Rojo retains the use of vector formulae, (albeit in a modified form), for the description of the Spanish tense forms, there are various factors that manifestly distinguish his theory from that of William E. Bull. First of all, Rojo's approach to the analysis of the verb forms' semantic content is not ideational, but functionalist. As we have seen, he insists upon a *tiempo lingüístico*, distinguishable from physical time, a distinction which, according to Rojo and Veiga, is crucial for the comprehension of the *functionality* of the verb forms (2872). Furthermore, they recognize only one axis of orientation, the definition of which is not based upon "events that take place inside human beings", but, initially, on the speech act (2873). One of the most significant revisions that Rojo introduces to the description of the Spanish verb tenses, however, is the idea that aspectual oppositions do not form part of their

distinctive semantic properties: ". . . concluimos que no existe una base suficientemente sólida para individualizar esta categoría gramatical [el aspecto] respecto de la categoría temporal en el núcleo del sistema verbal español . . ."91 (2921-22).

In this section I will pinpoint how Rojo's theory solves the problems that were identified for the theory of William E. Bull. Moreover, I will compare the vector formulae with the Reichenbachian representations, and inquire as to the status of the R point in the description of the Spanish verb tenses. Furthermore, I will determine whether it is indeed justifiable to exclude the category of aspect from the distinctive properties of the Spanish verb forms. Rojo's theory will be further tested against empirical evidence in section 5.

The linguist mentioned retains the vectors for the representation of the three possible temporal relations of anteriority (-V), simultaneity (oV), and posteriority (+V). However, he solely identifies one single axis of orientation respective of which these vectors are oriented. He labels the axis *el origen*, and symbolizes it with a capital O. He defines this axis as the deictic centre of the conversation that coincides with the speech point habitually, but not obligatorily. He proposes the following vector formulae for the Spanish tenses:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| a. <i>Canté</i> | O-V |
| b. <i>Canto</i> | OoV |
| c. <i>Cantaré</i> | O+V |
| d. <i>Había cantado</i> | (O-V)-V |
| e. <i>Cantaba</i> | (O-V)oV |
| f. <i>Cantaría</i> | (O-V)+V |
| g. <i>He cantado</i> | (OoV)-V |
| h. <i>Habré cantado</i> | (O+V)-V ⁹² |
| i. <i>Habría cantado</i> | ((O-V)+V)-V |

(2882).

In this manner, Rojo eliminates the problem of the four axes of orientation; the primary vector, which is the one farthest to the right in each formula, maintains a direct orientation either to the *origen*, or to a point which is functionally and formally different from the latter, and which in turn has a direct relation to the *origen*. He symbolizes these order relations by allowing the different elements to occupy distinct hierarchical positions within the system.

⁹¹ **Translation:** ". . . we conclude that there is no basis for singling out this category [aspect] with respect to the category of tense for the nucleus of the Spanish tense system . . ."

⁹² With this vector formula, Rojo effectively avoids the problem of three-way ambiguity for the future perfect indicated by Comrie for Reichenbach's system in section 4.1.1.1.2. In other words, Rojo's formula successfully presents it as vague, rather than ambiguous; the relative chronological order of E and S (*primary vector* and *O* respectively) is left unspecified.

Furthermore, by eliminating aspect all together as a distinctive category of the verb tenses and proposing that each tense have a unique temporal_{ts} structure, he solves the problem of redundancy which was identified by Bull himself for his vector formulae.

In order to scrutinize the function of the individual elements of the vector formulae, it is useful to compare them to those of the Reichenbachian representations. Such a comparison can determine to what extent Rojo's theory of the Spanish tense system conforms to the universal theory of what a possible tense is, and if there is an element that corresponds to the problematic R point. It will become apparent that Rojo's treatment of the equivalent of the R point is directly relevant to his elimination of aspect as a characteristic property of the Spanish tenses.

The *origen* is the deictic centre of the conversation, and it habitually coincides with the moment of utterance. In virtue of these fundamental properties, this element corresponds to S: "One of the points, S, is a deictic element anchored within the discourse situation, often to the moment of speech" (Hornstein 14).

The primary vector is defined by Rojo in the following manner: "La que vamos a llamar 'relación temporal primaria' es la expresada básicamente por cada forma y se refleja en el 'vector primario', que es el que corresponde al extremo derecho de cada fórmula"⁹³ (2882). In other words, the primary vector of the pluperfect (*había cantado*), for example, is the second one, and it expresses the tense's basic relation: (O-V)-V. This vector symbolizes a moment that is anterior to a moment that in turn is anterior to the *origen*. Ergo, the primary vector corresponds to the E (the event point) of Reichenbach's representation of the pluperfect. Effectively, the primary vector of all the formulae corresponds to Reichenbach's E.

By way of the identification of these two points: $O = S$, *primary vector* = E, then, it is possible to compare the formal representations of the absolute tenses, such as the simple past perfective tense *comí*. For this tense, both formal representations place the event time anterior to the deictic centre of the conversation; O-V and E_S respectively.

The identification of an element that would correspond to the R point, however, is not so straightforward.⁹⁴

In this connection it becomes relevant to return to the traditional distinction between absolute and relative tense. The R point of the relative tenses, (*absolute-relative tense* in Comrie's terminology), is required for the interpretation of their intrinsic temporal content,

⁹³ **Translation:** "That which we will label 'primary temporal relation', is the one basically expressed by each form and it is reflected in the 'primary vector', which is the one at the extreme right of each formula."

⁹⁴ Binnick remarks that Bull's four axes of orientation correspond roughly to points of reference in Reichenbach's system (116).

which is what Rojo's formulae are designed to account for. That is to say, none of the elements of the formulae have as their sole function the representation of the verb form's syntactic behaviour. Consequently, one would expect that an equivalent of the R point in Rojo's theory would have the same properties as defined previously (at the end of section 4.1.1.1.3), i.e. to mediate the relation between E and S. That is not the case however. Rojo offers the following statement about the traditional distinction between absolute and relative tense:

No hay . . . equivalencia total entre la perspectiva tradicional y la defendida aquí. . . la concepción expuesta en este capítulo implica que todas [las formas] tienen valores relativos en tanto que todas orientan con respecto a un eje central y, por tanto, ninguna de ellas realiza una localización 'absoluta' en sentido estricto (2880).⁹⁵

The fact that Rojo avoids the identification of a specific time point, such as the moment of utterance, or the act of observation, as the invariable referent of the *origen* (2889-90) obscures the distinction between this point and the reference point. This impression is reinforced by the fact that the latter point also does not have a determinate corresponding time point. Rojo offers the following definition of the reference point:

El 'punto de referencia', que puede ser el origen o bien un punto situado con relación a él, es el que establece la situación en el eje temporal del momento con respecto al cual las formas expresan la relación primaria. En las fórmulas, el punto de referencia es todo lo que queda a la izquierda del vector primario (2882).⁹⁶

In other words, the R point is defined simply by being what remains when the primary vector is removed, or more precisely, by being whatever the primary vector is directly oriented to. Consequently, all the tenses include an R point (since all the tenses include a primary vector), but Rojo does not successfully demonstrate that this is an element that corresponds to a time point which is functional for the semantic interpretation of all the verb tenses.⁹⁷ The following table illustrates the relations between the elements of the vector formulae, including the reference point:

⁹⁵ **Translation:** "There is no . . . complete equivalence between the traditional perspective and the one defended here . . . the conception presented in this chapter implies that all [the forms] have relative meaning in the sense that all of them are oriented to a central axis, hence, none of them have 'absolute' location in the strict sense."

⁹⁶ **Translation:** "The 'reference point', which may be the *origen* or a point located relative to this, is the one that establishes the situation in the temporal axis of the moment respective of which the forms express the primary relation. In the formulae, the reference point is all that which is to the left of the primary vector."

⁹⁷ Another repercussion is that *habría cantado*, a tense that requires the specification of two reference points for its interpretation (Comrie 27), is represented as having only one.

Table 3

The Reference Point and its Relation to the Other Elements of the Vector Formulae

PUNTO DE REFERENCIA	RELACIÓN TEMPORAL PRIMARIA		
	-V	oV	+V
O	<i>canté</i>	<i>canto</i>	<i>cantaré</i>
(O-V)	<i>había cantado</i>	<i>cantaba</i>	<i>cantaría</i>
(OoV)	<i>he cantado</i>		
(O+V)	<i>habré cantado</i>		
((O-V)+V)	<i>habría cantado</i>		

Source: Guillermo rojo and Alexandre Veiga. (1999). "El Tiempo Verbal. Los Tiempos Simples." en *Gramática Descriptiva De La Lengua Española*. Ed. Ignacio Bosque, and Violeta Demonte. Vol. 2. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, table 44.2.

At first glance, if we attempt to "convert" the vector formulae that correspond to the tense forms of the first horizontal row into Reichenbachian representations, they'd have the following outline: *canté* E_S,R; *canto* S,R,E; *cantaré* S,R_E. The Reichenbachian representations of the past and the future as represented by Hornstein, on the other hand, have a different configuration (15) because his R point, for the tenses where it coincides with S or E, is nothing more than a linguistic tool that accounts for the forms' syntactic behaviour. As I have already mentioned, Rojo's R point is an element which is considered necessary for the temporal interpretation of the individual tenses. However, regardless of the R point's presence or absence here, the S remains the referential centre for the events of the tenses in question. The problem is that Rojo allows that the R point for some of the tenses be *the equivalent* of the *origen*, and not an individual time point *simultaneous* to it. Tense is a deictic category, and the *origen* is the deictic centre of the conversation (Rojo and Veiga 2889), and as such its function by default is that of an axis respective of which other points are oriented. When the formulae consist only of this point and a primary vector, the designation 'reference point' is redundant for the *origen*. In other words, the label 'reference point' is only required for the designation of a time point which is distinguishable from the point that *par excellence* functions as the axis of orientation for the tenses. Rojo does not convincingly show that it is justifiable to have some formulae that include both an O and an R, and some that conflate the two into one. Consequently, if table three is to represent solely the tenses that include an R point, we can dispense with the first horizontal row all together, and eliminate the R point of the corresponding formal renditions.

Some problems have yet to be resolved however. Previously, for a universal theory of tense, we have rejected the idea of an R point that coincides temporally with S or E. But Rojo

identifies two such tenses: *he cantado* (OoV)-V and *cantaba* (O-V)oV. As Rojo rejects aspectual oppositions as distinctive of the Spanish verb tenses, he is forced to design vector formulae that exhaustively account for the temporal_{ts} oppositions between the tenses, and this may be part of the reason why these two tenses are assigned their respective formulae. In both cases, an element is needed to account for the temporal_{ts} distinction between each tense and the simple past perfective form *canté* O-V. The present thesis finds both formulae to be inadequate. They are rejected both on universal and on language-specific grounds.

We can start by scrutinizing the vector formula of the composite past (*he cantado*) (OoV)-V. In accordance with what has been argued previously, for the formulae in which it appears, the reference point is necessary for the positioning of the primary vector (E). All the tenses have as their basic function the positioning of this vector (Rojo and Veiga 2882). Consequently, the two points E and R are of different nature and they perform different functions within the formulae, so that, although there exists a vector formula which includes simultaneity between O and the primary vector: OoV, it is not necessarily the case that this is a functional relation between O and the reference point.⁹⁸ Temporally_{ts} speaking, there is no opposition between this formula: O-V, and this one: (OoV)-V, since the specification of a moment simultaneous with O is unnecessary for the interpretation of the primary vector as anterior to it. As we have seen, Comrie also argues that a reference point coinciding with the present moment simply gives absolute time reference (Tense 65).

Rojo himself makes a brief comment about this and two other reference points as presented in the table above: "En realidad, tres de los cinco puntos de referencia que tenemos que distinguir no tienen formas propias más que para la expresión de la anterioridad con respecto a ellos"⁹⁹ (2884). The three reference points Rojo alludes to are the following: (OoV), (O+V), and ((O-V)+V). It can be observed that these three reference points have a primary vector only of anteriority attached to them. This fact can be accounted for in a relatively uncomplicated manner for the two latter formulae; there is most likely a limit as to how many positions the primary vector (E) can be displaced away from O before the formula becomes too complex for comprehension. It seems that tense systems allow for further displacement into the past than into the future, since past events are part of our actual experience, and can be located more precisely in time. Thus, it is rather improbable that a language would have tense forms with the following vector formulae: (O+V)+V or ((O-

⁹⁸ It can be observed that Bull's original theory does not include a reference point (axis of orientation) that corresponds to this one: (OoV).

⁹⁹ **Translation:** "In fact, three of the five points that we have to distinguish have no forms of their own; their only function is that anteriority can be expressed with respect to them."

V)+V)+V. However, this argument does not hold for the first reference point: (OoV). This reference point is not in itself overly complex, so, if this is a possible vector formula: (OoV)-V, it would also seem likely that these would be possible: (OoV)oV, (OoV)+V. The fact that they are not seems to suggest that the vector formula of the composite past (*he cantado*) too is inadequate.

It appears that the mentioned formula is deficient also from a language-specific point of view. According to the majority of standard Spanish grammars, (Alarcos Llorach; Bello; Cartagena; Alcina Franch and Blecua; Kovacci), the form *he cantado* does not express that there is a moment simultaneous to the speech point anterior to which the event is located. What all these descriptions seem to have in common is that they underline the impact or influence the event time has on the speech time (the present moment). What kind of influence this is varies according to the different linguists. It can be of an emotive kind (Kovacci 67; Bello 202; Cartagena 2949), an aspectual kind (Kovacci 67; Bello 202; Cartagena 2949), or even of a temporal_{ts} kind (Alarcos Llorach 166-67; Alcina Franch and Blecua 802; Bello 202; Cartagena 2945). Evidently, these are claims that must be tested against corpus evidence; however, for now they will be taken as adequate for a criticism of Rojo's theory from a language-specific viewpoint.

Clearly, Rojo's formulae are not designed to accommodate semantic values of an emotive or aspectual nature (which they in due course might be criticized for), so it is the *temporal_{ts}* influence of the E on the speech point that is most relevant for the present discussion. The linguists that maintain that the *pretérito perfecto compuesto* is distinguished by the temporal_{ts} relation that exists between E and S describe this relation as one of proximity or as one of inclusion. In other words, some linguists claim that that this tense indicates an event or situation that transpired in the recent past, while others claim that it indicates that the present moment is included within the scope of the event or situation. Whether or not either of these is an adequate description of the tense, this does not seem to be the reality captured by this formula: (OoV)-V.

Rojo offers the following explanation for the proposed formula for the composite past (*he cantado*):

Las significaciones básicas expresadas por *canté* y *he cantado* coinciden en enfocar el proceso como primariamente anterior a un punto de referencia . . . En el caso de *canté* la referencia no es otra que el centro deíctico del sistema temporal, mientras *he cantado* introduce la precisión de una relación de simultaneidad entre esa referencia y el punto origen. Este es el motivo por el cual es especialmente

fácil hallar la forma compuesta acompañada de adverbios o localizadores temporales que se refieran a períodos de tiempo todavía no concluidos en el presente . . . nada impide que *he cantado* se refiera a un proceso situado en un período presentado como ya concluido siempre y cuando el hablante desee enfocar dicho proceso de alguna manera desde una situación vigente en el presente . . . (2902-03).¹⁰⁰

Rojo takes contextual elements with which the verb form might combine into account as he arrives at a specification of the verb form's temporal_{ts} content. This is considered an adequate approach in this thesis, however, in the present case, it does not seem justified that the composite past indicates an event that is anterior to a moment distinguishable from, but simultaneous to, the *origen*, simply based on the fact that the temporal locators refer to periods of time still not concluded in the present moment. It doesn't seem to be a prerequisite that the adverbials in question designate a moment simultaneous to the present, but rather that they include the present as such, as in: "Bilbao **ha estado siempre** en mi cabeza y he querido plasmar ese recuerdo . . ." (Jurado).¹⁰¹ The specifications that Rojo includes in the explanation above, about adverbials on one hand, and the desire of the speaker on the other, seem to allude to the verb form's aspectual and emotive values, rather than its temporal_{ts} content.

Thus, both from a general and from a language-specific perspective, the formula that Rojo proposes for the composite past (*he cantado*) is inadequate.

As for the imperfective past form *cantaba*, Rojo suggests that it signals an event that is simultaneous with a moment that is anterior to the *origen*: (O-V)oV. Thus, Rojo manages to distinguish it temporally_{ts} from the absolute past tense form *canté*, which signals an event that is directly anterior to the *origen*: O-V. The first-mentioned formula can be criticized on the same basis as the one for the composite past, namely that a reference point coinciding with the event or the present moment simply gives absolute time reference (Comrie Tense 65). In other words, this formula: (O-V)oV is not temporally_{ts} distinguishable from this one: O-V. Furthermore, the verb form in itself gives reference to one event, not two, so in order to find a time point in the past with which the event co-occurs one is forced to look at the context that

¹⁰⁰ **Translation:** "The basic meanings expressed by *canté* and *he cantado* coincide in presenting the process as primordially anterior to a reference point . . . In the case of *canté* this reference is no other than the deictic center of the tense system, whereas *he cantado* introduces the specification of a relation of simultaneity between this reference and the *origen*. This is the reason why it is especially easy to find the mentioned form accompanied by adverbs or temporal locators that refer to periods of time that still haven't been concluded in the present . . . nothing impedes that *he cantado* refer to a process situated in a period presented as terminated, as long as the speaker wishes to present that process from a situation somehow still valid in the present . . ."

¹⁰¹ **Gloss:** "Bilbao **has always been** on my mind and I have wanted to give this memory a shape . . ."

the verb form appears in. Again, it is vital to distinguish between the information that the context provides to the form, and the information which the form contributes to the context it appears in. Moreover, as will be shown with the analysis of the corpus data, both the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) appear with adverbials that designate past moments in time, and both can be subordinate to a main verb in the past tense. It can be argued with considerable plausibility that the fact that the event designated by the imperfective past (*cantaba*) is frequently interpreted as simultaneous with another is a consequence of the form's aspectual values, not its temporal_{ts} ones. In other words, it is more likely that an event (*cantaba*) presented as iterated (Real Academia 467), imperfective, or durative (Alarcos Llorach 161), shares intervals of time with another one than an event (*canté*) presented as perfective (Real Academia 469), terminative (Alarcos Llorach 161), initiative (Wheatley 272), or global (Kovacci 70). One possible reason why Rojo represents the past imperfective as designating a past event that co-occurs with another, is that he might adhere to one of the aforementioned descriptions of the imperfective aspect, namely that it involves periods immediately preceding and following the moment of observation. This understanding of the imperfective aspect obviously requires a moment of observation, or a reference point, coinciding with the event. However, as I have argued previously, this is not an adequate description of the imperfective aspect. Rather, what the imperfective aspect *has in common* with a tense that involves periods immediately preceding and following the moment of observation (for example the present tense), is that it does not take into account the event's beginning and end. Consequently, the inclusion of a moment of observation other than the *origen* is redundant for the imperfective. Rojo's vector formula for the Spanish *pretérito imperfecto* is thus considered inadequate.

There is another problem that can be identified for Rojo's vector formulae, and that is their potential for infinite complexity. There exists a limited set of temporal morphemes, and hence a limited number of tenses, which is a prerequisite for the assignment of contents to the linguistic forms, and by extension, for successful communication. According to Bull, the tense morphemes symbolize the four distinct axes of orientation (Time 27). By limiting the number of possible axes of orientation to four, he also limits the number of possible tenses for Spanish. Consequently, as Rojo solves the problem of the four axes of orientation, proposing the less definite reference point in addition to the *origen*, he enters into a new problem. His theory has the fundamental characteristics of what Hornstein calls *iterated-operator theories* (IOTs):

. . . iterated-operator theories and Reichenbachian theories offer very different accounts of what constitutes a possible tense. In an IOT, something is a possible tense if it is a basic tense (e.g., the simple past) or a complex tense derived by iterating the basic tenses (e.g., the past perfect). In contrast, the Reichenbachian approach takes a tense to be a structured SRE configuration, and a possible tense is one of these configurations. (93-94).

Thus, in a sense, Rojo is contradicting himself; his vector formulae reflect all the conceivable relations of *chronological* time, which is a concept that he explicitly wants to distinguish from *linguistic* time. Therefore, Rojo's theory could benefit from a modification that would limit the possible complexity of the formulae, so that they represented exclusively the tenses functional currently in the Spanish language.¹⁰²

4.3 Summary

In this section, we have identified the prime opposition between the categories of tense and aspect; tense is a deictic category which has to do with the order relation between points in time, the central one of which is the speech point, while aspect in its turn is not a deictic category, and does not describe the order relation between points in time; rather, it describes the internal temporal_m configuration of events or situations. Both temporal_s and aspectual oppositions are viewed as abstractions, and not as reflections of any objective reality.

It was established that tense differs from time in various different manners. Firstly, they differ as to their existential status; time is part of the first world, whereas tense, a human construct, is part of the third world. Secondly, time is infinite, while tense includes a restricted number of oppositions and relations. Thirdly, tense points are viewed as abstractions, and their temporal duration is not relevant. Finally, tense morphemes specify the relative chronology of events relative to the speech point; they do not stipulate a specific moment in time.

Subsequently, Reichenbach's theory was presented and reviewed. Two of Comrie's proposed modifications of it were taken as valid for our present concerns: Firstly, in the specification of any tense involving S, E, and R, there is no direct temporal relation allowed between S and E. The R is specified relative to S, and E is then specified relative to R.

¹⁰² It is also conceivable that such restrictions (of the potential complexity of the formulae) could be proposed for vector formulae in general, i.e. not only for Spanish. In other words, we could make a claim about human language's potential for expressing temporal_s content.

Secondly, R is removed from any tense configuration where it overlaps with E or S, as this simply gives absolute time reference.

Then, Norbert Hornstein's generative theory was reviewed. It was criticized for treating certain linguistic tools, specifically the R point and the extrinsic ordering of the time points, as if they were objects of study in their own right. Hornstein includes the R point for all tenses, because it accounts for each tense's combinatory potentials. This was identified as its *external* function. It also has an *internal* function, which is to mediate the relation between S and E. This is only required for the relative tenses.

Subsequently, the category of aspect was reviewed, the delimitation of which is somewhat complicated. The general description of aspect adopted for our present concerns is that aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal_{tm} constituency of a situation. Specifically, it concerns times that are *internal* to an event, none that are external to it. It is also not concerned with the order relation between the Reichenbachian time points.

We reviewed aspect as a grammatical category, and determined that it had to do with the grammaticalisation of the relevant semantic distinctions, while aktionsart represents lexicalisation of the distinctions. This is at least a valid criterion for singling out the aspectual properties of the Spanish verb forms, which is the aim of the present thesis. It was also suggested that it is possible to look for aspectual distinctions that have been claimed to be universal in the grammatical morphemes of individual languages.

In this connection, aspect was reviewed as a semantic category. It was determined that a recurrent opposition in virtually all treatments of aspect is the *perfective/imperfective* opposition. These two terms are understood in the present thesis thus: *Perfective*: indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation; *Imperfective*: pays essential attention to the internal structure of the situation. Distinctions such as *punctual*, *durative*, *terminative*, etc. are not to be understood as equivalents of the perfective or the imperfective, but rather as possible additional meanings of forms that have perfective or imperfective value.

As for a determination of aspect as a category, it was suggested that it might not be possible to do it in an unambiguous manner universally. It was, however, indicated that aspectual oppositions are fewer and more underspecified than oppositions within the domain of aktionsart or Aristotelian aspect. Furthermore, they are part of a closed group of systematic oppositions, which makes them likely to be expressed by inflectional morphemes in various languages. Ultimately, however, the optimal definition of the category of aspect might by necessity be partially language-specific. As concerns the present thesis, the relevant aspectual

distinctions are the ones to be found in the inflectional morphemes of the Spanish verb forms. My aim is to describe the temporal_{ts} and aspectual oppositions of the Spanish tense system, and not the way that aspect in general is expressed in Spanish.

Next, I reviewed two theories of tense and aspect of Spanish. Bull proposes a vector system with four axes of orientation. The idea of a system with more than one single axis of orientation was rejected for Spanish and in general. Furthermore, I alluded to the problem of redundancy mentioned by Bull himself for the description of the Spanish tense system: namely that it is an aspect-vector system, and thus must include both temporal_{ts} and aspectual indicators for some of the tenses.

Guillermo Rojo's system solves both of these problems, but presents additional ones. First of all, for some tenses, he conflates the two components *origen* and R point. These must always be considered two separate entities. Secondly, as he excludes aspect as a distinctive property of the Spanish tenses, he is forced to give each tense its own unique vector formula. This causes him to give the composite past (*he cantado*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) formulae where the R point overlaps with O (the speech point) or E (the primary vector) respectively. This was also rejected, both on universal and on language-specific grounds. Consequently, it seems that aspectual oppositions indeed are part of the Spanish tenses' distinctive properties. This theory will be further tested on the corpus evidence. The last drawback that was identified for Rojo's theory was its possibility for infinite complexity. It should be modified so as to include exclusively the tenses functional currently in the Spanish language.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1 Preliminary considerations

Prior to the analysis of the verb forms in the corpus, we shall examine the following four preliminary considerations, as they will all be taken into account for the analysis of the verb forms in question: *markedness*, *temporal adverbials (TADVs)*, *sequence of tenses (SOT)*, and *systemic vs. non-systemic functions*.

5.1.1 Markedness

The notion of markedness is highly relevant for the account of the semantic oppositions between the verb forms in the tense system. The classification of one (or several) of these forms as marked and the other one(s) as unmarked members of an opposition, might in many

cases help explain their distribution and interaction. Comrie offers the following definition of markedness: "The intuition behind the notion of markedness in linguistics is that, where we have an opposition with two or more members (e.g. perfective vs. imperfective), it is often the case that one member of the opposition is felt to be more usual, more normal, less specific than the other (in markedness terminology, it is unmarked, the others are marked)" (Aspect 111). Binnick presents the following account of semantic markedness: ". . . 'marked' is used for the member of an opposition which is semantically more specific, and 'unmarked' for the one which is nonspecific, even when there is no explicit marker" (151-52).

As we shall see, the kinds of markedness that are relevant for the analysis of the verb forms' temporal_s and aspectual values are *semantic* and *morphological* markedness. Comrie explains semantic markedness: "One of the most decisive criteria is that, in many cases, the meaning of the unmarked category can encompass that of its counterpart" (Aspect 112). He elaborates: "The clearest example of this situation is where overt expression of the meaning of the marked category is always optional, i.e. where the unmarked category can always be used, even in a situation where the marked category would also be appropriate" (Aspect 112). This kind of pattern might be specifically relevant for the opposition between the two forms *canté* (simple past perfective) and *he cantado* (composite past) in the corpus from La Paz, as it has been claimed that there exists a neutralization in temporal_s and aspectual values between these two forms. If one of them can be classified as the unmarked member of the opposition and the other one as marked, however, the neutralization is only partial. Comrie further explains the characteristics of this kind of opposition: "In such cases, we may say quite strictly that the marked category signals the presence of some feature, while the unmarked category simply says nothing about its presence or absence" (Aspect 112).

In many cases, semantic markedness is reflected in the morphology of the different forms, so that oppositions in meaning are reflected by explicit markers (Binnick 151). Comrie elaborates on the relationship between semantic markedness and morphology, and specifies two morphological criteria: 1) "...unmarked categories tend to have less morphological material than marked categories" (Aspect 114). With reference to the aforementioned opposition, such a claim could be an indication that the composite past (*he cantado*) is the marked category of the opposition simple past perfective/composite past (*canté/he cantado*). If it is at all feasible to describe this opposition as one involving markedness, this last claim must be tested against corpus evidence. Comrie avails himself of examples from the Romance languages, and Spanish in particular, as he explains the second morphological criteria, namely: 2) that there is ". . . greater likelihood of morphological

irregularity in unmarked forms . . . " (Aspect 114). He goes on to claiming that the simple past in the Romance languages is the unmarked one of the opposition *simple past/imperfect past*. This pattern can be observed in the Spanish tense system, where the conjugation of forms in the simple past perfective (*canté, estuve, puse, dormí*) do not follow regular patterns to the same extent as the imperfective past (*cantaba, estaba, ponía, dormía*). However, this claim is at odds with Guillermo Rojo's view, that, if we are to accept aspectual oppositions as part of the Spanish tense system, it is the imperfective forms that are unmarked: ". . . sería necesario considerar el perfectivo como término marcado, con lo que resulta posible hablar de valor neutro en las formas consideradas imperfectivas"¹⁰³ ("Relaciones" 35). As Rojo makes this claim, however, he is not referring exclusively to the opposition between the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*), but to one between all the imperfective and all the perfective forms in conjunction.¹⁰⁴ Again, he is at odds with Comrie's claims: ". . . in combination with past tense there is generally in languages a tendency for the perfective aspect to be unmarked, while with the present tense the tendency is for imperfective aspect to be unmarked" (Comrie Aspect 121). A central point here is that a category cannot be marked or unmarked in and of itself, irrespective of the oppositions and contexts it is part of; a tense form might be the marked form of one opposition, but the unmarked one of another. In other words, it is conceivable that the simple past perfective (*canté*) is the unmarked form of the opposition simple past perfective/imperfective past (*canté/cantaba*), but the marked form of the opposition simple past perfective/composite past (*canté/ha cantado*). Comrie comments: ". . . it is . . . possible that in certain circumstances one member of an opposition will be unmarked, while in other circumstances the other member (or one of the other members) will be unmarked" (Aspect 118).

Consequently, as I evaluate the tense forms of the corpus, the decision to classify them as marked or unmarked is inextricably linked to their behaviour in context and to their position in different systems of oppositions. Thus, the criteria that must be used in the determination of the forms' potential markedness might ultimately become valid tools in the very specification of the forms' temporal_s and aspectual content.

¹⁰³ **Translation:** ". . . it would be necessary to consider the perfective as the marked term, hence allowing for the possibility of talking about a neutral value of the forms that are considered to be imperfective."

¹⁰⁴ Rojo's reasoning for categorizing the perfective aspect as marked and the imperfective as unmarked, is that the perfective aspect always expresses termination, whereas the imperfective is neutral with respect to this opposition ("Relaciones" 35). In my view, this is not a valid criterion for classifying the perfective as marked and the imperfective as unmarked; the imperfective is not underspecified *as such*, it is only not specified with respect to the distinction terminated/not terminated. Furthermore, as I have argued previously, it is not justified to equate perfective aspect with *termination*.

5.1.2 Temporal_{tm} adverbials (TADVs)

Apart from other tense forms, temporal_{tm} adverbials are quite possibly the most significant contextual elements whose interaction with the verb forms must be taken into consideration for the evaluation of the semantic content of the latter. Binnick states: ". . . [temporal adverbials] have so much to contribute to the semantic interpretation of the expression they occur in and have such important interrelationships with tense, aspect and other types of temporal markings, that their study has in recent years become largely inseparable from that of tense and aspect (and vice versa)" (300). Consequently, a review of temporal_{tm} adverbials and their interaction with verb tense and aspect is an indispensable step preliminary to the analysis of the verb forms in the corpus. However, the present section is not aimed at offering an exhaustive and detailed overview of temporal_{tm} adverbials as such; rather, it discusses the characteristics of adverbials in so far as they are relevant to the interpretation of the verb forms' temporal_{ts} and aspectual content.

According to Klein, "temporal adverbials are a rich and heterogeneous category, both in a formal and in a functional respect" (147). Many linguists who touch upon the subject of temporal_{tm} adverbials sub-classify them into various different semantic and/or formal categories, but precisely because temporal_{tm} adverbials constitute such a rich and heterogeneous group, there seem to be as many ways to sub-categorize them as there are linguists classifying them. Part of the reason might be that different linguists classify them according to distinct criteria; some concentrate mainly on formal, syntactic characteristics, some exclusively on temporal location, some on temporal interval configurations, and others yet on all of the above. As we shall see, the subdivisions proposed by Klein are fruitful for our present purpose, and the classifications proposed by other linguists (Hornstein; Binnick; Bertinetto and Delfitto; Smith) can be aligned to them quite straightforwardly. The reason why Klein's classifications are beneficial to our present concerns is that his objectives coincide to a large extent with ours: ". . . our focus of interest is the interaction between TADVs¹⁰⁵ and what they express, on the one hand, and on other ways of expressing time, like tense, aspect, and inherent features of the lexical content" (Klein 143). As a consequence, Klein omits from his treatment, as shall we, adverbials whose temporal reference has no direct interaction with the time expressed by the finite verb of the sentence (Klein 143).

Klein identifies three major functional types of adverbials: "1 Positional temporal adverbials, in brief TADV-P. They specify time spans in relation to other time spans, which

¹⁰⁵ TADVs = Temporal adverbials (Klein 142).

are supposed to be given in context. Examples are *yesterday, before the autopsy, much later, at five o'clock, in the night*" (149), "2 Temporal adverbials of frequency, in brief TADV-Q. They indicate the frequency of temporal entities, like time spans or possibly situations . . . which obtain at these time spans. Examples are *often, once in a while, rarely . . .*" (149), "3 Temporal adverbials of duration, in brief TADV-D. They specify the duration of temporal entities, like time spans and/or perhaps situations obtaining at time spans. Examples are *briefly, for a while, within one hour, during the autopsy, etc.*" (149).¹⁰⁶ This way of subdividing the temporal adverbials is useful for our subsequent analysis because the first group consists of adverbials that might help specify a verb tense's *temporal_{ts}* and *aspectual* content, while the other two, in most cases, will help temporally_{tm} specify its *lexical* content (Klein 213). Hence, it is the first group that is most relevant for our present concerns. Klein explains: "[TADV-Ps] are not only the most varied subclass but also particularly interesting in the present context since they immediately compete with the tense-aspect system in embedding a situation in time" (150).

A few further specifications are required before I can venture to explain how the adverbials of the different classes help specify the contents of the verb forms. According to Klein, when we use language to talk about situations that hold at specific times, we make reference to three distinct times: *topic time* (TT), *time of utterance* (TU), and *time of situation* (TSit) (3). TU coincides with the speech point, the deictic centre of the tense system. The significance of TT and TSit is illustrated with an example: "The light was on" (Klein 2). In this case, TSit is the whole time at which the light was actually on, and TT is the time for which such a claim is made (Klein 3). In other words, "in languages with a finite verb, TT is specified by FIN, the finite component of the utterance, and TSit corresponds to the situation described by the INF, the non-finite component of the utterance" (Klein 160). For the example above, the INF is *the light be on* (Klein 2), while the FIN is the *temporal_{ts}* (and *aspectual*) component of the verb, in this case, it signals a time (TT) anterior to TU. It is thus possible that TSit and TT do not fully overlap, so that for example TSit (*the light being on*) might extend beyond the limits of TT, as would be likely for the following sentence: "The light was on when I came in".

The temporal adverbials, then, can, according to Klein, make explicit either an utterance's TT, or its TSit (161). Klein specifies: "I shall call these two possibilities 'FIN-

¹⁰⁶ Klein specifies three further peripheral categories whose functions are much less clear (149), some of which can be divided into *temporal_{ts}* or *aspectual* content, and they may or may not prove useful for the analysis of the Spanish tenses later on.

specification' and 'INF-specification', respectively" (161). Crucially, it seems that TT and TSit have many traits in common with the formerly defined R and E points. However, for the tenses in which TT and TSit are said to overlap, the former must be interpreted as corresponding to the linguistic tool *r* (described in 4.1.1.1.3), and not the R point. We shall see that TT, or *r*, is indispensable as we analyse the interaction between the temporal adverbials and the tense forms.

The TADV-Ps can have FIN-specification *or* INF-specification, the choice of which depends on ". . . word order, intonation, and perhaps other structural properties of the entire utterance" (Klein 161). These criteria are rather language-specific, so they will most likely not transport well from English to Spanish, nevertheless, I will present an example offered by Klein to illustrate how a TADV-P might be interpreted as specifying either an utterance's TT or its TSit; in the sentence "Chris had left Heidelberg yesterday" (161), the TADV-P *yesterday* can be interpreted as specifying either TT or TSit. In this particular case, TT corresponds to Reichenbach's R point, while TSit corresponds to his E (Klein 161).¹⁰⁷ Klein explains: "The tense of the finite verb *had* . . . expresses that TT is somewhere before TU. . . . The lexical content is <Chris leave Heidelberg>, and the particular aspect (perfect) places TT into the posttime of this lexical content" (161). In other words, *yesterday* can either be interpreted as referring to a time posterior to Chris' leaving, but anterior to TU, or as referring to Chris' leaving Heidelberg itself, anterior to TT. Klein elaborates:

. . . a TADV-P such as *yesterday*, when added to the lexical content <Chris leave Heidelberg>, can either serve to specify the TT to which this lexical content is linked, or it can enrich the lexical content to <Chris leave Heidelberg yesterday>, and this entire lexical content is then linked to a TT, which in itself is not further specified (161).

As regards the analysis of the Spanish tenses of the corpus, I will have to determine for every TADV, first, what kind of TADV I am dealing with, and second, for every case where a TADV-P is present, whether it has FIN-specification or INF-specification. Many cases will most likely be ambiguous, as I have no access to information about factors like intonation. The distinction between FIN-specification and INF-specification is nevertheless essential for my analysis, since one of the indispensable criteria for determining a tense form's temporal_{ts} and aspectual content is distinguishing between the contents of the form's lexical root and that of its tense morpheme. Klein's sub-classifications of the TADVs are thus particularly useful,

¹⁰⁷ In other words, this example corresponds to the second one that was given in footnote 67 on page 64-65, about the possible interpretation of a pluperfect combined with a temporal_{tm} adverbial.

as he makes an explicit distinction between the TADV_s that enrich lexical content versus those that do not; TADV-P can do both, while TADV-D and TADV-Q " . . . enrich the lexical content which is used in an utterance to describe a situation, and they serve to make explicit the duration and frequency of the corresponding TSit, which is left otherwise to context" (Klein 213).

The idea that TADV-Ds and TADV-Qs do not have FIN-specification supports the notion that an event's exact duration, or its iterativity, is *not* an aspectual distinction expressed by the tense morpheme, but a lexical one. In other words, it cannot be claimed for example that iterativity is a subsense of the imperfective aspect in Spanish, so when an informant says " . . . en algunas ocasiones en que el profesor presentaba . . ." ¹⁰⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 20), the lexical content is to be interpreted as <el profesor presentar en algunas ocasiones>, and the FIN-specification, that is TT, which signals what part of the lexical content is to be focused (Klein 196), is anteriority to TU and has imperfective aspect. However, the fact that TADV-Ds and TADV-Qs only have INF-specification does not mean that they are totally independent of an utterance's FIN-specification. In other words, different lexical contents (including a TADV with INF-specification) will yield different interpretations according to what FIN-specification they are attached to.

Other linguists distinguish between temporal_{tm} adverbials that specify *tense* and those that specify *aspect*.

Hornstein, Smith, and Binnick treat adverbials that deal with temporal_{ts} oppositions, and offer various sub-divisions of this group. Hornstein distinguishes between the adverbials that are S-oriented (deictic) and those that are not, and emphasizes syntactic behaviour (30-31). Some of his observations may thus be more relevant for the topic of *sequence of tenses*. Smith proposes a similar distinction, identifying the three groups *deictic* ('yesterday'), *clock-calendar* ('Tuesday'), and *dependent* ('beforehand') adverbials (218). Binnick distinguishes between deictic and non-deictic adverbials (305-06). Since the object of study of the present thesis is not temporal_{tm} adverbials, these finer distinctions will not be treated here in their own right, but they might be taken into consideration where it is deemed relevant for the interpretation of the temporal_{ts} contents of the verb forms. What can be said about them is that they all fall into Klein's TADV-P category.

Bertinetto and Delfitto, and Binnick treat adverbials that have aspectual and/or actional values. Binnick claims that some adverbials have inherent aspectual meaning (306), and

¹⁰⁸ **Gloss:** " . . . on some occasions when the teacher presented [past imp.] . . . "

subdivide these into three groups: "1. The *frame adverbial* refers to 'an interval of time within which the described action is asserted to have taken place.' They most often denote intervals of time" (307), "2. Adverbials of *number* and *frequency* refer either to the number of times a type of event occurred . . . or to the frequency . . ." (307), "3. *Durative* adverbial phrases 'indicate the duration of the described event by specifying the length of time that it is asserted to take'" (307). From the preliminary descriptions, it seems like Binnick's *frame adverbials* might, at least potentially, have FIN-specification, while his two other groups have INF-specification. However, an adverbial's FIN/INF-specification is something that has to be evaluated for each individual corpus occurrence. Bertinetto and Delfitto treat only adverbials that demand [+durative] verbs (195), and subdivide them into four types (195-205). Again, these finer subdivisions will only be scrutinized insofar as they are relevant to the analysis of the verb tenses.

5.1.3 Sequence of Tenses (SOT)

5.1.3.1 SOT: a problem of definition

Klein remarks about English and related languages that: ". . . finiteness is not confined to main clauses, hence, we also find tense and aspect marking on the verb of subordinate clauses" (218). This situation holds true also for Spanish. Consequently, for the analysis of the verb tenses in the corpus, it is crucial to determine whether the ones that appear in embedded sentences are to be treated or interpreted differently than those that appear in main clauses. In any event, the nature of the verb forms with which a specific form interacts, as well as the essence of the relation between the two forms, may prove to be an indispensable source of information about the verb forms' temporal_{ts} and aspectual content.

However, as is the case with a great many linguistic phenomena, "opinions vary considerably on how [subordinate clauses] are to be analysed in form and function . . ." (Klein 218). According to Binnick, "the first person to seriously study [the] sequence-of-tense (SOT) phenomena was Reichenbach (1947)" (339). Reichenbach's introduction of the aforementioned R point represented a tangible criterion for identifying how the verb forms interacted with other temporal_{tm} elements in the context. His theory will nevertheless not be subject to scrutiny in the present section, although, as we shall see, the basic components of his analysis form part of several more recent treatments of the SOT phenomenon.

Before we can venture to study this phenomenon in Spanish however, it must be made clear exactly what is meant by the *sequence-of-tense phenomenon*. Reichenbach describes it thus:

When several sentences are combined to form a compound sentence, the tenses of the various clauses are adjusted to one another by certain rules which the grammarians call the rules for the *sequence of tenses* . . . We can interpret these rules as the principle that, although the events referred to in the clauses may occupy different time points, the reference point should be the same for all clauses . . . (Binnick 113).

This rule calls attention to the fact that there is, or may be, some sort of temporal dependency between the verbs of the various clauses.¹⁰⁹ As we shall see, however, not all cases of subordination give rise to temporal dependency between the verbs of the different sentences.

Veiga and Rojo offer the following definition of SOT, or *correlación temporal* in Spanish:

. . . la expresión *correlación temporal*, que tomamos directamente de Rojo (1976), para referirnos estrictamente a la relación gramatical que se establece entre dos unidades verbales en aquellas situaciones en que una de ellas adopta como punto de referencia para su orientación temporal la realización concreta de contenido temporal expresada por otra (Estudios 157).¹¹⁰

They explain, and take the syntactic properties of the elements into account:

La correlación temporal o *consecutio temporum* es entonces el fenómeno de correspondencia de temporalidad que se da en las estructuras hipotácticas en las que el acontecimiento expresado por la cláusula subordinada está contemplado desde el punto en que se da la acción principal . . . (Veiga Estudios 164).¹¹¹

Veiga and Rojo also call attention to the crucial fact that in many cases, the event expressed by a verb in a subordinate clause may be temporally independent of the verb of the superordinate clause (Veiga Estudios 158,65), a situation which calls for a distinction between the cases of subordination which involve SOT and the ones that do not.

¹⁰⁹ According to Binnick, Reichenbach's account of the sequence-of-tense rules is not adequate (113).

¹¹⁰ **Translation:** “. . . the expression *correlación temporal*, which we take directly from Rojo (1976), to refer exclusively to the grammatical relation which presents itself between two verbal entities in the situations in which one of them adopts as its reference point the concrete realization of the temporal content expressed by the other.”

¹¹¹ **Translation:** “The sequence of tenses or *consecutio temporum* has to do with temporal correspondence which appears in structures of subordination in which the event expressed by the subordinate clause is contemplated from the point at which the primary action takes place.”

The present treatment of SOT will be limited to cases that involve the past tenses of the indicative mode, since they are the object of study here.

According to Hornstein, "SOT relates the temporal interpretation of a sentential argument with that of its theta-assigning verb" (119). The theta-assigning verb is the verb of which the embedded clause is the argument (Hornstein 217), and it is the verb which assigns semantic roles to its arguments. Hornstein thus limits his treatment to *nominal* subordinate clauses, since, according to the *theta criterion*, the arguments of the theta-assigning verb are all NPs (Bussmann 485). Temporal and relative subordinate clauses are thus left out, and Hornstein offers the following description of the SOT rule for embedded finite clauses: ". . . the rule associates an embedded point, S_{n-1} , with a higher point, E_n " (120). In other words, the verb of the subordinate clause will not have deictic reference, rather, its S point is interpreted as simultaneous with (*associated with*) the E of the superordinate verb.

Hornstein offers two examples of sentences with subordinate nominal clauses, where the first one does not involve SOT, while the second one may: "John heard that Mary is pregnant" vs. "John heard that Mary was pregnant" (120). In the first example, the verb of the subordinate clause is independent of the verb of the superordinate one, and has the moment of utterance (the present moment) as its deictic centre. For the second sentence, Hornstein offers two distinct interpretations which illustrate the sentence's ambiguity: either a) "John heard: 'Mary is pregnant'", or b) "John heard: 'Mary was pregnant'" (121). According to Hornstein, only the first of the two examples constitutes an SOT case (121); firstly, the S of the subordinate clause (S_2) is interpreted as simultaneous with the event of the verb of the superordinate clause (*John hear* (E_1)), and secondly, the E of the subordinate clause (*Mary be pregnant* (E_2)) is also interpreted as simultaneous with S_2 , and not anterior to it, which would normally be the case for the past tense. The latter circumstance constitutes a case of *shifted interpretation*, whereby the formal representation of the subordinate verb (*was*), in this case, becomes one of present tense, and not past tense: S_2, R, E_2 instead of E_2, R, S_2 (Hornstein 121,27). Mary's being pregnant is thus interpreted as simultaneous with John's observation of it. It will become apparent, however, that Hornstein's interpretation is somewhat simplified, especially when we take the Spanish equivalents of the sentences into account.

Firstly, according to Hornstein's own definition of what SOT is, (" . . . the rule associates an embedded point, S_{n-1} , with a higher point, E_n "), *both* interpretations a) and b) above would have to be regarded as instances of SOT, since, in both cases, S_2 is associated with E_1 . The only difference between them is that a) is an example of shifted interpretation. In other words, interpretation a) states that Mary was pregnant as John heard it, whereas

interpretation b) stipulates that she was pregnant *before* he heard it. When Hornstein insists that interpretation a) is the only one which represents an instance of SOT, it seems that he conflates the two notions of SOT and *shifted interpretation*.

Secondly, it is questionable whether interpretation a) indeed is a case of SOT if we take SOT to mean that S_2 is simultaneous with E_1 . For rendition b), it is clear that it must be so, as the temporal location of Mary's pregnancy is interpreted relative to John's hearing about it (specifically, anterior to it). The only requirement for interpretation a) however, is that E_2 (*Mary be pregnant*) be interpreted as simultaneous with E_1 (*John hear*). There is no apparent reason to stipulate that S_2 must be simultaneous with E_1 . Thus, if we take "John heard that Mary was pregnant" to mean that she was pregnant as he heard it, there is no basis for postulating neither SOT nor shifted interpretation; it is perfectly acceptable to interpret the subordinate tense deictically, with its original past tense-configuration, and still have E_1 and E_2 be simultaneous. Spanish would require the use of the past imperfective in this case, signalling a past ongoing event: "Juan escuchó que María *estaba* en embarazo". Interpretation b), on the other hand, would require a perfective past in the subordinate clause: "Juan escuchó que María *estuvo* en embarazo".

Thirdly, as Hornstein proposes the two mentioned interpretations of the sentence in question, it appears that he completely disregards one of the immediate intuitions behind the notion of SOT, namely that a sentence like "John heard that Mary was pregnant" ("Juan escuchó que María estaba en embarazo") might be uttered with the meaning: "John heard that Mary *is* pregnant" ("Juan escuchó que María *está* en embarazo"). In other words, it is perfectly acceptable, both in English and in Spanish, to utter the former sentence to signal that the pregnancy is a reality at the moment of utterance. If this is indeed the meaning of SOT, then it does not imply a temporal dependency between E_1 and S_2 ; it only implies shifted interpretation. It has shifted interpretation because the surface form of the verb (past E,R_S) does not correspond to its temporal_{is} interpretation (present S,R,E). There is no temporal dependency between E_1 and S_2 because E_2 is interpreted relative to the moment of utterance, not relative to E_1 . In this case, the notion of SOT denotes a situation where there is a conflict between the surface form of a verb in a subordinate clause and its temporal interpretation, and where its surface form is 'coloured' by that of the superordinate verb.

Consequently, it seems that we are dealing with three distinct possibilities when we are faced with a subordinate nominal clause with past tense verbs: 1. the verb of the subordinate clause is deictic (not temporally dependent on the superordinate verb), and does not have shifted interpretation. Examples are "John heard that Mary went to London", and

interpretation a) of "John heard that Mary was pregnant". In other words, this possibility cannot under any circumstance be interpreted as a case of SOT. 2. The verb of the subordinate clause is temporally dependent on the superordinate verb, but we are not dealing with shifted interpretation. Interpretation b) of "John heard that Mary was pregnant" is an example of this. Spanish would require the use of the past perfective in this case: "Juan escuchó que María estuvo en embarazo". In other words, the subordinate verb retains its original SRE-configuration and is temporally interpreted relative to E₁. 3. The verb of the subordinate clause has shifted interpretation, but it is not temporally dependent on the superordinate verb (i.e. it is deictic). The use of the sentence "John heard that Mary was pregnant" to express the idea: "John heard that Mary is pregnant" is an example of this. This is to be distinguished from the cases where the statement is that she was pregnant, and this may or may not still be the case.¹¹² That would not be a case of shifted interpretation. In the case at hand, the former sentence is used to express specifically the content of the latter. Hence, there is a conflict between the surface form of the subordinate verb and its SRE-configuration, and its surface form is 'coloured' by that of the superordinate verb. The subordinate verb has deictic reference.

Hence, we have these three situations: 1. [+deictic, -shift], 2. [-deictic, -shift], 3. [+deictic, +shift].

While Hornstein only presents two different interpretations of the English sentence "John heard that Mary was pregnant", the present proposal gives a full account of the ambiguity of *both* the Spanish equivalents "Juan escuchó que María estaba en embarazo" and "Juan Escuchó que María estuvo en embarazo";

"Juan escuchó que María *estaba* en embarazo"

	DEICTIC	SHIFT
Interpretation a) María was pregnant as he heard it: <i>estaba</i> : E ₂ ,R,S	+	-
Interpretation b) María is pregnant at the moment of utterance: <i>estaba</i> : E ₂ ,R,S	+	+

¹¹² If it were simply a normal case of past imperfective, where the state of affairs may or may not still be valid in the present moment, conversations such as the following would not be acceptable: *Pedro*: "Me pregunto si Mariana está en casa. *Carmen*: -No, Juan dijo que *estaba* en Paris esta semana." (*Pedro*: "I wonder if Mariana is at home. *Carmen*: -No, Juan said that she *was* in Paris this week.")

"Juan Escuchó que María *estuvo* en embarazo"

	DEICTIC	SHIFT
Interpretation a) Juan heard: "María estuvo en embarazo": <i>estuvo</i> : E ₂ R_S ₂	-	-
Interpretation b) Juan heard: "María está en embarazo", but she is no longer pregnant at the moment of utterance: <i>estuvo</i> : E ₂ R_S	+	-

The interpretations that are of particular interest in the present section, are the ones that are not deictic and/or include shifted interpretation (situations 2. and 3. above); these are the cases in which the verb forms have altered meanings compared to what is described as their basic meaning in independent sentences. Consequently, some verb forms that appear in subordinate clauses in the corpus must be treated differently than the verb forms that appear in independent sentences. How these altered interpretations eventually are to be included into the descriptions of the verb tenses' basic temporal_{is} and aspectual contents, will be resolved in the sections where the analyses are conducted.

We have yet to resolve what particular cases constitute true cases of SOT. Both situations 2. and 3. above may be defined by different linguists as cases of SOT. For the present purpose, we might tentatively distinguish them thus: SOT-d = the subordinate verb is temporally interpreted relative to the superordinate verb (i.e. it is not deictic), SOT+s = the subordinate verb has shifted interpretation.

One final remark about the S point for the SOT-d cases is pertinent before we go on to discussing sequence of tenses in Spanish. When the verb of the subordinate clause is temporally interpreted relative to that of the superordinate clause, one might ask whether there is at all grounds for speaking of a second *speech* point for the subordinate verb. That is to say, the situation described by the subordinate clause is not necessarily an *utterance*, but rather a state of affairs. In these cases, then, it might be argued that S should not be defined as the speech point, but rather simply as the most central axis of orientation for the verb at hand. This definition of the S point has many parallels to Rojo's definition of the *eje de orientación*, but it is important to observe that the S point as understood in the present thesis, is *by default* the speech point, and is only to be interpreted as a more general axis of orientation when its default value becomes an impossible interpretation. This is the same interpretation that was proposed by Smith, as presented by Binnick: "Smith says that a time is oriented to what Smith

calls an "orientation time" or OT, which in independent sentences is ST. The next highest (matrix) clause serves to establish the OT for the RT¹¹³ of the complement" (Binnick 348).

5.1.3.2 SOT in Spanish: *la consecutio temporum*

For the scrutiny of the SOT phenomenon in Spanish, we shall inspect one treatment in particular, namely Ángeles Carrasco Gutiérrez' examination of the phenomenon, "El tiempo verbal y la sintaxis oracional. La *consecutio temporum*", in the most extensive current grammar of the Spanish language, Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española.

Carrasco Gutiérrez does not confine her treatment to nominal subordinate clauses, although they constitute her focal area of attention. According to her, confining the attention to nominal subordinate clauses is the most customary approach among linguists who deal with sequence of tenses (3065).

Carrasco Gutiérrez defines *consecutio temporum* in the following manner:

Dicho fenómeno alude a la relación de dependencia que se establece entre las interpretaciones temporales de dos formas verbales si entre sus respectivas oraciones existe asimismo una relación de dependencia o subordinación sintáctica. En otras palabras, hablaremos de concordancia entre el verbo de una oración subordinada y el verbo de su oración principal siempre que el primero oriente sus relaciones temporales con respecto al segundo (3063).¹¹⁴

She elaborates: "En las oraciones subordinadas . . . el tiempo de evaluación para las formas verbales, el eje de deixis temporal, pasa a ser el tiempo del evento de la oración principal"¹¹⁵ (3063). Hence, it seems that Carrasco Gutiérrez' definition of *consecutio temporum* corresponds to the previously defined SOT-d category.

As Carrasco Gutiérrez sets out to specify the relation between SOT and subordinate nominal clauses, she also articulates what is considered here as the first problem of her thesis, namely that it claims that *all* sentences with subordinate nominal clauses involve SOT:

¹¹³ RT = reference time

¹¹⁴ **Translation:** "The mentioned phenomenon alludes to the relation of dependence which is present between the temporal interpretations of two verb forms if there is also a relation of syntactic dependence or subordination between their respective sentences. In other words, we will be talking about agreement between the verb of a subordinate clause and the verb of its superordinate clause whenever the former orients its temporal relations with respect to the latter."

¹¹⁵ **Translation:** "In the subordinate clauses . . . the evaluation time for the verb forms, the axis of temporal deixis, is the time of the event of the superordinate clause."

Las formas verbales de las oraciones sustantivas . . . sitúan en la línea temporal el tiempo en que ocurre el evento subordinado¹¹⁶ con respecto al tiempo en que ocurre el evento principal: el tiempo del evento subordinado puede ser anterior al tiempo del evento de la oración principal, puede ser posterior o puede ser simultáneo (3066).¹¹⁷

She seems to claim that, since the event of the subordinate verb can be anterior, simultaneous, or posterior to the event of the superordinate verb, it must also have it as a deictic anchor, i.e. it is temporally dependent on it. As we shall see, (and indeed have seen), this is not always the case; the chronological temporal order of E_1 and E_2 can in many cases be determined without the presence of temporal dependency between them. In other words, it can be established even in cases where the verb signalling E_2 is deictic. Carrasco Gutiérrez' claim that verb forms in subordinate nominal clauses, *by virtue* of their very position, are temporally dependent on the superordinate verb (3088), appears to indicate that she equates syntactic subordination with semantic (temporal) dependency.

The linguist mentioned puts forth a high number of arguments in favour of her view, all of which are inadequate, as will be shown in the succeeding paragraphs. At the end of this discussion, we will briefly examine Comrie's treatment of the matter, since his position seems to be consistent with that of Carrasco Gutiérrez.

The latter linguist starts off with an example which, according to the criteria posited in the present thesis, does not constitute a case of SOT. Carrasco Gutiérrez claims that there is temporal dependency between the two finite verbs of the following sentence: "Juan nos dijo hace dos días que María *está* embarazada"¹¹⁸ (3063). The fact that we infer, upon hearing the mentioned utterance, that María must have been pregnant at the time at which Juan declared it however, should not be considered an attestation of the fact that there is temporal dependency between *dijo* and *está* in this case, i.e. that *está* (S,R,E) expresses primarily simultaneity with a past event. The present tense of the subordinate clause here indicates quite simply that María is pregnant at the moment of utterance, i.e. *está* is deictic. It is our extralinguistic

¹¹⁶ The fact that Carrasco Gutiérrez talks about a subordinate (and principal) *event*, instead of a subordinate (and principal) *verb*, indicates that she does not distinguish clearly between the formal *syntax* of the phrase, and the elements of the forms' *semantic content*; it is the verb that is subordinate, by virtue of its position in a nominal subordinate clause, and not the event, which is not a linguistic form, and cannot have syntactic function or position.

¹¹⁷ **Translation:** "The verb forms of the nominal subordinate clauses . . . locate the time at which the subordinate event happens on the timeline with respect to the time at which the principal event happens: the time of the subordinate event may be anterior to the event of the superordinate clause, it may be posterior or it may be simultaneous."

¹¹⁸ **Gloss:** "Juan told [simple past perfective] us two days ago that María *is* pregnant."

knowledge that allows us to infer the time span for which the event expressed by the subordinate clause has validity, and which causes us to regard the sentence as an acceptable one. Correspondingly, it is our extralinguistic knowledge that leads us to reject the following sentence, a sentence which Carrasco Gutiérrez, strangely enough, cites in support of the claim that there must be temporal dependency between the two verbs where subordinate nominal clauses are involved: "#Juan nos dijo hace dos años que María *está* embarazada"¹¹⁹ (3063). This sentence is unacceptable, not simply by virtue of the tense forms involved, but by virtue of the information added by the temporal adverbial coupled with our knowledge of the duration of a pregnancy. The fact that this last sentence, along with another one put forth by the mentioned linguist: "??Juan pensó que María *está* embarazada"¹²⁰ (3064) is unacceptable, must be taken as evidence of the fact that the subordinate verb is deictic, and not, as Carrasco Gutiérrez would have it, dependent on the superordinate verb; if its deictic centre indeed were given by the superordinate verb in these cases, the sentences should be acceptable, as there would be an unequivocal relation of simultaneity between E₁ and E₂.

The second argument that Carrasco Gutiérrez proposes in favour of the view that all sentences with subordinate nominal clauses involve SOT, revolves around the contrast between nominal and relative subordinate clauses. The linguist in question comments on the fact that the first one of the following two sentences is unacceptable, while the second one is not: "#Juan {dijo/pensó} el lunes que María *visitó* El Prado el martes"¹²¹ and "Juan conoció el lunes a la chica que os *visitó* el martes"¹²² (3065). Upon identifying this contrast (unacceptable vs. acceptable), Carrasco Gutiérrez concludes:

Este contraste pone de manifiesto que el verbo de una oración sustantiva ha de orientar sus relaciones temporales con respecto al tiempo del verbo principal de forma obligatoria y que existe la posibilidad, en cambio, de que el verbo de una oración subordinada de relativo oriente sus relaciones temporales exclusivamente con respecto al momento del habla (3065).¹²³

¹¹⁹ **Gloss:** "#Juan told [simple past perfective] us two years ago that María *is* pregnant."

¹²⁰ **Gloss:** "??Juan thought [simple past perfective] that María *is* pregnant."

¹²¹ **Gloss:** "#On Monday Juan {said/thought [simple past perfective]} that María *visited* [simple past perfective] El Prado on Tuesday."

¹²² **Gloss:** "On Monday Juan became [simple past perfective] acquainted with the girl that *visited* [simple past perfective] you on Tuesday."

¹²³ **Translation:** "This contrast confirms the fact that the verb of a nominal clause obligatorily orients its temporal relations with respect to the superordinate verb, and that for the verb of a subordinate relative clause on the other hand, the possibility is present for it to orient its temporal relations exclusively with respect to the moment of speech."

Firstly, and foremost, Carrasco Gutiérrez' main rationalization here is logically invalid; the fact that one category (subordinate relative clauses) *optionally* includes a certain feature (temporal dependency) can under no circumstances be taken as evidence that another category (subordinate nominal clauses) *obligatorily* includes this feature. Carrasco Gutiérrez offers only one single example of a subordinate nominal clause here, which happens to include SOT. The fact that the relative clause doesn't, is not an indication that *all* nominal clauses do. Secondly, as we shall see later on, it might not be justifiable to suggest that there are *any* cases of SOT between the verb of a subordinate relative clause and that of the main clause; relative clauses are subordinate to a noun, not a verb.

Carrasco Gutiérrez goes on to offer examples of sentences with SOT that have present and future tense in the main clause. For the ones with present tense in the superordinate clause, it makes no sense to talk of sequence of tenses, as the superordinate verb at any event corresponds temporally to the moment of utterance. The linguist mentioned makes the following clarification about the sentences with future tense in the superordinate clause: ". . . la subordinación a un futuro tiene como consecuencia la pérdida por parte del tiempo verbal subordinado de su referencia deíctica al momento de la enunciación"¹²⁴ (3067). First of all, if this statement is valid, it seems somewhat redundant, since Carrasco Gutiérrez has already claimed that *all* subordinate nominal clauses involve the loss of deictic reference on the part of the subordinate verb. Secondly, the claim in itself is false; despite the fact that Carrasco Gutiérrez offers examples of sentences with future tense in the main clause that involve SOT, (such as the sentence "María sabrá el jueves qué nota *obtuvo* el día anterior"¹²⁵ (3066)), it is entirely conceivable to construct a parallel sentence where the subordinate verb is deictic: "María sabrá el jueves qué nota *obtuvo* ayer"¹²⁶. The corpus from La Paz also includes an example of a sentence with future tense in the main clause (albeit with a modal interpretation) and a deictic subordinate past tense verb: "Entonces, comprenderás que no pude dejar ya el periodismo . . ." ¹²⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 132). In other words, it is not the case that all sentences with future tense in the main clause include SOT when a subordinate nominal clause is involved.

As for nominal clauses that are subordinate to a past tense verb, they have already been treated rather extensively in the previous chapter, but a few of Carrasco Gutierrez' claims

¹²⁴ **Translation:** ". . . for the subordinate verb, the subordination to a future tense has as a consequence the loss of deictic reference (on the part of the subordinate verb)."

¹²⁵ **Gloss:** "On Thursday María will know what grade she *obtained* [simple past perfective] the day before."

¹²⁶ **Gloss:** "On Thursday María will know what grade she *obtained* [simple past perfective] yesterday."

¹²⁷ **Gloss:** "So you'll understand that I couldn't [simple past perfective] leave journalism . . ."

require comment. The vast majority of the examples that she offers, such as the imperfective and the pluperfect in the subordinate clause to express simultaneity and anteriority respectively (relative to the main clause verb), do not constitute cases of SOT; in both instances the verbs have deictic reference, with E_2 and r/R respectively coinciding temporally with E_1 : "Juan pensó que María *estaba embarazada*"¹²⁸ (3064), and "Juan reconoció que siempre *habíamos estado* en lo cierto"¹²⁹ (3066). As I mentioned in section 5.1.3.1, the only instances that can be interpreted as cases of SOT, (either SOT-d or SOT+s), are the ones where there is a conflict between the surface form of the verb and the semantic interpretation that it would be given in an independent sentence.

Finally, Carrasco Gutiérrez offers an example of a sentence with a subordinate nominal clause which, at first glance, seems to be an exception to her rule (that sentences that include subordinate nominal clauses always involve SOT). According to her, when both the superordinate and the subordinate verbs are in the simple past perfective, the subordinate verb can be interpreted as deictic, as in the following case: "Por fin *occurrió* que Juan y María *hicieron las paces*"¹³⁰ (3081). However, Carrasco Gutiérrez maintains that this example is not an exception to her rule, by claiming that it is not a true case of subordination (3081). She seems to reach this conclusion based simply on the fact that both verbs are temporally oriented with respect to the moment of utterance. She contrasts it to a parallel example which, according to her, does include SOT: "*Vimos* que Juan *se marchó* con María"¹³¹ (3081), maintaining that the latter is a true case of subordination (3081). Again, she appears to conflate the notions of syntactic function and semantic content; *both* sentences are unequivocally cases of syntactic subordination. According to the view adopted here, the apparent exception is just one of numerous examples of sentences with subordinate nominal clauses which do not include SOT.

Consequently, if one takes care to distinguish consistently between syntactic function and semantic content, one is forced to differentiate between sentences with subordinate nominal clauses that include SOT and those that do not.

As I already mentioned, Comrie arrives at some conclusions that appear to be consistent with Carrasco Gutiérrez' view, that is, he maintains that SOT is present even in cases where the subordinate verb at first glance seems to be deictic. Certain reservations must be made

¹²⁸ **Gloss:** "Juan thought [simple past perfective] that María *was* [past imp.] pregnant."

¹²⁹ **Gloss:** "Juan admitted [simple past perfective] that we *had been* right all along."

¹³⁰ **Gloss:** "It finally *happened* [simple past perfective] that Juan and María *made* [simple past perfective] peace."

¹³¹ **Gloss:** "We *saw* [simple past perfective] that Juan *left* [simple past perfective] with María."

however: Comrie only treats tense in indirect speech, and only English (although he offers some Spanish examples, commenting that they are similar to English ("Indirect speech" 270-71)). To the best of my knowledge, this brief discussion is also relevant for the equivalent Spanish constructions. In his article, Comrie states: "The main aim of this paper is to show that tense in indirect speech in English is determined by sequence of tenses . . ." ("Indirect speech" 271). He elaborates:

. . . some data will be considered where [the SOT rule] either makes or appears to make incorrect predictions, including some instances where absolute deixis at least appears to make correct predictions. In all instances, however, it will turn out that the sequence of tenses rule remains intact ("Indirect speech" 283).

The sequence of tenses rule that Comrie refers to is the following: ". . . If the tense of the verb of reporting is non-past, then the tense of the original utterance is retained; if the tense of the verb of reporting is past, then the tense of the original utterance is backshifted into the past" ("Indirect speech" 279). Hence, Comrie's notion of SOT entails that the subordinate verb is 'coloured' by the tense of the superordinate verb, but no specific requisite of temporal dependency (such as $S_2 = E_1$) is posited.

Comrie offers some examples that contradict the SOT rule, such as "Kit said that he is sick" ("Indirect speech" 285), and explains how some linguists (in accordance with the view adopted here) maintain that both verbs have absolute deixis in these cases, and the SOT rule does not apply. Comrie, on the other hand, claims that the SOT rule applies also in these instances, because there are cases that cannot be explained by absolute deixis, but rather by a revised SOT rule called *continuing applicability*. The rule is the same as the aforementioned one, with an added sentence: ". . . , except that if the content of the indirect speech has continuing applicability, the backshifting is optional" ("Indirect speech" 285). In Comrie's view, this is different from absolute deixis, since absolute deixis cannot account for the unacceptability of sentence b) as an interpretation of sentence a) here: a) "Yesterday, Linda said, 'I will arrive the day after tomorrow,' but she immediately changed her mind," b) "*Yesterday, Linda said that she will arrive tomorrow, but she immediately changed her mind" ("Indirect speech" 286). Comrie explains his view: ". . . in [b]) the final clause makes it clear that the content of the original utterance does not have continuing applicability. What is crucial in the examples discussed in this section is thus not the time reference of the content of the original utterance, but rather its continuing applicability . . ." ("Indirect speech" 286).

Three main objections, which will allow us to retain absolute deixis as an explanation, can be identified regarding Comrie's account. Firstly, if there is no backshift in these cases (cf.

the revised SOT rule, 'backshifting is optional'), what remains as the axis of orientation for the subordinate verb, if not the moment of utterance? Secondly, as Comrie rejects the notion of absolute deixis, he refers to 'the time reference of the content of the *original utterance*'. When the claim is made that the verb of the subordinate clause has deictic reference however, we are not talking about the original utterance. It is self-evident that an utterance cannot have an S point which is posterior to the utterance itself. Rather, the state of affairs described by the subordinate verb is to be interpreted as current and relative to the present moment, but with temporal validity also for the past moment of utterance. Thirdly, for a verb in the present tense, 'current relevance' and deictic reference amount to the same thing. In other words, if an informant were to utter "*Yesterday, Linda said that she will arrive tomorrow, but she immediately changed her mind", it would amount to saying "It is true at the present moment that Linda will arrive tomorrow, but it's not". Hence, the reason why the former (and the latter) sentence is semantically unacceptable, is that the informant negates his own statement in one and the same sentence, and not because absolute deixis is an unacceptable reading. A present tense form that has current relevance is also deictic.

Consequently, the notion that a distinction must be made between subordinate nominal clauses that include SOT and those that do not, remains valid (also for indirect speech), and will be used as one of the criteria for establishing the temporal_s and aspectual contents of the verb forms in the corpus.

As previously indicated, Carrasco Gutiérrez does not confine her treatment of SOT to nominal clauses. She also includes a brief discussion of relative, causal, and temporal clauses. As regards the former two types, after a consideration of some examples involving the three relations of anteriority, simultaneity and posteriority (3106-17), she concludes:

En este apartado se han ofrecido ejemplos en los que las formas verbales subordinadas no orientan sus relaciones temporales con respecto a las formas verbales de la oración principal. Recordemos que esta posibilidad está reservada para las formas verbales de oraciones subordinadas distintas de las sustantivas, lo que demuestra que su dependencia temporal con respecto al verbo de la oración principal es menor (3117).¹³²

¹³² **Translation:** "In this subchapter we have presented examples in which the subordinate verb forms do not orient their temporal relations with respect to the verb forms of the superordinate clause. We have to keep in mind that this possibility is reserved for the verb forms of subordinate clauses that are not nominal, which in turn demonstrates that their [verbs of non-nominal clauses] temporal dependency with respect to the verb of the superordinate clause is weaker."

In other words, none of the examples put forth by Carrasco Gutiérrez include SOT. Her conclusion upon observing this state of affairs is that the subordinate verbs in these constructions have a *weaker* temporal dependency on the superordinate verb than what is the case for nominal clauses. The view adopted here, however, is that there are *no* cases of temporal dependency between the verb of a superordinate clause and that of a subordinate relative or causal clause; for the relative clauses ("Ayer *oímos* el disco que le *regalaremos* a Juan en su cumpleaños"¹³³ (Carrasco Gutiérrez 3108)), the subordinate clause is subordinate to a noun, not to a verb, hence there are no restrictions on the choice of tense for the subordinate verb relative to the superordinate one; both are deictic. For the causal clauses ("Quiero un helado de pistacho porque los otros sabores no me *llaman* la atención"¹³⁴ (Carrasco Gutiérrez 3108)), although considered subordinate, they are not *governed* by the superordinate verb, as opposed to nominal clauses, which can function for example as subjects or direct objects. Hence, the syntactic and semantic bond between the subordinate and main clause is weaker. The semantic relation between a subordinate causal clause and the main clause is one of cause and effect, both of which are mediated relative to the moment of utterance. Consequently, in the present thesis, the SOT phenomenon is not considered applicable to sentences with relative and causal clauses.

Carrasco Gutiérrez offers the following description of subordinate temporal clauses: "Las oraciones temporales de las que nos ocuparemos a continuación contribuyen a situar en la línea temporal el tiempo del evento denotado por el verbo principal"¹³⁵ (3117). For subordinate temporal clauses however, "it is the subordinator"¹³⁶, rather than FIN, which defines the special syntactic and semantic status of the clause . . ." (Klein 219). In other words, for a sentence such as "Todos *ayudaron* a Juan mientras *pintó* su casa"¹³⁷ (Carrasco Gutiérrez 3122), it is the word *mientras* which determines the temporal relation (simultaneity) between the main and subordinate clause. Carrasco Gutiérrez seems to be aware of this fact as she subdivides his examples according to the kind of subordinator by which the clause is introduced (3117). This causes her to claim, as she did for the relative and causal clauses, that the temporal dependency between the subordinate and main verb is *weaker* than for nominal clauses. However, there is no direct temporal dependency between the subordinate and main

¹³³ **Gloss:** "Yesterday we *listened to* [simple past perfective] the cd that we *will give* to Juan for his birthday."

¹³⁴ **Gloss:** "I *want* a pistachio ice cream because I *don't* like the other flavours."

¹³⁵ **Translation:** "The temporal sentences that we will pay attention to now contribute to locating the time of the event of the principal verb on the timeline."

¹³⁶ "A subordinate clause is typically marked by some element such as the relative pronoun, a subordinate conjunction or some other complementiser. I shall call this element the 'subordinator'" (Klein 219).

¹³⁷ **Gloss:** "Everybody *helped* [simple past perfective] Juan while/when he *painted* [simple past perfective] his house."

verb of a construction with a subordinate temporal clause; the relationship between E_1 and E_2 is mediated by the subordinator. In other words, the events or reference points of the two verbs might have a determinate chronological order, but the subordinate verb is not temporally oriented respective of the superordinate one.

Consequently, the present analysis starts from the notion that only sentences with subordinate *nominal* clauses may include SOT. Furthermore, the only instances that will be considered cases of SOT are the ones where the subordinate verb is 'coloured' by the tense of the superordinate verb, and where there is a conflict between the form of the subordinate verb and its semantic content, that is, its content differs from that which it would be assigned in an independent clause. In the SOT cases, then, the subordinate verb either loses its deictic reference or it has shifted interpretation.

5.1.4 Systemic vs. nonsystemic functions

It is a well-known fact that one linguistic form will not always have exactly the same meaning in all the contexts in which it appears. Sometimes the different interpretations can be regarded as subsenses of its main or core meaning, but sometimes a meaning seems to be at odds with the original meaning of the form. When it comes to the verb forms of Spanish, Bull offers an account of the latter phenomenon by distinguishing between the verb forms' *systemic functions* and their *nonsystemic functions*: ". . . each tense form has theoretically two potentials. It has, first, a function which is defined by its systemic position and, second, a function which is defined by the very fact that there is some arbitrary shift in systemic position" (Time 60). He illustrates what is meant by *systemic function*: he mentions how for example the *e* of the present set contrasts with the *ía* or *í* of the past set, and explains: "These basic contrasts exemplify the fundamental structure of the tense system and the **systemic function** of each morpheme" (Spanish 159). Rojo makes a parallel distinction which he labels *usos rectos* vs. *usos dislocados*; he states that the verb forms are employed with their *usos rectos* when their meaning can be defined in what he calls the Saussurean way: "Asignar una fórmula [vectorial] a cada elemento de la conjugación supone caracterizarla; en ella se indica lo que consideramos su posición inicial en el sistema"¹³⁸ ("La temporalidad" 90). He explains *usos dislocados* thus: "[Existe] la posibilidad de alterar la estructura del sistema en ciertos

¹³⁸ **Translation:** "The act of assigning a [vector] formula to every element of the conjugation implies categorizing it; the formula indicates what we consider to be its primary position in the system."

puntos y según unas líneas determinadas. Este último es lo que llamaremos *dislocación del sistema temporal*¹³⁹ (Ibid.).

In order to accomplish a meaningful analysis of the verb forms in the corpus, it is essential to distinguish between their systemic and nonsystemic functions. Bull explains: ". . . the functions of a form cannot be defined unless we know what systemic properties it has" (Time 34). In other words, the fact that each verb form has specific relations to the other forms of the system must be borne in mind as their behaviour in context is observed. Bull comments: "The immediate task is not to discover all possible tense form contexts . . . but to define the properties of tense forms in terms of their relationship to each other, that is, to define their individual roles in terms of the total tense system and not in terms of other systems with which they happen to be compatible" (Time 34). Bull also claims that a form's systemic function can be defined without the aid of context (Spanish 159), a statement that is interpreted here as implying that a form's systemic function is the meaning which it contributes to the context in which it appears, without the aid of other contextual elements. In my view, it is entirely legitimate, (although seemingly paradoxical), to look to the interaction between form and context to arrive at a determination of the 'context-independent' sense of the form, i.e. its systemic function. In other words, a verb form's systemic properties (as well as its nonsystemic properties) can be determined by observing its behaviour in context.

Logically, in order to determine what a form's nonsystemic functions are, one must first establish its systemic functions. According to Bull, nonsystemic functions appear when there is an obvious logical conflict between the systemic function and the context (Spanish 160). Thus, for example, the Spanish future tense has a nonsystemic function whereby its plus vector (of its systemic function) is neutralized as the form is combined with an adverb which expresses zero vector, yielding the interpretation of a conjecture: "Estará cantando ahora mismo"¹⁴⁰ (Bull Time 60). Crucially, the fact that a form appears with nonsystemic functions does not negate its fundamental systemic functions, rather, it confirms them; "La suspensión o incluso la anulación de las funciones iniciales implican su previa existencia"¹⁴¹ (Rojo "La temporalidad" 90). This condition resembles that of metaphoric use of language: the meaning of a form can only be metaphorical in relation to an original literal meaning. Bull makes the same observation as Rojo, and elaborates: ". . . the use of something for which it was not

¹³⁹ **Translation:** "The possibility exists to alter the structure of the system in certain points and following certain guidelines. This is what we will call *dislocation of the tense system*."

¹⁴⁰ **Gloss:** "He will be singing right now."

¹⁴¹ **Translation:** "The suspension of, or even the annulment of, the primary functions imply their previous existence."

originally constructed does not interfere with its primary function, provided there is no attempt to use a screwdriver as a screwdriver and as a paint paddle simultaneously" (Time 60).

Bull offers a detailed explanation of how to determine whether a form has systemic or nonsystemic functions. The basic principles that he outlines here will be used as a criterion for analyzing the verb forms of the corpus:

The Spanish tense forms . . . contain morphemes which can be organized in terms of two basic systems, the aspect and the vector systems. According to this formulation, the tense system is, in reality, a fusion of two systems, and there are two criteria which determine whether a form function is systemic or nonsystemic.

A function is systemic when it exemplifies the unique exchange value used to organize the set. It is nonsystemic whenever it exemplifies a concept of order or aspect which is in conflict with the exchange value assigned the form in organizing the set. . . .

. . . any deviation from the pattern of the set in terms of either aspect or order is considered a valid reason for classifying the function as nonsystemic (Time 70).

Specifically, a form displaying a non-systemic function has lost its temporal_{tm} interpretation and acquires a modal one.

5.2 Simple past perfective (*Canté*) and imperfective past (*cantaba*)

The semantic oppositions between the simple past perfective and imperfective past in Spanish have been accounted for in many different ways by various linguists, from the ones who claim that the opposition is purely temporal_{ts} to those that identify several aspectual contents for each tense. Kamp and Reyle comment: ". . . French and the other Romance languages, have two morphologically distinct past tenses, a simple past (the French *Passé Simple*) and a continuous past (the French *Imparfait*). To articulate precisely what the difference between these tenses is has turned out to be surprisingly difficult" (1).

The main objective of the present analysis is to identify the *systemic functions* of the two verb forms at hand as they appear in the corpus, and through that, to establish the systemic opposition between these two tenses in the Spanish of La Paz. Existing descriptions of the contents of these two forms will also be scrutinized and questioned in light of the analysis. After having identified the forms' systemic functions, I will single out the cases of nonsystemic functions, if any are present.

The many descriptions put forth by the most prominent Hispanic linguists of the two tenses at hand, as well as Comrie's definitions of the *perfective* and the *imperfective*, can be condensed down to four principal values for *canté* (the simple past perfective), and eight for *cantaba* (the imperfective past).

For the simple past perfective (*canté*), the first value is *global*, as proposed by Ofelia Kovacci (70) for the Spanish verb form, and by Comrie (Aspect 16) for perfectivity in general. As we have already seen, the latter linguist explains the concept thus: ". . . perfectivity indicates the view of a situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation . . ." (Aspect 16).

The second value, *absolute past* (Bello; Real Academia; Rojo and Veiga), is of a purely temporal_{ts} nature and, as we have seen, some linguists maintain that this is the only semantic specification necessary to distinguish the simple past perfective (*canté*) from the imperfective past (*cantaba*) (which is defined as a *relative past*). Bello maintains that the simple past perfective (*canté*) expresses: ". . . la anterioridad del atributo al acto de la palabra" (200).

The third value, *initiative aspect at RP*¹⁴², is offered by Bull as a subsense of the simple past perfective (*canté*) which only manifests itself in certain cases. He explains: "The event [has] . . . initiative aspect at RP" (Time 95). He presents an example: "Aquella misma noche, Mauro supo¹⁴³ que Soledad había quedado preñada"¹⁴⁴ (Ibid. 95).

The fourth value, *terminative aspect at RP*, is identified both by Bull and by Alarcos Llorach. Bull offers an example: "A los 10 días se abrió un pequeño absceso parietal"¹⁴⁵ (Ibid. 95).

For the imperfective past (*cantaba*), eight values could be identified among the linguists.

The first one, *Reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation* (Kovacci; Real Academia; Comrie Aspect), is a rather broad definition. Comrie explains that the imperfective aspect is recognized by: ". . . explicit reference to the internal temporal structure of a situation, viewing a situation from within . . ." (Aspect 24).

The second value, *co-preterite* (Bull Time; Bello; Real Academia; Rojo and Veiga), is purely temporal_{ts}. Rojo and Veiga describe it thus: ". . . *llegaba* indica simultaneidad con respecto a un punto anterior al origen"¹⁴⁶ (38).

¹⁴² RP = retrospective point. This point was mentioned and described in chapter 4.2.1.

¹⁴³ In other words, the difference between *supo* and *sabía* corresponds to the one between *found out* and *knew*.

¹⁴⁴ **Gloss:** "That very night, Mauro found out [simple past perfective] that Soledad had become pregnant."

¹⁴⁵ **Gloss:** "Ten days later, a small parietal abscess opened [simple past perfective]."

¹⁴⁶ **Translation:** ". . . *arrived* [past imp.] indicates simultaneity with respect to a point anterior to the *origen*."

The third value, *iterative* (Bull Time; Real Academia), is described in the following manner by Bull: "A series of events is imperfect at RP" (Time 100).

The fourth value, *durative* (Alarcos Llorach; Real Academia; Comrie Aspect), signals: "... a situation viewed in its duration" (Comrie Aspect 26).

The fifth value is *habitual* (Comrie Aspect). Comrie presents this sense and *durative* as opposite values of the principal subdivision of the imperfective aspect. According to him, a habitual situation is "... a situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time" (Aspect 27-28).

The sixth value, *non-terminative* (Alarcos Llorach), describes a situation that hasn't been concluded.

The last two values are described as special cases, occurring only rarely. They are: *conative* (Real Academia), which expresses "... acciones pasadas que no llegan a consumarse" ¹⁴⁷ (Real Academia 467). In other words, the *conative* denotes a situation or event that was intended but which never came to occur. La Real Academia offers an example of this use of the imperfective: "*Salía* cuando llegó una visita" ¹⁴⁸ (467). The last value is defined by Bull as expressing that *a preliminary phase is imperfect at RP* (Time 99). He specifies: "The decision or commitment to perform the event was anterior to but still operative at RP" (ibid. 99), and offers an example: "Ya sabía ella con quién se *casaba*" ¹⁴⁹ (ibid. 99).

All the mentioned descriptions of the two verb forms at hand yield the following, somewhat confusing panorama:

¹⁴⁷ **Translation:** "... past actions which are never accomplished"

¹⁴⁸ **Gloss:** "I *left* [past imp.] [i.e. *was leaving*] when a visit arrived [simple past perfective]."

¹⁴⁹ **Gloss:** "She already knew [past imp.] who she *married* [past imp.] [i.e. *was marrying*]."

Table 4

Temporal_{ts} and aspectual values traditionally assigned to the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*)

CANTÉ	CANTABA
(Past) Global	(Past) Referene to internal structure
Absolute past, O-V	Co-preterite, (O-V)oV
(Past) Terminative	(Past) Non-terminative
(Past) Initiative	(Past) Durative
	(Past) Iterative
	(Past) Habitual
	(Past) Conative
	Preliminary phase imperfect at RP

Hence, it seems that the overview that one gets after consulting the different grammars for a description of the two tenses in question is less than enlightening; how do all this values relate to one another? Are some of them subordinate to others? Are they all intrinsically part of the forms' semantics, or are there other elements that may produce the interpretations in question? Do these two tenses contrast aspectually or temporally_{ts}, or both?

Upon a preliminary scrutiny of the definitions and examples offered by the mentioned linguists, it becomes clear that many of the definitions are inconceivable without the inclusion of certain contextual elements or the interaction between the lexical root and the grammatical morpheme. In the present chapter we will demonstrate how the analysis of the verb forms in a corpus can simplify the panorama, as long as the distinction between grammatical morpheme, lexical root, and context is upheld.

5.2.1 The simple past perfective (*canté*)

The analysis of the present section, as well as the section that treats the imperfective past, will begin with an inspection of the forms that are accompanied by a TADV. Although this only constitutes a minority of the total instances of the simple past perfective (10%) in the corpus, a preliminary examination of how the TADVs modify the verb, i.e. whether they have FIN or INF-specification, will be an indication of what systemic properties might ultimately be assigned the verb tense. Subsequently, the rest of the occurrences will be analyzed in light

of the descriptions exposed in the section 5.2, and with the formal tools of Rojo, Reichenbach and Klein in mind. The interaction of the simple past perfective and the imperfective past will also be examined. This analysis should result in a specification of what the systemic and nonsystemic properties of the simple past perfective are. A comparison of the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*), whereby their status as marked or unmarked terms of an opposition is established, will be conducted after the analysis of the imperfective past, at the end of chapter 5.

5.2.1.1 TADVs with *canté*

Of the 1652 cases of the simple past perfective found in the corpus, 163 (10%) are modified by TADVs. I subcategorized the individual occurrences of TADVs in the corpus into the classes previously described by Klein.

Firstly, the occurrences that were classified as TADV-Ps, that is, those that ". . . specify time spans in relation to other time spans, which are supposed to be given in context," modified 65% of all the 163 verb forms that were modified by a TADV. In other words, these verb forms were modified by TADVs like: ". . . *yesterday, before the autopsy, much later, at five o'clock, in the night*" (Klein 149). Crucially, and as can be discerned from Klein's examples, in order for a TADV to "specify time spans in relation to other time spans", that is, for it to locate a situation in time, the TADV itself must not necessarily be of a deictic or anaphoric nature, as long as it is always somehow clear what relation it has to the moment of speech or to the event of the verb it modifies. In other words, TADVs like *el año setenta y seis*¹⁵⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 24) and *bajo su gobierno*¹⁵¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 64) are categorized as TADV-Ps, in addition to TADVs like the anaphoric *después*¹⁵² (Gutiérrez Marrone 63) and the deictic *en septiembre del año pasado*¹⁵³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 59). Secondly, a *time span*, as understood here (and by Klein, judging from his examples), is not necessarily an extended period of time, but can also be a point.

As I have mentioned, a TADV-P can either have FIN-specification or INF-specification, that is, it either modifies an utterance's TT or its TSit. For example, in the sentence "Mary had sold the potatoes at five o'clock", *at five o'clock* may have INF-specification, enriching the

¹⁵⁰ **Gloss:** *the year of seventy-six*

¹⁵¹ **Gloss:** *during his time in office*

¹⁵² **Gloss:** *after/afterwards*

¹⁵³ **Gloss:** *September of last year*

lexical content to <Mary sell the potatoes at five o'clock> or it may have FIN-specification, in which case it specifies TT, which is posterior to TSit (the selling of the potatoes). However, for the specification of the contents of the simple past perfective in the corpus, there were no cases where INF-specification and FIN-specification could clearly be distinguished. This is most likely an attestation of the fact that, for the perfective in Spanish, unlike the pluperfect or the imperfective, TT and TSit coincide. As we have seen, this is not an uncommon interpretation of the perfective aspect. In other words, for an example such as "El sistema de semestres ya *empezó el sesenta y cinco* . . ." ¹⁵⁴ (Gutiérrez Marrone 128), it cannot be ascertained whether *el sesenta y cinco* specifies the TT to which the lexical content <El sistema de semestres *empezar*> is linked (i.e. anterior to S, perfective), or whether it enriches the lexical content itself, to <El sistema de semestres *empezar el sesenta y cinco*>. FIN-specification and INF-specification would yield the same interpretation in this case.

As it turns out, it is the cases where a past perfective is modified by a TADV-D or a TADV-Q that are most useful for the determination of the temporal_s and aspectual features of the simple past perfective. The fact that they unequivocally have INF-specification allows us to single out what semantic contribution the tense morpheme of the verb (specifying TT) has to be.

The occurrences that were classified as TADV-Ds, that is, those that ". . . specify the duration of temporal entities, like time spans and/or perhaps situations obtaining at time spans," modified 14% of all the 157 past perfective verb forms that were modified by a TADV. In other words, these verb forms were modified by TADVs like: ". . . *briefly, for a while, within one hour, during the autopsy*, etc." (Klein 149). Examples taken from the corpus are: *cuarenta años* (48), *unas tres semanas* (61), and *durante seis años* (110). ¹⁵⁵ Unlike TADV-Ps, TADV-Ds do not specify time spans relative to other time spans, and they do not necessarily *delimit* the event temporally, as shown with the example *mucho tiempo* ¹⁵⁶ (110). Nevertheless, we interpret the event of the following sentence as anterior to S and terminated: ". . . mi empleada esta que te digo que *estuvo mucho tiempo* . . ." ¹⁵⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 140). In other words, *mucho tiempo*, being a TADV-D, enriches the lexical content of the phrase, to <mi empleada . . . *estar mucho tiempo*>, which in turn is linked to the TT of the tense form, the simple past perfective. If we assume that the latter, that is the tense morpheme of *estuvo*, expresses anteriority to S and temporal delimitation, we can successfully account for the

¹⁵⁴ **Gloss:** "The semester system *started* already in sixty five . . . "

¹⁵⁵ **Gloss:** (for) *fourty years, some three weeks, for six years*

¹⁵⁶ **Gloss:** (for) *a long time*

¹⁵⁷ **Gloss:** ". . . this maid of mine that I'm saying that *stayed* [simple past perfective] *for a long time* . . . "

interpretation of the whole utterance, that is, that the described state of affairs had a certain duration in the past, but that it is no longer valid. In other words, from examples such as this one, we can extract what must be the semantic contribution of the tense morpheme of the verb, that is, the content of the particle which expresses its *systemic function*. So far, then, it seems that the simple past perfective of Spanish locates an event in the past and somehow delimits it temporally. Not unexpectedly, the vast majority of TADV-Ds that appear with this verb tense in the corpus, although they are interpreted as having INF-specification, also temporally delimit the situation described by the verb, although this is not a requirement.

Before I present the analysis of the TADV-Qs, there are a few special cases that need mention.

As might be expected, not all the TADVs could be neatly fitted into one category or the other. Three occurrences included features of both a TADV-P and a TADV-D: *en los cuarenta años que estuvo en poder* (Gutiérrez Marrone 52), *del tres al catorce del septiembre* (58), and *esos trece años* (101).¹⁵⁸ The first case can be divided up quite plainly; *en los cuarenta años* is a TADV-D, while *que estuvo en poder* has the features of a TADV-P. The second case is classified as a TADV-D in virtue of that fact that it specifies the duration of a situation, and as a TADV-P in virtue of the fact that it stipulates *when* the situation took place (the context allows us to infer what particular September the informant is referring to). The third case is a TADV-D, again, because it specifies the duration of a situation, and a TADV-P because it, anaphorically, signals exactly *what* thirteen years the informant is talking about, i.e. it specifies a time span relative to another. These three cases, then, are registered both as TADV-Ps and as TADV-Ds, which is the reason why there seems to be more than a 100% total of TADVs.

The occurrences that were specified as TADV-Qs, that is, those that "indicate the frequency of temporal entities, like time spans or possibly situations . . . which obtain at these time spans," modified 23% of all the 157 past perfective verb forms that were modified by a TADV. In other words, these verb forms were modified by TADVs like: *often, once in a while, rarely* (Klein 149). Crucially, TADV-Qs can also modify events that occurred only once, since *one time* can be claimed to be a frequency. Consequently, TADVs such as *en una ocasión* (Gutiérrez Marrone 19) and *una vez* (32)¹⁵⁹ are also classified as TADV-Qs, as long as they do not specify time spans in relation to other time spans (in which case they would be

¹⁵⁸ **Gloss:** (during) the forty years that he was [simple past perfective] in power, from the third to the fourteenth of September, those three years

¹⁵⁹ **Gloss:** on one occasion, once

TADV-Ps). Furthermore, *never* and *always* are also interpreted here as expressing frequency, hence TADVs like *nunca* (Gutiérrez Marrone 38), *jamás* (40), and *siempre* (223)¹⁶⁰ are interpreted as TADV-Qs here, in addition to the intuitively more obvious ones, like for example *varias veces*¹⁶¹ (64). Essentially, the interaction between TADV-Qs and the past perfective can be analysed the same way as with the TADV-Ds, since they have INF-specification. In other words, the TADV-Q of the sentence ". . . rusos que combatían a Napoleón, *siempre concentraron* su ataque en Napoleón ¿no?"¹⁶² (Gutiérrez Marrone 63) enriches the lexical content, to <[los] rusos . . . *siempre concentrar su ataque en Napoleón* >, which in turn is linked to the TT of the tense form. If we assume that the latter, that is the tense morpheme of *concentraron*, expresses anteriority to S and temporal delimitation, we can successfully account for the interpretation of the whole utterance, that is, that the described state of affairs tended to happen in the past, but that it is no longer valid.

In conclusion, the analysis of the interaction between the simple past perfective and the different TADVs seems to indicate that the tense morpheme of this verb form expresses anteriority to S and temporal delimitation, and that TT and TSit are fully overlapping, i.e. that the tense is used to express the *whole* event or situation.

5.2.1.2 Systemic and nonsystemic functions of the simple past perfective (*canté*)

As I have already mentioned, part of the aim of the present section is to employ corpus evidence to make sense of the somewhat disorderly overview of the values assigned to the simple past perfective (*canté*) by the traditional grammars as presented in section 5.2. Ultimately, the objective is to identify the systemic function(s) of the Spanish simple past perfective as it appears in the corpus.

I will begin by identifying and eliminating the values that are reducible to another one and/or those that can only be inferred by taking into consideration the combination of the tense form's morpheme with other elements.

The first meaning (or in Bull's terms *function*) that we will examine here is *initiative aspect at RP*, or alternatively *past inchoative*. Initiative aspect, or inchoative, indicates ". . . the inception or the coming into existence of a state or process . . ." (Bussmann 222). Strangely enough, Bull categorizes this meaning as a *systemic function* of the past perfective (*retro-perfect* in his terms), although he explicitly specifies that: "That the event is initiative is

¹⁶⁰ Gloss: *never, always*

¹⁶¹ Gloss: *many times*

¹⁶² Gloss: ". . . [the] Russians that battled [past imp.] Napoleon *always concentrated* [simple past perfective] their attack on Napoleon, you know?"

indicated by context and the fact that the event is noncyclic . . . " (Time 95). *Cyclic* vs. *noncyclic* events are distinguished by whether or not they have a natural end-point (Ibid. 44-45), and these are characteristics expressed by the lexical root of the verb, not by the tense morpheme.¹⁶³ These observations are confirmed by the analysis of the occurrences of the corpus. In other words, for the corpus-instances that were interpreted as having initiative aspect, of which there were only six, this interpretation could always be attributed to the nature of the lexical root, or to the interaction between the latter and the tense morpheme along with the context. Four of the six cases were instances of the verb *comenzar*¹⁶⁴ (Gutiérrez Marrone 197,223), which in itself expresses initiative aspect, irrespective of what tense morpheme it is combined with. The remaining two cases are instances of a lexical root denoting a noncyclic event, combined with the perfective aspect of the morpheme and/or certain contextual elements; " . . . un día antes, o sea sábado antes, se *supo* ya que Siles no iba . . . "¹⁶⁵ (Gutiérrez Marrone 177), and "Claro, tú la *conociste* la casa"¹⁶⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 256). In both cases, the lexical part of the verb denotes *knowing* someone or something. Usually, this is interpreted as a state that, once in effect, lasts indefinitely. The perfective aspect of the tense morpheme can, according to Comrie, sometimes have the effect of reducing the event or situation to a point:

While it is incorrect to say that the basic function of the perfective is to represent an event as momentary or punctual, there is some truth in the view that the perfective, by not giving direct expression to the internal structure of a situation, irrespective of its objective complexity, has the effect of reducing it to a single point (Aspect 17-18).

In other words, when a lexical root denoting a state such as *know* is combined with a morpheme that presumably presents something as a limited whole (*global*), even reducing it to a point, it is a fairly natural interpretation that the verb form denotes the *inception* of the state expressed by the lexical root, as opposed to its duration or its mere boundless existence. It thus seems that the apparent 'clash' between the limitless nature of the state and the boundaries expressed by the perfective aspect produces the interpretation of initiation, marking the change from one state to another. Furthermore, the TADVS of the first example (*un día antes, sábado antes*) emphasize the finite, global essence of the perfective aspect, and

¹⁶³ Bull offers verbs like *girar* and *levantarse* as examples of verbs denoting cyclic events, and *dormir* as a verb denoting a noncyclic event (Bull Time, tense 44-45).

¹⁶⁴ **Gloss:** *commence/start*

¹⁶⁵ **Gloss:** ". . . the day before, that is, the Saturday before, it *became* [simple past perfective] known that Siles wasn't going . . ."

¹⁶⁶ **Gloss:** "Of course, you *got to know* [simple past perfective] her house."

are at odds with the natural interpretation of the time span of knowing something. Consequently, *initiative aspect at RP* is rejected here as a possible sense of the Spanish simple past perfective as such. In other words, the mentioned significance is not one provided by the tense morpheme, and hence is not one that gives the tense form its place in the system of oppositions that is the tense system of Spanish. So far, then, we can tentatively conserve the *global* interpretation previously suggested for the perfective aspect also for the simple past perfective of Spanish, since this allows us to account for the interpretation that has just been presented.

The second meaning that we will examine here is *terminative aspect at RP*. I have previously argued why *terminative* is not an adequate term to describe perfective aspect; the fact that a situation viewed as a whole necessarily has a termination does not justify a label that singles out or emphasizes this termination above the other parts of the whole. Furthermore, Bull's argumentation for identifying *terminative aspect at RP* as one of the systemic functions of the simple past perfective is exactly the same as for *initiative aspect at RP*; "That the event is terminative is indicated by context and by the fact that the event is cyclic . . ." (Bull Time 95). Moreover, the examples provided by Bull to illustrate terminative aspect at RP cannot be said to emphasize the end of the event described by the verb more than any other part of it; "El paciente se levantó al tercer día y esto sólo le produjo una moderada sensación de mareo"¹⁶⁷ (Time 95), "Cuando llegaron a la puerta llamó a sus amigos"¹⁶⁸ (Ibid. 95). The events described by the simple past perfective here are interpreted as terminated because they are cyclic (hence have a natural end-point), *and* they have perfective aspect (presumed here to express a complete whole); they are terminated, but their end-point is not the focal point of attention. As for the instances in the corpus, only one could be interpreted as having terminative aspect, i.e. as emphasizing the termination of an event or situation; "Y se hizo todo el problema que *terminó* con el cierre de la X"¹⁶⁹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 302). Evidently, the termination-interpretation here is provided by the lexical root of the verb, not by the tense morpheme. Consequently, *terminative aspect at RP* is rejected here as one of the systemic functions of the simple past perfective of Spanish.

It thus seems that both of the interpretations that have been rejected here as possible systemic functions of the simple past perfective (*canté*) can be accounted for by granting the perfective aspect of the tense morpheme for this particular tense the *global* reading, which is

¹⁶⁷ **Gloss:** "The patient got up [simple past perfective] the third day, and that only made [simple past perfective] him feel moderately nauseous."

¹⁶⁸ **Gloss:** "When they arrived [simple past perfective] at the door he called [simple past perfective] his friends."

¹⁶⁹ **Gloss:** "And the whole problem that *ended* [simple past perfective] with the closure of X arose."

the first one presented in section 5.2. In other words, the Spanish simple past perfective presents an event or situation as a single whole, without distinction of the various separate phases that make up that situation.

In addition, the simple past perfective (*canté*) has the temporal_{ts} value of *direct anteriority to the speech point*, which is the second value presented in section 5.2. We have seen that Rojo, which presents this value thus: O-V, claims that this is this verb tense's only distinctive feature, i.e. that it is the only value that it is necessary to specify in order to account for its place in the Spanish tense system. Specifically, Rojo maintains that the mentioned specification is enough to distinguish this tense from the other simple past tense *cantaba*. Whether this is a correct assessment can only be fully evaluated after the analysis of the content of the latter verb form has been conducted, i.e. after it has been ascertained whether the imperfective past indeed implies *lack of direct anteriority to the speech point*. However, there are indications already at this juncture that the aspectual *global* reading should be included as one of the distinctive features of the Spanish simple past perfective; were it not so, any linguist would be hard pressed to account for the segmenting function of this tense form when it is used in a narration. If an informant presents a series of events or situations using the simple past perfective, these events are not interpreted as simultaneous, but rather as terminated and separate, i.e. that each one has been concluded before the inception of the next one. The corpus offers many examples of this interpretation: ". . . el comandante Cero, Edén Pastora, cuando *capturó* a algunos prisioneros, los *llevó* de inmediato a la frontera costarricense y los *entregó* a esas autoridades"¹⁷⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 60), "Entonces, *decidimos* juntarnos y *comenzamos* haciendo un pequeño remate de antigüedades. Nos *juntamos* en casa, *pusimos* varias cosas y la gente *respondió*, cosa curiosa"¹⁷¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 73), ". . . un día *estuve* ya cansada realmente de los famosos medicamentos y *resolví* buscarlo a un acupunturista boliviano y me *sometí* a su nuevo tratamiento durante unos . . . otros ocho o siete meses seguramente. Y *comencé* a mejorar . . ."¹⁷² (Gutiérrez Marrone 216). It is difficult, if not impossible, to account for the 'non-overlapping' interpretation of

¹⁷⁰ **Gloss:** ". . . when commandant Cero, Edén Pastora, *captured* [simple past perfective] prisoners, he immediately *brought* [simple past perfective] them to the Costa Rican border and *handed* [simple past perfective] them over to the authorities there."

¹⁷¹ **Gloss:** "So we *decided* [simple past perfective] to get together and we *began* [simple past perfective] by putting together a small flea market of antiquities. We *assembled* [simple past perfective] at the house, *put* [simple past perfective] forth various items and people, strangely enough, *responded* [simple past perfective]."

¹⁷² **Gloss:** ". . . one day I *was* [simple past perfective] really tired of the notorious medications, and I *swore* [simple past perfective] to look for a Bolivian acupuncturist and I *subjected* [simple past perfective] myself to his new treatment for some . . . eight or seven more months surely. And I *started* [simple past perfective] getting better . . ."

these events if we assume that the simple past perfective simply expresses anteriority to the speech point. Consequently, after the preliminary analysis of the simple past perfective in the corpus, it is assigned the temporal_{ts} value of *direct anteriority to S* and the aspectual *global* value as its systemic functions. In fact, there was only one single occurrence of the 1652 found in the corpus which could not unequivocally be assigned both these values. The case in question is a possible case of SOT.

A total of 38 cases, or 2,3% of the simple past perfective forms in the corpus, were found in subordinate nominal clauses. Only one of these does not have an unambiguous deictic reading, i.e. only one constitutes a possible case of SOT: ". . . pasamos un mes recogiendo sus cosas con mi mamá, mis hermanitos y trajimos los restos, pero nos contaron, los amigos de mi padre que esa oración fúnebre *fue* algo fabulosa"¹⁷³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 335). The reference of the subordinate verb is ambiguous; either it is deictic and signals anteriority to the moment of utterance, or it has lost its deictic reference, and signals anteriority respective of the event expressed by the superordinate verb *contaron*. In the latter case, it has the interpretation traditionally assigned the pluperfect, and could be replaced by *había sido*. If this is indeed the correct interpretation of the utterance at hand, we are faced with a case of SOT.

5.2.2 The imperfective past (*Cantaba*)

I will begin the present section, as I did with the analysis of the simple past perfective (*canté*), with an inspection of the occurrences of the imperfective past (*cantaba*) that are accompanied by a TADV. Subsequently, the rest of the occurrences will be analyzed in light of the descriptions exposed in section 5.2, and with the formal tools of Rojo, Reichenbach and Klein in mind. This analysis should result in a specification of what the systemic and nonsystemic properties of the past imperfective in the corpus are.¹⁷⁴ Rojo's vector formulae will be particularly relevant for the analysis of the imperfective past found in subordinate nominal causes, where the interaction of the simple past perfective and the past imperfective

¹⁷³ **Gloss:** ". . . we spent [simple past perfective] a month gathering his things with my mother and my brothers and we brought [simple past perfective] the rest with us, but they told [past .perfective] us, my father's friends, that that speech at the funeral *was* [simple past perfective] incredible."

¹⁷⁴ The present analysis disregards the occurrences of the imperfective past that form part of expressions with "ir a + inf." (F.ex. "Yo iba a comprar ese vestido": "I was going to buy that dress"). These instances are disregarded because they are part of expressions which themselves have a determinate temporal_{ts} reference, i.e. posteriority, and the past imperfective cannot be studied in its own right.

will also be examined. Additionally, we will establish whether or not there are cases of SOT with *cantaba*.

5.2.2.1 TADVs with *cantaba*

Of the 2227 cases of the past imperfective found in the corpus, 115 (5%) are modified by TADVs. Again, I subcategorized the individual occurrences of TADVs in the corpus into the classes described by Klein.

The occurrences that were classified as TADV-Ps, (i.e. those that specify time spans in relation to other time spans, which are supposed to be given by context), modified 65% of all the 115 imperfective verb forms that were modified by a TADV. Examples of TADV-Ps that modify occurrences of the imperfective in the corpus are: *Cuando me recibí* (20), *hace un momento* (55), *en ese año* (240), *anteriormente* (295) and *esta vez* (355).¹⁷⁵ As was the case for the TADV-Ps with the simple past perfective, there were no cases with the imperfective where it could be determined whether the TADV-P had INF-specification or FIN-specification. In other words, for an example like “. . . una restructuración de la universidad que *hacían* ellos *en el año 72 . . .*”¹⁷⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 198), for instance, it could not be determined whether the TADV-P enriches the lexical part of the utterance (<*una restructuración que hacer* (ellos) *en el año 72*>), or whether it specifies the finite part of the utterance (the tense morpheme of the verb, which in *hacía*'s case would be *-ía*: <past, imperfective>). This is most likely due to the fact that, although TT and TSit of the imperfective verb form are not necessarily fully overlapping (as they are with the perfective), they are simultaneous. Since the main function of TADV-Ps is to temporally locate time spans relative to others, it is impossible to distinguish FIN and INF-specification when TT and TSit are simultaneous, unlike the situation of the pluperfect, for example. What could be determined is that all the TADV-Ps in question specify a time span which is anterior to S, as in the following example: “. . . mis padres *eran* propietarios, *antes de la reforma agrarian*, de fincas en la region . . .”¹⁷⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 99). This trait makes them compatible with what is initially perceived here as the temporal_{ts} content of the tense morpheme of the Spanish imperfective.

The occurrences that were classified as TADV-Ds (i.e. those that specify the duration of temporal entities, like time spans, and/or perhaps situations obtaining at time spans) modified

¹⁷⁵ Gloss: *When I graduated, a moment ago, this year, previously, this time*

¹⁷⁶ Gloss: “. . . a restructuring of the university that they *did* in the year of seventy-two . . .”

¹⁷⁷ Gloss: “. . . my parents *were* [past imp.] the owners, *before the agricultural reform*, of estates in the region . . .”

only five cases of the imperfective verb forms, that is, 4,3% of the occurrences that appear with TADVs. Examples of TADV-Ds that modify imperfective verbs in the corpus are: *con el paso del tiempo* (127), *toda su vida* (233) and *en un tiempo* (263).¹⁷⁸ According to Klein, these TADVs have INF-specification, so the TADV-D of the sentence ". . . *con el paso del tiempo* . . . el alumno *quedaba* en más libertad . . ." ¹⁷⁹ (127) modifies the lexical content of the verb to <*el alumno quedar en más libertad con el paso del tiempo*>, to which the TT of the tense morpheme is added. If we presume that the latter expresses *anteriority to S* and *reference to the internal temporal structure of the situation*, we can successfully account for the interpretation of the whole utterance, namely that in the course of a prolonged period in the past (whose beginning and end is left unspecified), the relevant state of affairs transpired. One can only speculate as to why so few of the imperfectives are modified by a TADV-D, but it might have something to do with the fact that many TADV-Ds specify the exact duration of a time span, and one of the main aspectual characteristics of the imperfective as understood here is that it leaves the beginning and end of a situation unspecified because it is the internal composition of the situation that is focalized.

There is one TADV-D in the corpus, however, that modifies an imperfective *and* specifies the exact duration of a situation: *los tres primeros meses*¹⁸⁰ (85).¹⁸¹ What is particular about this case is that the lexical root of the verb form it modifies is punctual, which, in combination with the TADV in question and the imperfective aspect of the tense morpheme, yields an iterative interpretation: ". . . *los tres primeros meses venía* a casa . . ." ¹⁸² (85). In other words, since the punctual lexical root forces an iterative interpretation in this case, attention to the interior composition of the situation described by the verb is maintained, even if the duration of the series of events is delimited by the TADV. In this case then, the TADV-D modifies the lexical content of the utterance, to <*venir a casa los tres primeros meses*>, to which the TT of the tense morpheme is added, namely *anterior to S*, *reference to the internal temporal structure of the situation*.

The occurrences that were categorized as TADV-Qs, (i.e. those that indicate the frequency of temporal entities, like time spans or possibly situations which obtain at these time spans), modified 35% of all the 115 imperfective verb forms that were modified by a TADV. Crucially, and as can be discerned from coming examples, frequency does not

¹⁷⁸ **Gloss:** *With(the passing of) time, his/her whole life, a while*

¹⁷⁹ **Gloss:** ". . . *with time* . . . the student *received* [past imp.] more freedom . . ."

¹⁸⁰ **Gloss:** *the first three months*

¹⁸¹ This TADV is classified both as a TADV-D and as a TADV-P, as will be shown later on.

¹⁸² **Gloss:** ". . . *the first three months* he *came* [past imp.] to our house . . ."

necessarily entail iterativity. Examples of TADV-Qs that modify imperfective verbs in the corpus are: *En algunas ocasiones* (20), *siempre* (77), *los domingos* (59) and *todo el tiempo* (86).¹⁸³ Evidently, a TADV-Q like *los domingos* also implies iterativity, as can be discerned from the example " . . . *los domingos había concentraciones con los colores del frente sandinista . . .*"¹⁸⁴ (59). In this case, the situation is interpreted as iterative by virtue of the TADV¹⁸⁵, since the lexical root of the verb is not a punctual one. The TADV-Q modifies the lexical content of the utterance, to *<haber concentraciones . . . los domingos>*, to which the TT of the tense morpheme is added. Again, if we presume that the latter expresses *anteriority to S* and *reference to the internal temporal structure of the situation*, we can successfully account for the interpretation of the whole utterance (i.e a situation repeated itself over time in the past), keeping in mind that the tense morpheme modifies the whole stretch of iterated events, and not each individual iterated event. *Siempre* is an example of a TADV-Q which can modify imperfective verb forms that may or may not express iterativity. In the first of these two examples the situation is perceived as iterative, in the second one, it is not: a) " . . . *nos invitaban siempre a las dos*"¹⁸⁶ (86), b) "*Eramos siempre las mujeres las preferidas en la casa*"¹⁸⁷ (33). Since TADV-Qs have INF-specification, *siempre* modifies the lexical content of the utterance in both cases here. In a), the lexical root is punctual, forcing an iterative interpretation when it is combined with *siempre* and the imperfective tense morpheme; in b), the lexical root is not punctual, hence there is no conflict between this root and a TADV and a tense morpheme that alludes to its internal temporal composition.

Not unexpectedly, there were cases of TADVs that could not tidily be categorized in one class or the other; three cases are a combination of two categories: *los tres primeros meses* (85) *hasta la fecha* (154) and *aquellas veces* (163).¹⁸⁸ The first case has been classified as a TADV-P and as a TADV-D; it relates a time span to another *and* it specifies the duration of a situation. The same is the case for the second example, whereas the third example has been classified as a TADV-P and a TADV-Q: it relates a time span to another *and* it expresses frequency. This is the reason why the total amount of TADVs that modify imperfectives seems to exceed 100%.

In conclusion, the analysis of the interaction between TADVs and the imperfective contributes to isolating the semantic contribution of the tense morpheme of the latter much in

¹⁸³ **Gloss:** *on some occasions, always, (on) Sundays, all the time*

¹⁸⁴ **Gloss:** "On Sundays there were [past imp.] assemblies with the colours of the Sandinist front"

¹⁸⁵ And possibly also because of the plural direct object, *concentraciones* (*assemblies*).

¹⁸⁶ **Gloss:** " . . . they always invited [past imp.] the two of us."

¹⁸⁷ **Gloss:** "We were [past imp.] always the women the preferred ones of the household."

¹⁸⁸ **Gloss:** *the first three months, to date, those times*

the same way as for the perfective: it is the interaction with TADV-Ds and TADV-Qs that is most revealing. By observing what information is *not* provided by the TADVs or the lexical root, we can arrive at a conclusion about what the semantic content of the tense morpheme must be. In this case, its temporal_{is} content is *anteriority to S*, a relation which is never expressed neither by the TADV-D, TADV-Q or the lexical root of the verb. Furthermore, it seems that the preliminary specification of its aspectual content as *reference to the internal temporal composition of the event or situation* (i.e. beginning and end are left unspecified) allows us to account for all the different interpretations of the utterances containing TADVs and imperfectives.

5.2.2.2 Systemic and nonsystemic functions of the imperfective past (*cantaba*)

As with the simple past perfective (*canté*), part of the aim of the present section is to employ corpus evidence to make sense of the somewhat disorderly overview of the values assigned to the imperfective past (*cantaba*) by the traditional grammars as presented in section 5.2. Ultimately, the objective is to identify the systemic function(s) of the Spanish past imperfective as it appears in the corpus.

I will begin by identifying and eliminating the values that are reducible to another one and/or those that can only be inferred by taking into consideration the combination of the tense form's morpheme with other elements. After the systemic functions of the imperfective past are established, I will specify what its nonsystemic function(s) are in the corpus, if any are present.

The first meaning that we will examine here is the *iterative* aspect. It can be described thus: ". . . iteratives describe durative¹⁸⁹ . . . events that occur repeatedly or regularly . . ." (Bussmann 244). The iterative interpretation in connection with imperfective aspect has been discussed previously in the present thesis, however, it is important to revisit it one final time in connection with the corpus evidence (and independently of the TADVs). As is the case with the examples provided by the linguists that suggest this interpretation for the Spanish imperfective, the iterative-reading of the occurrences in the corpus can always be attributed to contextual elements and/or the combination of the imperfective morpheme with certain lexical roots. Examples of contextual elements other than TADVs that can yield an iterative interpretation are plural nominal elements, such as direct objects: ". . . tuve grandes descepciones al comienzo cuando vi el volumen de *los juicios* que *se seguían* por cosas

¹⁸⁹ The way the term *durative* is used here is misleading. In this case, the term *durative* should refer to the duration of the stretch of all the iterated events, not to the duration of each individual iterated event.

insignificantes . . . ¹⁹⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 19). The fact that these kinds of nominal elements can yield an iterative interpretation independently of the imperfective form is verified by the fact that they will yield a similar interpretation when combined with a perfective: "Somoza *bombardeó barrios enteros*. Somoza *bombardeó ciudades abiertas* donde había no solamente combatientes, sino señoras, niños, ancianos. *Se fusiló a familias íntegras* . . . ¹⁹¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 58). As for the lexical roots that produce an iterative interpretation in combination with the imperfective morpheme, they are, as we have already discussed, punctual: "Y el voto era, digamos, calificado en el sentido de que uno *escogía* al candidato y *tachaba* al candidato que no quería" ¹⁹² (Gutiérrez Marrone 23). In other words, if we presume that the imperfective morpheme carries the aspectual meaning of *reference to the internal composition of an event*, and it is combined with lexical roots which are not perceived as having enough temporal expansion so as to facilitate a description of them that alludes to their internal temporal composition, the *iterative* interpretation is a natural one. In other words, the state of affairs whose internal temporal composition is focalized is the stretch of iterated events, not each individual event. Hence, the iterative-reading is not provided by the morpheme of the verb, consequently, *iterativity* is rejected here as a systemic function of the Spanish imperfective.

The second meaning that we will examine here is *non-terminative*. There were no occurrences in the corpus of an imperfective that expressed that an event or situation had not been terminated; rather, the use of the imperfective form leaves the termination or non-termination of an event unspecified. In fact, there was an example where the state of affairs described by the imperfective, due to information found in the surrounding context, would have to be interpreted as terminated: ". . . varias veces *iba* a la finca pero ya no voy" ¹⁹³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 88). Consequently, *non-terminative* is rejected here as a systemic function of the Spanish imperfective.

The third meaning that will be examined here is the *conative*. The term is taken to describe ". . . an action as an unsuccessful attempt . . ." (Bussmann 92). In other words, it is implicit that the action described by the imperfective did not arrive at its completion. There were no instances in the corpus of this use of the imperfective, an observation which in and of itself does not imply that this is not indeed one of the systemic functions of the Spanish

¹⁹⁰ **Gloss:** ". . . I experienced [simple past perfective] a lot of disappointment in the beginning when I saw [simple past perfective] the amount of *court cases* that *were* [past imp.] held over insignificant issues . . ."

¹⁹¹ **Gloss:** "Somoza *bombardeó* [simple past perfective] *entire suburbs*. Somoza *bombardeó* [simple past perfective] *open cities* where not only combatants were present, but also women, children, and elderly people. *Whole families were* [simple past perfective] executed."

¹⁹² **Gloss:** "And the votes *were* [past imp.] evaluated, as it were, in the sense that you *chose* [past imp.] the candidate and *crossed* [past imp.] out the candidate that you didn't [past imp.] want."

¹⁹³ **Gloss:** ". . . I often *went* [past imp.] to the summer estate but now I don't go anymore."

imperfective. However, there are other reasons for questioning whether the *conative* truly is a possible sense of the imperfective as such. Hedin offers a good explanation of why this sense should not be understood as one that is given by the imperfective aspect. Although her main argument is that the imperfective has a *neutral* function, her rationalization is valid also for the view of the imperfective as expressing *reference to the internal temporal composition of an event* (i.e. the disregard of its beginning and end): She provides the following example of an utterance with a conative reading: "He tried to convince me for two hours, but didn't (manage to) convince me" (247), and offers the following explanation:

The so-called conative use of the Imperfective in some aspect languages is a good illustration of the neutral function of the Imperfective. The irrelevance of the instantiation of the situation means that the actual accomplishment of the transitional phase of the situation (for instance, that somebody was actually persuaded) is neither stated nor denied. If the sentence is followed by another one, where the success is denied by reference to the situation in negated Perfective ('but he didn't (actually) persuade him'), the interpretation of the first verb phrase in the Imperfective as referring to an attempt to persuade is the only logically possible one. However, this interpretation is created by the context and not by the imperfective verb phrase, which only tells us that 'there was persuasion' . . . (247-48).

Observations parallel to those made by Hedin can be made with respect to the examples offered by the *Real Academia* to illustrate the conative use of the Spanish imperfective; it is the context that stipulates that the action at hand is not accomplished. In fact, for the first example, the non-accomplishment of the event described by the imperfective is only one of the possible readings (i.e. it is conceivable that the action eventually was accomplished): "*Salía cuando llegó una visita*"¹⁹⁴ (Real Academia 467), and "*Le dio un dolor tan fuerte, que se moría; hoy está mejor*"¹⁹⁵ (Real Academia 467).

When we take the non-accomplishment-reading out of the conative, we are left with the eighth meaning described in section 5.2, namely *a preliminary phase is imperfect at RP*. In other words, this category and the former is in essence one and the same; "The decision or commitment to perform the event was anterior to but still operative at RP", and whether the event was accomplished or not, is specified by context. However, even if we strip away the non-accomplishment-reading, there are reasons to doubt that the sense described in this

¹⁹⁴ **Gloss:** "I left [past imp.] (i.e. *was leaving*) when a visit arrived [simple past perfective]."

¹⁹⁵ **Gloss:** "It hurt [simple past perfective] so much that he *died* [past imp.] (i.e. *was dying*); today he's better."

paragraph is one that can be assigned to the Spanish imperfective as such. It seems like this reading, like the conative, is conditioned by context. Bull, who proposes this interpretation as a systemic function of the imperfective, specifies: "These facts [i.e the decision or commitment to perform the event was anterior to but still operative at RP] may be established either by context or by the use of an auxiliary verb" (Time 99). The only two examples of this reading found in the corpus appear in the same sentence, and the interpretation is conditioned by context (underlined): ". . . yo no sentía que ellos se burlaran ni nada, pero era una expectativa . . . a ver si realmente lo *hacía* bien o si *fracasaba*, ¿no?"¹⁹⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 21). The forms *hacía* and *fracasaba*, if employed in a context which does not indicate expectation, would not yield the mentioned interpretation, hence it is not the imperfective alone that yields this reading. The reason why it is the imperfective that is employed in these cases is most likely the need for a past tense form which does not stipulate that an event or situation is terminated, as would be the case with the perfective. Consequently, both *conative* and *a preliminary phase is imperfect at RP* are rejected here as systemic functions of the Spanish imperfective, at least as far as corpus evidence is concerned.

The fourth and fifth values presented in section 5.2, namely *durative* and *habitual*, have been presented as opposite values of the principal subdivision of the imperfective aspect. Comrie states: "In traditional grammars of many languages with a category covering the whole of imperfectivity, the impression is given that the general area of imperfectivity must be subdivided into two quite distinct concepts of habituality and continuousness"¹⁹⁷ (Aspect 26). Interestingly enough, all the occurrences of the imperfective with systemic functions¹⁹⁸ in the corpus could be defined as either habitual or durative, that is, they either described events or situations that were characteristic of an extended period of time or era, or they described a specific event or situation. Utterances such as "En esa época . . . Bolivia *tenía* descuidados esos territorios"¹⁹⁹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 195) and "En esa zona *había* columnas sobre todo influidas por corrientes marxistas . . ."²⁰⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 61) have been classified as expressing habituality, while utterances such as "En una ocasión . . . encontré con que le *faltaban* una cosa de dos pesos"²⁰¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 19) and "Los rusos ya habían

¹⁹⁶ **Gloss:** ". . . I didn't feel [past imp.] that they were making fun of me or anything, but it was [past imp.] an expectation . . . to see if I really *did* [past imp.] well or if I *failed* [past imp.], you know?"

¹⁹⁷ Comrie specifies that *durativity* is another term for continuousness (Aspect 26).

¹⁹⁸ 17 instances have been identified as having nonsystemic functions, and they will be exposed later on.

¹⁹⁹ **Gloss:** "During that time . . . Bolivia *did* [past imp.] not pay attention to those territories."

²⁰⁰ **Gloss:** "In that zone there *were* [past imp.] columns that were inspired above all by Marxist tendencies . . ."

²⁰¹ **Gloss:** "On one occasion . . . I found that he *was* [past imp.] short about two pesos."

informado que yo *estaba* en camino"²⁰² (Gutiérrez Marrone 166) have been classified as expressing durativity. However, in order to arrive at a classification of the occurrences as habitual or durative, it was often necessary to take into account a large part of the surrounding context. This observation seems to confirm Comrie's aforementioned observation, namely that the approach that would subdivide the imperfective aspect into these two categories,

. . . fails to recognise that these various subdivisions do in fact join together to form a single unified concept, as is suggested by the large number of languages that have a single category to express imperfectivity as a whole, irrespective of such subdivisions as habituality and continuousness (Aspect 26).

In other words, the fact that one and the same form expresses these distinctions, and that one is forced to look to the context in order to arrive at a classification of the verb form, are testaments to the fact that *habituality* and *durativity* should not be defined as systemic functions of the imperfective as such, but rather that they are sub-categories of the overarching meaning *reference to the internal temporal composition of an event or situation*.

The seventh meaning that will be scrutinized here, the *co-preterite*, has also been examined previously in the present thesis. However, again, it is important to revisit the issue in connection with the corpus evidence. The co-preterite-reading is a purely temporal_{ts} one, which stipulates that the event expressed by the imperfective past is to be interpreted as simultaneous with another past event or moment. In other words, unlike the simple past perfective (*canté*), it does not express direct anteriority to the moment of speech. As we have seen, Rojo illustrates the two senses thus: the simple past perfective (*canté*): O-V, the imperfective past (*cantaba*): (O-V)oV. He argues that this interpretation of the Spanish imperfective successfully accounts for its use in utterances such as "VÍ que *salía del portal*"²⁰³ ("Relaciones" 38). In other words, his representation illustrates how the event expressed by the subordinate imperfective is simultaneous with that of the superordinate form, which expresses direct anteriority to S ('O' in Rojo's terms). Evidently, the imperfective does not invariably appear in embedded sentences, so for the cases where this verb form is not subordinate to another, he argues that the reference that would correspond to a superordinate past verb is surmised or somehow implicit: "La referencia con valor O-V es, en estos casos, un **antes** genérico (carácter que permite su no aparición explícita) con respecto al cual resulta

²⁰² **Gloss:** "The Russians had already informed that I *was* [past imp.] on my way."

²⁰³ **Gloss:** "I saw [simple past perfective] that he *came* [past imp.] (i.e. *was coming*) out of the gate."

simultánea la situación mencionada . . . "204 ("Relaciones" 39). It remains unclear, however, what the real, conceptual or linguistic referent of this implicit element is. What's more, if this: (O-V)oV were truly the adequate interpretation of the Spanish imperfective, one might expect that, at least in a majority of the cases, it would appear subordinate to another past tense verb. Upon a scrutiny of the corpus evidence, however, it became clear that this is not the case; the imperfective is subordinate to another verb (of any tense) only in 7,2% of the cases. The vast majority of the imperfectives appear in autonomous sentences. Moreover, of the imperfectives that appear subordinate to another verb, 30% of them are subordinate to a verb in the present tense, which would grant them the interpretation of direct anteriority to S: O-V: " . . . él *dice* que *había* intereses ingleses"205 (Gutiérrez Marrone 197), 37% of them are subordinate to another imperfective, which would give them (the subordinate imperfectives) the following, rather inconvenient formula: ((O-V)oV)oV: " . . . yo *encontraba* que no *había* razón para vestir y ponerse corbata . . . "206 (Gutiérrez Marrone 20). Only 26% of them are subordinate to the simple past perfective, that is, to a superordinate verb which expresses direct anteriority to S: "Un político nuestro del siglo pasado *dijo* que Bolivia *era* un país sin memoria . . . "207 (Gutiérrez Marrone 70). What's more, there are several cases in the corpus where *canté* appears subordinate to another past perfective: "*Sucedió* que yo *hice* un viaje bastante largo por Latinoamérica . . . "208 (Gutiérrez Marrone 310), hence, this is not a use reserved for the imperfective.

Again, it is crucial to distinguish between the information provided by the context that a form appears in, and the information provided by the form in isolation. When we keep these elements apart, it is clear that the Spanish imperfective in the corpus invariably expresses anteriority to the moment of utterance. The fact that it appears subordinate to a past tense verb more frequently than the simple past perfective (*canté*) (2% of *cantaba*, 0,5% of *canté*) can be more adequately accounted for by alluding to its aspectual properties. If we assume that it temporally_{ts} expresses *direct anteriority to S* (O-V), and aspectually *reference to the internal temporal composition of the event; its beginning and end are left unspecified*, it becomes apparent why this tense form is used to express simultaneity to another past event more often

²⁰⁴ **Translation:** "The reference with the content O-V is, in these cases, a generic **anterior** (which allows for it not to be explicitly expressed) respective of which the mentioned situation is simultaneous . . ."

²⁰⁵ **Gloss:** "He *says* that there *were* [past imp.] English interests."

²⁰⁶ **Gloss:** " . . . I *found* [past imp.] that there *wasn't* [past imp.] any reason to dress up and put on a tie . . ."

²⁰⁷ **Gloss:** "One of our politicians of the past century *said* [simple past perfective] that Bolivia *was* [past imp.] a country without memory . . ."

²⁰⁸ **Gloss:** "It *happened* [simple past perfective] that I *made* [simple past perfective] quite a large trip across Latin-America . . ."

then the simple past perfective (*canté*), which presents an event as whole, or completed, albeit past.

If we assume that the systemic functions of the imperfective are *direct anteriority to S* (O-V), and *reference to the internal temporal composition of the event* (a description which accounts both for its use in subordinate clauses and its use in autonomous clauses where it typically describes the 'background' for other events), there are 17 cases of imperfectives with nonsystemic functions in the corpus. In all but one of these cases, the imperfective acquires a modal interpretation. As specified by Rojo and Veiga, this is part of what defines nonsystemic functions, or *dislocación temporal* in their terms. According to them, *dislocación temporal* is: ". . . un mecanismo que en el interior del sistema verbal interrelaciona ciertos rasgos de contenido temporal y ciertos rasgos de contenido modal, posibilitando que determinadas formas verbales puedan expresar más de una combinación modo-temporal . . ." ²⁰⁹ (2896). Briz Gómez alludes to the same phenomenon:

De todos es sabido que muchas formas verbales, junto a tiempo o, incluso, antes que tiempo expresan valores modales o modalizadores . . . por tanto, unas formas verbales aparecen en lugar de otras, incluso aparecen formas alternantes.

Ahora bien, este aparente baile no afecta ni a todos los vectores, ni a todas las formas del sistema verbal español (47). ²¹⁰

This linguist further specifies that the imperfective is one of the verb tenses that sometimes exhibit *dislocación* (47-53).

In 14 of the nonsystemic corpus-cases, the imperfective substitutes the conditional *cantaría*, as in "Me parece que es el error de mi hermana. Yo creo que ya *debía* haber cambiado de reglamento, ¿no?" ²¹¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 94). The Spanish conditional can exhibit either a modal or a temporal_{ts} value, but its modal use is the most frequent one, or in other terms, its default value (Rojo and Veiga 2896). Hence, in 13 of the 14 cases where the imperfective substitutes the conditional, it has an unambiguous modal value, as in: "Ahora, en el lenguaje clásico que tenemos, el campesino... es lo que *podíamos* decir, 'el indio', el obrero

²⁰⁹ **Translation:** ". . . a mechanism that, in the interior of the system, interrelates certain temporal traits and certain modal traits, which allows certain verb forms to express more than one mode-tense combination . . ."

²¹⁰ **Translation:** "It is a well-known fact that many verb forms express, along with tense, or even before tense, modal distinctions . . . that is why some verb forms appear in stead of others, and even alternating forms may appear. Be that as it may, this apparent dance does not affect all the vectors, nor does it affect all the forms of the Spanish verb system."

²¹¹ **Gloss:** "I think it is my sister's fault. I think she *should* [past imp.] have changed the rules by this time, you know?"

es 'el cholo', ¿no?"²¹² (Gutiérrez Marrone 106). There is one case, however, where the imperfective could be interpreted as adopting the temporal_{ts} value of the conditional, namely *posteriority relative to a moment anterior to S*, or (O-V)+V: "Y retornó a mi casa, pero así, con todo mi consentimiento, que yo me *moría* el día que se me vaya . . ." ²¹³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 140). It is the TADV *el día que se me vaya*²¹⁴ which allows the temporal_{ts} interpretation of *moría* in this case, as opposed to for example "Me *moría* si se fuera". In other words, the corpus evidence suggests that *dislocación temporal*, or *nonsystemic function* for the imperfective does not necessarily imply that it acquires a modal value; rather, it implies that it substitutes a tense which in the majority of the cases expresses a modal value. It is also noteworthy that all the imperfectives in the corpus that substitute a conditional are of the third conjugation, i.e. they all end in *-ía*, like the conditional. It is tempting to suggest that this is not a coincidence. This last observation becomes even more conspicuous in light of the fact that the three other cases of imperfectives with nonsystemic functions, which substitute the past subjunctive, are of the first conjugation, ending in *-aba*, as in: "Y la división de ahora lo ha hecho Banzer. Si no se *presentaba* Banzer, salía uno u otro"²¹⁵ (Gutiérrez Marrone 358).

5.2.2.3 The imperfective past (*cantaba*) and SOT

Of the 161 cases of imperfectives in subordinate clauses in the corpus, 112 were subordinate to past tense verbs. Only 6 of these were unambiguous cases of SOT, while 5 were possible cases of SOT. As we have seen (in section 5.1.3.1), for the (subordinate) imperfectives, the only relevant cases of SOT are SOT+s, i.e. shifted interpretation. For the corpus-cases that were classified as instances of SOT+s, the imperfectives were read as having present tense interpretation, while their surface form was 'coloured' by the tense of the superordinate verb (see examples below). The 5 uncertain corpus-cases were ambiguous with respect to the subordinate imperfective's intended reference as past or present, as in: "Un político nuestro del siglo pasado dijo que Bolivia *era* un país sin memoria, y creo que eso facilita mucho la inclinación de nuestros pueblos al revolucionarismo; es decir, a la

²¹² **Gloss:** "Now, the classic speech that we have as farmers... is what we *could* [past imp.] say/call, 'the indian', the worker is 'el cholo', right?"

²¹³ **Gloss:** "And he came [simple past perfective] back to my house, but, with my blessing, because I *died* [past imp.] (e.g. *would die*) the day he would leave . . ."

²¹⁴ One might expect that the 'adequate' version of the TADV in this case would be 'el día que se me *fuera*'. However, the corpus evidence suggests that there is a neutralization between the present and past subjunctive in certain constructions in La Paz. However, as that is not the present object of study, a detailed scrutiny of this phenomenon has not been conducted.

²¹⁵ **Gloss:** "And today's division was made by Banzer. If Banzer *didn't present* [past imp.] himself, somebody else would have been a candidate."

discontinuidad histórica"²¹⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 70). This case is ambiguous because we cannot determine whether the informant wishes to state that Bolivia *is* a country without memory, as stated by the politician of last century (i.e. his statement is perceived as universal or general): "Un político nuestro del siglo pasado dijo que Bolivia *es* un país sin memoria", or whether the informant indeed wishes to express that this statement was confined to the past century, although it might still be valid. In other words, five of the mentioned instances in the corpus were embedded in a context that, for one reason or another, could allow both readings. Six of the cases were unambiguously cases of SOT+s, as in:

Inf. 4. - . . . Este año nos hemos reunido festejando el cincuenta aniversario y estos días la universidad va a hacer una obra tratando de estas convenciones y del movimiento que hicimos.

Inf. 2. - Yo creí que tú *tenías* 49 años, Doro?

Inf. 4. - No, cincuenta, ja... ja... ja...

(Gutiérrez Marrone 318).²¹⁷

The age of each informant is specified at the beginning of each sequence, and informant 4 is actually 70 years old. However, from the surrounding context we are able to surmise that informant 2 and 4 are in fact joking and that they are referring to the present tense: "Yo creí que tú *tienes* 49 años"²¹⁸.

The cases of SOT do not interfere with the systemic functions of the imperfective, as they are completely dependent upon context, and hence cannot be interpreted as a default value of the tense. In order to grasp the systemic function of a tense, however, one is forced to observe its place in the system of oppositions that is the tense system. Therefore, a comparison of the systemic opposition the simple past perfective (*canté*) – the imperfective past (*cantaba*), based on the present findings, is imperative.

5.2.3 The systemic opposition the simple past perfective (*canté*) – the imperfective past (*cantaba*)

In section 5.2, the following overview of the oppositions between the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) was presented:

²¹⁶ **Gloss:** "One of our politicians of the past century said that Bolivia *was* [past imp.] a country without memory, and I think that this facilitates our people's inclination towards revolutionarism; that is, towards historical discontinuation."

²¹⁷ **Gloss:** "Inf. 4. - . . . This year we have come together to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary, and these days the university is going to do a play that treats these convensions and the movement that we were a part of. Inf. 2. - I thought that you *were* [past imp.] 49 years, Doro? Inf. 4. - No, fifty, hahaha."

²¹⁸ **Gloss:** "I thought [simple past perfective] that you *are* 49 years old."

Table 4

Temporal_{ts} and aspectual values traditionally assigned to the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*)

CANTÉ	CANTABA
(Past) Global	(Past) Reference to internal structure
Absolute past, O-V	Co-preterite, (O-V)oV
(Past) Terminative	(Past) Non-terminative
(Past) Initiative	(Past) Durative
	(Past) Iterative
	(Past) Habitual
	(Past) Conative
	Preliminary phase imperfect at RP

After a scrutiny of the corpus evidence and an examination of the linguists' bases for positing these values, however, the overview can be reduced to the following:

Table 5

Systemic temporal_{ts} and aspectual values assigned to the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) based on corpus evidence

	CANTÉ	CANTABA
Temporal _{ts} value	E directly anterior to S: O-V	E directly anterior to S: O-V
Aspectual value	Global	Reference to the internal temporal composition of the event or situation

Specifically, Rojo's theory, that these tenses have temporal_{ts} opposition, and that their aspectual values are not part of their intrinsic or systemic values, is rejected. Moreover, the decision to include these aspectual values as part of *canté* and *cantaba*'s systemic features is not, as Veiga would have it, an attempt to adapt the Spanish tenses to a framework that is designed for the English tense system (Veiga "Cantaba" 608-09). Veiga adds:

. . . hemos de insistir en que la funcionalidad de la distinción aspectual solamente resultaría probada en el caso de que se pudiera demostrar la coincidencia de ambas

unidades verbales en cuanto a su valor funcional temporal . . . (Veiga "Cantaba" 608-09).²¹⁹

In line with the previous findings and argumentation, the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) do have coinciding temporal_{ts} value; accordingly, a functional aspectual distinction between the two tense forms has been demonstrated. Granted, the decision to include aspectual values as part of the tense forms' systemic features makes for a less orderly system than one that takes into consideration only temporal_{ts} features; tense inevitably operates with a limited set of oppositions, since it is based on location and order in time, while the theoretical potential for aspectual oppositions seems boundless. The aspectual oppositions can thus not be independently pre-defined, but must be obtained by examining what oppositions are in fact operative in the language. However, the quest for a symmetric and orderly system should never trump the pursuit of one that adequately describes the language at hand. The combination of an approach that favours the inclusion of only the minimal set of necessary features with one that consistently takes into account what oppositions are in fact expressed in the language, should yield an overview which is not overly elaborate but which accounts for the distinctions necessary for a student to grasp the phenomenon of the language in question.

Hence, the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) are in opposition exclusively on an aspectual level. Furthermore, the vast majority of features presented in table 4 are not to be understood as the systemic values of these two forms, rather, they are possible values derived from the interaction between the tense morpheme and the context or the lexical root of the verb form. Whether it is pedagogically justifiable to present all of the mentioned values is a debatable point, however, it should always be made clear what values are derived and which ones are over-arching and systemic.

As for the forms' nonsystemic functions, none were identified for the simple past perfective (*canté*) in the present analysis. While the absence of such an occurrence in a corpus under no circumstance can be taken as an indication of the absence of it in the language as such, there is no reason to stipulate that the simple past perfective (*canté*) necessarily should exhibit nonsystemic functions: "No todas las formas verbales del español actual admiten la posibilidad de experimentar una dislocación"²²⁰ (Rojo and Veiga 2896). Rojo and Veiga

²¹⁹ **Translation:** ". . . we must insist that the functionality of an aspectual distinction would be proven only if the two verbal units could be demonstrated to concur temporally_[ts] . . ."

²²⁰ **Translation:** "Not all the verb forms of present day Spanish allow for the possibility of exhibiting a non-systemic function."

specify what tenses may exhibit nonsystemic functions (or *dislocación*), and the simple past perfective (*canté*) is not one of them (Rojo and Veiga 2896-97).

As I have mentioned previously, the designation of the two tenses as marked or unmarked terms of an opposition might help clarify the systemic relation they bear to each other. There are both semantic and morphological arguments in favour of defining the simple past perfective (*canté*) as the unmarked term and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) the marked term of the opposition. If we take the term *global* to indicate that an event or situation simply took place, with no additional overtones, then we might be justified in claiming that it is the unmarked term of the opposition, while the imperfective past, which is used when the speaker wishes to state more about a situation than the fact that it simply took place (i.e. it somehow describes its internal temporal configuration), is the marked one, cf. Binnick's specification: ". . . 'marked' is used for the member of an opposition which is semantically more specific, and 'unmarked' for the one which is nonspecific, even when there is no explicit marker" (151-52). The disparity of the two sides of table 4 above might also be taken as an attestation of the fact that the imperfective past is perceived as semantically more specific than the simple past perfective by Spanish linguists. While it is not true of the opposition at hand that the unmarked category can always be used, even in a situation where the marked category would also be appropriate (Comrie Aspect 112), there is some truth in the notion that ". . . the meaning of the unmarked category can encompass that of its counterpart" (Comrie Aspect 112). In other words, the group of events that can be classified as simply having taken place, as being presented in their entirety (the end-point included), incorporates events which are of a type that allows reference to their internal temporal composition, but not necessarily vice versa. Semantically, then, it is true of *canté* and *cantaba* that ". . . the marked category signals the presence of some feature, while the unmarked category simply says nothing about its presence or absence" (Comrie Aspect 112).

As we have seen, there are also powerful morphological arguments in favour of defining the simple past perfective (*canté*) as unmarked and the imperfective past (*cantaba*) as marked, since there is ". . . greater likelihood of morphological irregularity in unmarked forms . . ." (Comrie Aspect 114). This is certainly the case of the Spanish simple past perfective.

These findings are in line with Comrie's aforementioned observation, namely that ". . . in combination with past tense there is generally in languages a tendency for the perfective aspect to be unmarked . . ." (Comrie Aspect 121).

In conclusion, in accordance with the present analysis, a) the imperfective is viewed as the marked and the perfective as the unmarked term of this opposition, and b) the number of

semantic temporal_{tm} meaning traditionally ascribed to the two forms at hand must be greatly reduced.

5.3 The simple past perfective (*canté*) and the composite past (*he cantado*)

Since the previous section treats the simple past perfective in detail, a scrutiny of this form's systemic and nonsystemic functions is not required here. The systemic functions of the composite past and the opposition between this verb tense and the former are particularly relevant for the Spanish of the region in which Bolivia is situated; several linguists (Sastre 1995 and Caravedo 1996, cited in (Quesada Pacheco 81)) have observed a certain neutralization in the use of the two verb forms at hand in the Andes region, as well as a possible preference for the composite form over the simple one (Quesada Pacheco 81). Consequently, a certain disparity is to be expected between its systemic functions as observed in the corpus and existing descriptions of it in standard Spanish grammars.

The attempt to verify the supposed neutralization between the two verb forms in question warrants an analysis with a stronger quantitative component than what has been employed for the opposition *cantelcantaba*. In other words, in the present case, the relative frequency of the two verb forms might prove to be a source of information about their semantic content. However, the mere observation of the 'preference' of one form over the other one, i.e. that one form is used more frequently than the other one is not in and of itself specific enough to enlighten us as to the nature of the neutralization between the two forms. Josse De Kock comments: "La frecuencia relativa del pretérito perfecto simple y del compuesto se ha calculado ya más de una vez, desde H. Kensington en 1937 hasta las estadísticas recientes sobre la lengua hablada en las grandes ciudades de habla hispánica, sin olvidar las de W. Bull, en 1947, por ejemplo"²²¹ ("Pretéritos" 481). He argues, along the lines of the present thesis: ". . . la recopilación de los ejemplos y el cálculo estadístico; suelen ser muy simples y, desde el punto de vista técnico, las dificultades no van más allá del simple cálculo de promedios"²²² ("Pretéritos" 481), and that, in some cases, "... los resultados son . . . imposibles de interpretar en cuanto a los valores representados gramatical y semánticamente"²²³ ("Pretéritos" 481). He specifies that this is the case for some of the studies

²²¹ **Translation:** "The relative frequency of the simple and composite perfective [*he cantado*] has been calculated more than once, from H. Kensington in 1937 to the recent statistics of the spoken language of the large Spanish-speaking cities. And we mustn't forget W. Bull's studies from 1947."

²²² **Translation:** ". . . the collection of examples and the statistics calculations are usually very simple and, from a technical viewpoint, the difficulties don't extend beyond the mere calculation of averages."

²²³ **Translation:** "The results are . . . impossible to interpret with respect to distinctions that are represented grammatically and semantically."

conducted as part of the "Proyecto de estudio de la norma lingüística culta del español hablado en las principales ciudades de Iberoamérica y de la Península Ibérica" ("Pretéritos" 481).

For the opposition the simple past perfective (*canté*)/the composite past (*he cantado*), then, it is vital initially to ascertain, by way of an observation of the verb forms in various contexts, whether the supposed neutralization is partial or whole (if it is at all present). If it is partial, it might be the case that one form can replace the other one, but not vice versa, and it might also be the case that this form cannot replace the other one in all conceivable contexts. Only after it has been determined what state of affairs we are faced with, can we decide how we might take into account the relative frequency of the two verb forms. In other words, we might be faced with a situation where the verb forms that appear in certain contexts have to be excluded from the frequency count.

5.3.1 The composite past (*he cantado*)

Since the simple past perfective will not be dedicated its own section in the present subchapter, comparisons between this form and the composite one will be included continuously throughout the analysis of the latter, with a synthesis at the end of the chapter.

The present section will begin with a brief presentation of the values traditionally assigned to the composite past (*he cantado*) by the most prominent Hispanic linguists, as well as Comrie's definitions of *the perfect aspect*. Subsequently, an inspection will be conducted of the forms that are accompanied by a TADV, followed by a scrutiny of the rest of the forms. The occurrences will be analyzed in light of the descriptions exposed on the coming pages, and with the formal tools of Rojo, Reichenbach and Klein in mind. These analyses should result in a specification of what the systemic and nonsystemic properties of the composite past in the corpus are, and also whether this form has overlapping temporal and aspectual meanings with the simple past perfective. Subsequently it will be determined whether there are cases of *he cantado* and SOT. Finally, a comparison of the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the composite past (*he cantado*) will be conducted, where frequency will be taken into account, and whereby their status as marked or unmarked terms of an opposition is established.

The main objective of the present analysis is thus to identify the *systemic functions* of the composite past, and to determine to what extent this form and the simple past perfective (*canté*) are in systemic opposition to one another in the corpus.

For the simple past perfective, I identified the following temporal_{ts} and aspectual contents: O-V, *global*.

For the composite past, I have organized the different values that have been assigned to it by the most prominent Spanish and Latin-American linguists, both from the theoretical and the empiricist descriptive tradition. I have also included Comrie's account of the perfect aspect. This scrutiny has yielded eight subsenses for the tense form at hand.

The first sense identified is the *perfect of result*, by which a present state is referred to as the result of some past event or situation (Comrie Aspect; Cartagena; Quesada Pacheco; Real Academia; Alcina Franch and Blecua; Kovacci). Some of the Spanish linguists cited include as a subsense of the composite past that it expresses an event or situation which has a negative or positive emotional impact on the speaker in the present moment, as in "¡Me he llevado un susto!" (Lope Blanch, quoted in (Cartagena 2947)). By virtue of this meaning's semantic proximity to the *perfect of result*, I have classified it as a sub-category of this sense.

The second sense identified is the *perfect of persistent situation*, which describes a situation that started in the past but continues into the present (Comrie Aspect; Cartagena; Bull Time; Quesada Pacheco), for example: "Durante esta década ha reinado la paz en la region"²²⁴ (Quesada Pacheco 75).

The third sense identified is the *experiential perfect*, which indicates that a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present (Comrie Aspect; Quesada Pacheco), for example "¿Alguna vez has visto una serpiente?"²²⁵ (Quesada Pacheco 75).

The fourth sense identified is the *negated perfect*, which implies the negation of an event or situation which still might hold in the future (Lope Blanch cited in (Cartagena)), (Moreno de Alba): "Todavía no ha llegado"²²⁶ (Cartagena 2949). Thus, this sense is different from the one where the negation is perceived as final, where it is not to be expected that the situation in question might hold in the future. The difference between the two senses might be illustrated with the following constructed examples: "Juan no llegó, así que empecemos de una vez la reunión"²²⁷ vs. "Juan *no ha llegado* (todavía), así que aún no podemos empezar"²²⁸. In the first example, Juan is not expected to arrive in the near future, so the meeting will have to start without him; in the second case, he might still arrive.

²²⁴ **Gloss:** "Throughout this decade peace has reigned in the region."

²²⁵ **Gloss:** "Have you ever seen a snake?"

²²⁶ **Gloss:** "He still hasn't arrived."

²²⁷ **Gloss:** "Juan didn't arrive, so let's start the meeting straight away."

²²⁸ **Gloss:** "Juan *hasn't arrived* (yet), so we can't start yet."

The fifth sense is a purely temporal_{is} one, and has been discussed previously in the present thesis, namely: (OoV)-V, i.e. the event expressed by the composite past is perceived as anterior to a reference point which in turn is simultaneous with the *origen* (Rojo "Relaciones; Rojo and Veiga; Veiga Estudios). This way of describing the content of the composite past is parallel to Reichenbach's description of the present perfect: E_R,S, which has been adopted by Acero for the Spanish equivalent (49,54). Rojo and Veiga offer the following example as part of their argumentation: "Es para mí una satisfacción poder comunicarles que ayer mismo nuestros investigadores *han llegado* por fin a la resolución total del problema"²²⁹ (2903).

The sixth sense identified is the *perfect of recent past*, i.e., the past event expressed by the composite past is perceived as anterior to S, but recent (Comrie Aspect; Quesada Pacheco; Real Academia; Alcina Franch and Blecua; Kovacci), for example: "He cantado hoy"²³⁰ (Quesada Pacheco 75).

The seventh sense is identified for the Andine region by Rocío Caravedo and Ma. Ángeles Sastre Ruano as quoted by Quesada Pacheco (81): the mentioned verb form is used to designate past events that hold no specific relation to the present. This sense can typically also be expressed by the simple past perfective. Quesada offers an example of the use: "Esto se ha tratado de solucionar hace unos cuatro años"²³¹ (81).

The eighth and last sense is a rather wide one that potentially includes various subsenses: The verb form expresses that E is anterior to S, but these points are perceived as occurring within one and the same time interval. The Real Academia describes it thus: "[*he cantado*] denota el hecho ocurrido en un lapso de tiempo que no ha terminado todavía"²³² (465-66). They offer various examples: "Hoy me he levantado a las siete . . . Yo he estado siempre (y estaré) en Buenos Aires"²³³ (466). Crucially, and as can be discerned from these examples, the composite past with this sense does not specify whether E has been terminated or whether it continues until and/or beyond S.

As was the case with *canté* and *cantaba*, the collected existing descriptions of *he cantado* yield a rather confusing panorama:

²²⁹ **Gloss:** "It is a great satisfaction for me to be able to tell you that yesterday the investigators *have* finally found a complete solution to the problem."

²³⁰ **Gloss:** "I have sung today."

²³¹ **Gloss:** "There have been attempts to solve this some four years ago."

²³² **Translation:** "[*he cantado*] denotes an event that has occurred in a stretch of time that still hasn't been concluded"

²³³ **Gloss:** "Today I have gotten up at seven o'clock . . . I have always been (and will be) in Buenos Aires"

Table 6

Temporal_{ts} and aspectual values traditionally assigned to the composite past (*he cantado*)

HE CANTADO
Perfect of result
Perfect of persistent situation
Experiential perfect
Negated perfect
Purely temporal _{ts} (OoV)-V
Perfect of recent past
Simple past
E and S within the same time interval

This overview is of little help in the search for a specification of the systemic opposition(s) between the simple past perfective and the composite past, unless and until we have determined how these subsenses relate to one another, that is, if some are subordinate to others, if they are context-dependent etc.

The subsequent examination of the corpus evidence aims to disentangle this overview and condense it down to the minimal set of necessary and sufficient features.

5.3.1.1 TADVs with *he cantado*

Of the 1602 cases of the composite past found in the corpus, 241 (15%) are modified by TADVs. Again, I subcategorized the individual occurrences of TADVs in the corpus into the classes previously described by Klein. As we shall see, the task of determining exactly how the different TADVs modify *he cantado* is more complex than what was the case for the simple past perfective and the imperfective past.

The occurrences that were classified as TADV-Ps, that is, those that ". . . specify time spans in relation to other time spans, which are supposed to be given in context," modified 55% of all the 241 present perfects that were modified by a TADV. In other words, TADVs like *el año sesenta y seis* (Gutiérrez Marrone 24), *a los veintidós años* (Gutiérrez Marrone 42), *después* (Gutiérrez Marrone 314) and *en el gobierno de Banzer* (Gutiérrez Marrone 209)²³⁴ are classified as TADV-Ps.

²³⁴ **Gloss:** *the year of sixty six, at twenty two years of age, after/afterwards, during Banzer's time in office*

As I have mentioned, a TADV-P can either have FIN-specification or INF-specification, that is, it either modifies an utterance's TT or its TSit. As we observed, with *canté* and *cantaba*, it was not possible to distinguish between FIN-spec and INF-spec, since, for both tenses TT and TSit overlap. The analysis of how TADV-Ps specify *he cantado* yielded two different states of affairs: the TADV-P either had FIN-specification or it could not be determined whether its specification was INF or FIN. I will explain.

The latter situation was the case for 78% of all TADV-Ps. The relevance of this observation becomes apparent as we analyse the cases at hand in light of the question “*Why* can it not be determined whether the TADV-P has INF or FIN-spec?” The occurrences that were indeterminate with respect to the mentioned distinction could be divided into two groups according *why* their temporal_{is} specification could not be established.

The first group, with 62 cases (47% of all TADV-Ps) was comprised of examples such as the following: “El derecho a voto... eh... le *han dado el año cincuenta y tres . . .*”²³⁵ (Gutiérrez Marrone 22), “Yo *he comenzado hace cuarenta años*”²³⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 43), “El sistema de semestres ya empezó el sesenta y cinco, y Banzer *ha subido recién el sesenta y dos*”²³⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 128), “Perú ha firmado un tratado revisable, mientras el que *hemos firmado en 1904* es irrevisable”²³⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 196). These examples, like all the rest in this group, exhibit traits that correspond to those commonly assigned to the simple past perfective *canté*; they are clearly terminated and separate from the present moment, and are represented as global events and situations. This circumstance confirms the observations made previously by linguists of the empiricist tradition (Quesada, Sastre, Caravedo), namely that a certain neutralization is present between the simple past perfective and the composite past in this region. It also explains why the TADV-Ps are indeterminate with respect to INF/FIN-spec; the verb forms in question have the tense structure of the simple past perfective, where TT and TSit overlap.

The second group which is indeterminate with respect to FIN/INF-specification, with 42 cases (32% of the TADV-Ps), is comprised of TADV-Ps that modify occurrences of *he cantado* in contexts that make it natural to categorize them as cases of the *perfect of result*, i.e. they express that a present state is referred to as the result of some past event or situation: “Al respecto puedo decir que la época de las inmigraciones sensiblemente creo que *ya ha pasado*

²³⁵ **Gloss:** “The right to vote... eh... *has been granted* to [women] in *nineteen fifty-three . . .*”

²³⁶ **Gloss:** “*I have started forty years ago.*”

²³⁷ **Gloss:** “The semester system already started [simple past perfective] in seventy five, and Banzer *has just come into office in sixty two.*”

²³⁸ **Gloss:** “Peru has signed a revisable treaty, while the one that we *have signed in 1904* is irrevisable.”

a la historia ¿no?”²³⁹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 211), “Me gusta mi trabajo, *ya me he acostumbrado*”²⁴⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 246), “Entonces he tratado de equilibrar y es un cincuenta/cincuenta al final, pero *ahora ya más o menos hemos salido del paso*”²⁴¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 284). The *perfect of result* is one of the subsenses that have been specified for the verb form at hand, however, in many parts of Latin-America, this use is not exclusive of the composite form, as it is in Spain (Cartagena 2945-48). In fact, in large parts of Latin-America, the simple form is *preferred*, even in occasions when it is obvious that the present relevance of the past event or situation is essential; “[En el español Americano], Acciones terminadas antes del momento de hablar siempre se expresan mediante el pretérito simple, independientemente de la distancia temporal o afectiva entre ellos”²⁴² (Cartagena 2948). Examples of the simple form used in this manner are also present in the corpus from La Paz: “Por ejemplo, al mío *ya lo hice*, *ya he hecho* la reserva para el próximo año”²⁴³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 130). As a consequence, it can be argued with reasonable plausibility that the mentioned examples constitute another case of neutralization between the simple past perfective and the composite past. Furthermore, for the corpus examples, the reading *a present state is referred to as the result of some past event or situation* is one inferred from the context in which the verb form appears, and not a subsense of the form itself. In other words, since both the simple and the composite form acquire this interpretation in certain contexts, the mentioned sense cannot be ascribed to one form in particular. Another reason why the idea of a *perfect of result* is rejected here is that the composite past can display this meaning also when it has a temporal_{ts} composition which is different from the one displayed by the occurrences of group two; “Poco a poco han limado las diferencias que tenían de *hace tiempo*”²⁴⁴ (Quesada Pacheco 80). In the latter example, contrary to the examples which display neutralization with the simple past perfective, the event referred to is stretched out and includes the moment of utterance, for which it also has relevance. In other words, the sense *a present state is referred to as the result of some past event or situation* is one that presents itself independently of, and across tense structures. This state of affairs, coupled with the fact

²³⁹ **Gloss:** “About that I can say that the epoch of the immigrants simply I think that it *has already passed* into history, you know?”

²⁴⁰ **Gloss:** “I like my work, I *have grown accustomed* to it.”

²⁴¹ **Gloss:** “So I have tried to even it out and it’s fifty/fifty in the end, but *now (already)* more or less we *have exited* the situation.”

²⁴² **Translation:** “[In American Spanish], Actions that have been terminated before the speech point are always expressed by way of the simple preterite [the simple past perfective], regardless of the temporal or affective distance between them [the action and the speech point]. . . .”

²⁴³ **Gloss:** “For example, for mine I *already did* [simple past perfective] it, I have already made the reservation for next year”

²⁴⁴ **Gloss:** “Little by little the differences that they had some time ago have been smoothed out.”

that it is the context which provides the information about the event's relevance for the present moment, and that this use is not confined to the composite past, leads us to conclude that the mentioned reading is not one given by the verb form's tense structure.

However, if we start from the idea, as is done in the present thesis, that the cases of the composite past of group two display neutralization with the simple past perfective, thus adopting the latter form's temporal_{ts} structure, we are faced with a challenge when we aim to account for how the TADV-Ps of the relevant group modify the verb forms. The verb forms of this group are all modified by the TADV-Ps *ya* (28 cases), *ahora* (9 cases), *ahora ya* (2 cases), and *apenas* (1 case).²⁴⁵

The TADV-Ps *ya* and *ahora ya* unequivocally signal a moment in time *posterior* to E (TSit). It is this very TADV-P (possibly in conjunction with other contextual elements) that makes us interpret the event in question as relevant for the present moment. It may thus be argued that *ya* and *ahora ya* in these circumstances do not modify any part of the tense form's temporal_{ts} configuration. In other words, since the composite past is interpreted as having the tense configuration of the simple past perfective here, with TSit and TT overlapping and anterior to TU, *ya* temporally_{ts} modifies neither, since it signals a moment posterior to, and separate from, TSit. But even if we were not to grant *he cantado* the temporal_{ts} configuration of *canté* in these cases, it would not be uncomplicated to account for the interaction between these TADV-Ps and the verb form in question. As will be argued in chapter 5.3.1.2, all the cases of *he cantado* which do not display neutralization with respect to *canté*, have a temporal configuration where TSit (E) and TU (S) take place within one and the same time interval (TT), cp. the Real Academia's description of *he cantado*: “[*he cantado*] denota el hecho ocurrido en un lapso de tiempo que no ha terminado todavía”²⁴⁶ (465-66). Examples of TADV-Ps that are compatible with such an interpretation are *hoy*, *este año*, *la última década* etc.²⁴⁷ *Ya* and *ahora ya* do not denote time intervals that include both TSit and TU, rather, they exclude TSit and point solely to TU. Hence, in the present thesis this phenomenon is interpreted thus: the mentioned cases of *he cantado* display neutralization with *canté*, and are not temporally_{ts} specified by the TADV-Ps *ya* and *ahora ya*, rather, these TADV-Ps indicate that the event denoted by the tense form has some kind of relevance for the present moment. As I have mentioned, this interpretation becomes all the more plausible when we take into

²⁴⁵ **Gloss:** *now/already, now, now already, (only just) now*

²⁴⁶ **Translation:** “[*he cantado*] denotes an event that happened in a time stretch that still hasn't terminated”

²⁴⁷ **Gloss:** *today, this year, this last decade*

account the fact that these TADV-Ps also appear with the simple form *canté*, to which they add the exact same interpretation.

Nine of the corpus cases in this group (*perfect of result*) are modified by the TADV-P *ahora*. In three of these cases, *ahora* unmistakably functions in the same way as *ya* and *ahora ya* described in the previous paragraph, as illustrated by the following example: “. . . yo por ejemplo, otras mujeres que han trabajado en periodismo antes. . . *Ahora* la cosa se *ha generalizado*”²⁴⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 138). In six of the cases, however, the way in which *ahora* modifies *he cantado* is ambiguous. The reason why it is difficult to temporally_{ts} interpret the utterances at hand, apart from the ambiguous nature of *he cantado*, is that *ahora* also may have various different meanings. At least three distinct interpretations may be ascribed to *ahora* as it appears in the corpus; it may signal exclusively the present moment, separate from past events, displaying the same function as *ya* above, it may denote an extended time period which includes both TSit and TU, and finally, it may actually exclude TU and designate a recent past moment, taking on the meaning of “a moment ago”/ “just now”. In three of the six cases where *ahora* is ambiguous, it is ambiguous as to whether it points to TSit or TU, as in the following example: “Fue toda una boda así medio de. . . de ensueño, pero esta muchacha se *ha metido ahora* en el campo de la publicidad. Le va muy bien”²⁴⁹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 139). In other words, this example, like the two other of the three cases, is ambiguous as to whether we are indeed faced with a case of *perfect of result* (*ahora* points to TU), or whether it is a case of past tense with no additional overtones (*ahora* is simultaneous with TSit, modifying either this point or the TT overlapping with it). In both scenarios *he cantado* would be interpreted as displaying neutralization with *canté*. The exact same state of affairs presents itself with the TADV-P *apenas*.

In the last three occurrences where *ahora* displays ambiguity, it may be interpreted as having either one of all the three possible interpretations mentioned, as in the following example: “Es una buena persona, *ahora he llegado* a estimarlo muchísimo”²⁵⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 308). This example, like the two other of the three cases, may be interpreted in any of the two manners described in the previous paragraph, *or* we may regard *ahora* as designating an extended time period which encompasses both TSit and TU, in which case we are not dealing with a neutralization between the simple and the and composite form, rather,

²⁴⁸ **Gloss:** “. . . I for example, other women that have worked in journalism before. . . *Now* the thing *has become more common*”

²⁴⁹ **Gloss:** “It was one of those weddings that are kind of. . . like a daydream, but this girl *has entered now* into the area of publicity. She is very successful.”

²⁵⁰ **Gloss:** “He is a good person, *now I have come* to appreciate him a lot.”

the tense form at hand would have the temporal_{ts} composition described by the Real Academia, quoted above.

Consequently, of the 42 cases that were initially categorized as *perfect of result*, 39 display neutralization with *canté*, whereas 3 are ambiguous as to their temporal_{ts} interpretation.

It thus seems like, of the 136 cases of the composite past that are modified by a TADV-P, 78% (100 cases) unequivocally display neutralization with the simple past perfective.

As for the remaining 33 cases of TADV-Ps, they have all been classified as having FIN-spec. However, only 8 of them have been classified as pure TADV-Ps; the rest exhibit traits of both TADV-Ps and of TADV-Ds (21 cases), or TADV-Ps and TADV-Qs (4 cases, reviewed at the end of this sub-chapter), and exhibit both FIN and INF-spec. The 8 pure TADV-Ps and the 21 cases of P and D have been grouped together because the occurrences of *he cantado* that they modify all fall into one of two categories which arguably are one and the same: the *perfect of persistent situation*, which describes a situation that started in the past but continues into the present, and the *negated perfect*, which implies the negation of an event or situation which still might hold in the future. The reason why these two categories should be treated as one is that there is no temporal_{tm} distinction between a negative and a positive persistent situation that continues into the present. The corpus offers a few examples of pure TADV-Ps that modify the mentioned cases of *he cantado*: “. . . los premios que se *han producido en este último tiempo* no han... eh... dado a conocer autores muy, muy valiosos”²⁵¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 67), “. . . y nuestra población . . . es la mayor cantidad analfabeta, diremos... no obstante que *en este último tiempo ha progresado* mucho”²⁵² (Gutiérrez Marrone 208). These are TADV-Ps by virtue of the fact that they limit themselves to specifying time spans in relation to other time spans. The corpus also offers multiple examples of TADVs that are a combination of P and D: “Yo, *desde que me casé, he hecho* mi vida: la oficina a la casa, la oficina a la casa”²⁵³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 46), “. . . la producción de estaño *ha declinado* en cuatro mil toneladas finas *en los últimos tres o cuatro años*”²⁵⁴ (Gutiérrez Marrone 52), “La femininidad, *desde Eva, se ha entendido* fragilidad, sensibilidad, ¿no es cierto? dulzura”²⁵⁵ (Gutiérrez Marrone 330). These TADVs have been classified as P

²⁵¹ **Gloss:** “. . . the prizes that *have been produced lately* haven’t.. eh... made known authors that are very good.”

²⁵² **Gloss:** “. . . and our population . . . is for the most part illiterate, so to speak... however *lately it has progressed* a lot.”

²⁵³ **Gloss:** “I, *since I got married, have made* my own life: back and forth from the office to my house.”

²⁵⁴ **Gloss:** “. . . the tin production *has declined* by four thousand tons *in the last three or four years.*”

²⁵⁵ **Gloss:** “Femininity, *from the time of Eve, has entailed* fragility, sensibility, right? Sweetness.”

and D by virtue of the fact that they specify time spans in relation to other time spans *and* that they specify the duration of temporal entities and/or situations. For this sense of *he cantado*, TSit (E) is understood as stretched out in time from the past into the present. When modified by a TADV, the TSit of a verb form is specified by TADVs having INF-spec, in this case the TADV-Ds, indicating the duration of the event or situation at hand. If we postulate, as is done in the present section, that the TADV-Ps in these cases have FIN-spec, it seems that TT and TSit overlap; the event (TSit) stretches out across what is specified as the TT, as we can observe in the examples with pure TADV-Ps: “. . . los premios que se *han producido en este último tiempo* no han... eh... dado a conocer autores muy, muy valiosos”²⁵⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 67). Hence, at first glance it seems that we are not justified in claiming that the TADV-Ps have FIN-spec in these cases, rather, they seem to be indeterminate with respect to INF/FIN-spec. However, it will be argued later on that the TT of the tense as such, signalled by the FIN part of the utterance, indicates a period of time which includes both E (TSit) and S (TU), an interpretation which corresponds to the one posited by the Real Academia for the verb form at hand, namely that it expresses that E (TSit) is anterior to S (TU), but that these points are perceived as occurring within one and the same time interval. The TSit (stretched out in time in the cases of the present paragraph) is expressed by the lexical part of the utterance, and is thus not a part of the meaning of the tense as such. In light of this state of affairs, we postulate that the TADV-Ps have FIN-spec also in the cases of *perfect of persistent situation*.

The occurrences that were classified as TADV-Ds (i.e. those that specify the duration of temporal entities, like time spans, and/or perhaps situations obtaining at time spans) modified forty-six cases of *he cantado* in the corpus, that is, 19% of the occurrences that appear with TADVs. Of these, 30 (65% of the TADV-Ds) are combined TADV-Ds and Ps, and have been reviewed above. Sixteen cases are pure TADV-Ds, and they are the ones that will be examined here. Examples of pure TADV-Ds that modify *he cantado* in the corpus are: *Durante más de veinte años* (Gutiérrez Marrone 19), *cuarenta años* (Gutiérrez Marrone 43), and *durante unos dos o tres meses* (Gutiérrez Marrone 54).²⁵⁷ According to Klein, these TADVs have INF-specification; a claim that, once again, seems to fit with the observations of the corpus evidence. If we assume, as does Klein, that the TADV-Ds modify the lexical part of the utterance, the FIN interpretation is left up to the verb form or other contextual elements.

²⁵⁶ **Gloss:** “. . . the prizes that *have been produced lately* haven’t.. eh... made known authors that are very good.”

²⁵⁷ **Gloss:** *for more than twenty years, forty years, during/for about two or three months*

The analysis of the corpus occurrences quickly revealed that the TADV-Ds were of no avail in the quest to distinguish between the cases of the composite past that have the temporal_{is} characteristics of the simple past perfective (terminated before S), and those that signal a time span which includes S. The following two examples show the ambiguity of these constructions: “*He sido* catedrática de derecho romano *durante más de veinte años* en la Universidad de La Paz”²⁵⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 19), “*He estudiado* *cuarenta años* el tema de Bolívar”²⁵⁹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 43). In neither of the two cases are we enlightened as to whether the epoch in question is a past one, separate from the present moment (in which case “he sido” and “he estudiado” are interchangeable with “fui” and “estudí” respectively), or whether the time span includes the present moment (in which case “he sido” and “he estudiado” are being used with a temporal interpretation traditionally seen also in non-Andine parts of the Spanish-speaking world). Surprisingly, of the sixteen cases where *he cantado* was modified by pure TADV-Ds, only two were ultimately indeterminate with respect to their temporal_{is} interpretation. However, the rest of the occurrences could be temporally_{is} specified only on the basis of contextual information or information about the informant provided at the beginning of each interview. In the following two examples from the corpus, the temporal_{is} information is given by the immediate context:

Inf. - Sí yo he estudiado historia, ¿no? *He estudiado cinco años*. He egresado de la facultad después de...

Enc. - ¿Eso después de enviudar?

Inf. - Ah, sí, sí.

(Gutiérrez Marrone 74),²⁶⁰

“Ella *ha trabajado treinta años* en el... o sea, antes de que me lo deje el negocio, trabajó treinta años. Cuando nosotros le compramos el negocio, ya ella dejó de trabajar”²⁶¹

(Gutiérrez Marrone 251). The following two examples can be temporally_{is} interpreted on the basis of information given at the beginning of each interview: For the first example, we are provided with the information that the informant is 55 years old, and that she is still employed as a professor (Gutiérrez Marrone 65). “Eh... a mí me ha interesado mucho la filosofía de la

²⁵⁸ **Gloss:** “I have been a professor of Roman law for more than thirty years in the University of La Paz.”

²⁵⁹ **Gloss:** “For forty years I have studied the theme of Bolívar.”

²⁶⁰ **Gloss:** “Inf. – Yes I have studied history, you know? I have studied for five years. I have graduated from the faculty after... Enc. – After becoming a widow? Inf. – A, yes, yes.”

²⁶¹ **Gloss:** “She has worked for thirty years in the... that is, before she left me the business, she worked for thirty years. When we bought the business from her, she stopped working”

historia. Esta es una cátedra que *he desempeñado durante largos años . . .*²⁶² (Gutiérrez Marrone 68). On the basis of the aforementioned information, we are able to determine that the epoch in question includes the S point, so that this is not a case of neutralization between the composite past and the simple past perfective. For the second example, we are provided with the information that the informant has a son (Gutiérrez Marrone 142). “El principio ha sido muy interesante porque he ansiado tener un hijo y en realidad lo *he esperado tres años*”²⁶³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 142). From the information provided in the beginning, we are able to deduce that she is no longer waiting to have a child, and can confirm that we are faced with a case of neutralization between the composite and the simple form: the epoch in question is separate from S.

Of the sixteen cases of *he cantado* modified by pure TADV-Ds, two are indeterminate as to their temporal_{ts} reference, eight display neutralization with *canté*, and six signal an ongoing event, i.e., one that started in the past and continues into the present.

The occurrences that were specified as TADV-Qs, (i.e. those that indicate the frequency of temporal entities, like time spans or situations which obtain at these time spans) modified ninety-one cases of *he cantado* in the corpus, that is, 38% of the 241 occurrences that appear with a TADV. Of these, 87 (95,6% of all TADV-Qs) were pure TADV-Qs, while only 4 were a combination of TADV-P and Q. The latter four cases will be reviewed at the end of this subchapter. Examples of TADV-Qs that modify *he cantado* in the corpus are: *siempre* (which actually modified 29 of the 91 cases of TADV-Qs) (Gutiérrez Marrone 181), *nunca/jamás* (which modified 36 of the TADV-Qs) (Gutiérrez Marrone 56), *dos veces* (Gutiérrez Marrone 24), *en algunos casos* (Gutiérrez Marrone 182) and *otra vez* (Gutiérrez Marrone 355).²⁶⁴ According to Klein, these TADVs have INF-specification; a claim that, once again, seems to fit with the observations of the corpus evidence. As was the case with the TADV-Ds, the TADV-Qs contribute no information as to the temporal_{ts} specification of the occurrences of *he cantado*, that is, if it has the temporal_{ts} characteristics of *canté* (terminated before S), or whether it signals a time span which includes S. The following example shows the ambiguity of these constructions:

. . . veinte años de trabajo y solamente se promulgó el año sesenta y seis, con algunos defectos porque intervinieron condiciones de personas que produjeron

²⁶² **Gloss:** “The philosophy of history has interested me a lot. It’s a professorship which *I’ve had for many long years . . .*”

²⁶³ **Gloss:** “The beginning has been very interesting because I have longed for a child and in reality *I have waited three years* for him.”

²⁶⁴ **Gloss:** *always, never, twice, in some cases, again*

algunas reformas que... yo no me he podido oponer. *Se ha revisado dos veces*. La segunda revisión ha sido peor que la primera . . . (Gutiérrez Marrone 24).²⁶⁵

For the construction at hand, it is impossible to determine whether it is a case of experiential perfect (i.e. a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present), or whether it is a case of neutralization with the simple past perfective, in which case the form would be interchangeable with *se revisó*, and the events are not perceived as part of a time period which includes the present moment. Hence, it is made plain that the TADV-Q *dos veces* has INF-specification, describing the lexical part of the utterance: <*revisarse dos veces*>, to which the FIN-element of the utterance is added. As I have mentioned, this is the case also for the other occurrences of TADV-Qs, however, the mentioned example is the only one where *he cantado* is indeterminate with respect to its temporal_{ts} interpretation. As was the case with the TADV-Ds, the rest of the cases can be temporally_{ts} identified either because of elements present in the immediate context, or because of information provided at the beginning of each interview. For the following two examples, the relevant information is provided by the immediate context: “*Siempre me han creído la profesora, pero yo era alumna. Fui cinco años a la universidad, hice muy Buenos estudios y egresé*”²⁶⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 75), “*En algunos casos ha pasado esto, hay otros que están muy contentos con lo que han escogido*”²⁶⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 182). In the first case, it is clear that we are dealing with a situation and a time period which have been terminated before the present moment (providing *han creído* with the temporal_{ts} interpretation of *creyeron*), and in the second case we are dealing with the experiential perfect, and the context shows us that the present moment is part of the time period alluded to. For the following example, the relevant information is provided at the beginning of the interview, where we are told that the informant’s mother is dead. The informant is talking about her in this example: “*Y así todito el tiempo he tenido que procurar en toda forma contentarla, ¿no?*”²⁶⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 89). This is another case of neutralization between the simple and the composite form, (*he tenido* can be replaced by *tuve*), as the present moment is clearly separate from the time period in question.

²⁶⁵ **Gloss:** “. . . twenty years of work and it wasn’t enacted until seventy six, with some imperfections because the conditions of some people who produced some reforms intervened... I have not been able to oppose. It *has been revised twice*. The second time the revision has been worse than the first [time] . . .”

²⁶⁶ **Gloss:** “They *have always viewed* me as a teacher, but I was a student. I attended the university for five years, I did very well, and I graduated.”

²⁶⁷ **Gloss:** “*On some occasions that has happened*, there are others who are very content with what they have chosen.”

²⁶⁸ **Gloss:** “And like that *all the time I have had* to make sure to please her in every way, you know?”

Of the 87 cases of *he cantado* modified by pure TADV-Qs, fifteen displayed neutralization with *canté*, twenty-six were cases of the *perfect of persistent situation*, eight displayed the properties of *experiential perfect*, two could be classified as either one of the two latter categories²⁶⁹, thirty-four were cases of *negated perfect*, one was a case of *perfect of recent past*, and finally, one was indeterminate. Since all these interpretations are in part dependent upon the context in which the verb form appears, one might argue that we should not bestow upon the composite past as such more than one temporal_{is} interpretation. However, at least one of these interpretations (the one where the composite past displays the temporal_{is} properties of the simple past perfective) is not compatible with the others. In other words, at least some interpretations are mutually exclusive and cannot possibly be sub-meanings of one over-arching general temporal_{tm} sense. This state of affairs will be further explored in the subsequent chapter, which treats the systemic and nonsystemic functions of the composite past.

As I mentioned, there were four cases of *he cantado* that were modified by a TADV that was a combination of P and Q, that is, a combination of a TADV which specifies time spans in relation to other time spans, and one that indicates the frequency of temporal entities. In all four cases, *he cantado* was yielded the interpretation of *negated perfect*, i.e. the negation of an event or situation which still might hold in the future: “Bueno, tengo cuatro hermanos. El mayor tiene veintiséis años y ha salido de literatura. *Todavía no ha hecho* la tesis, pero no se dedica a la literatura”²⁷⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 184). In these cases, then, the time period alluded to includes the present moment, i.e. there is no neutralization with *canté*.

In conclusion, the reason why we have examined the way in which the TADVs interact with the composite past is that we want to be able to say something about the temporal_{tm} content of the latter. We were able to extract the relevant information from the TADVs by way of examining their FIN/INF-specification. We postulated that, with *he cantado*, all TADV-Ps that were not indeterminate with respect to the FIN/INF-specification had FIN-spec., and that this meant that they specified a TT (r) that includes both TSit (E) and TU (S). The rest of the (non-TADV-P) TADVs were interpreted as having INF-spec., which means that they specify the lexical part of the utterance. One consequence of this perspective is that the nature of the TSit (E) itself, i.e. whether it is terminated before TU (S) (as with the *experiential perfect*) or outstretched so as to include TU (S) (as in the *perfect of persistent*

²⁶⁹ These two cases are not treated as temporally_{is} indeterminate here because it will be argued posteriorly that the two mentioned categories in fact are one and the same.

²⁷⁰ **Gloss:** “Well, I have four brothers. The oldest one is twenty-six years and has graduated from literary studies. *He still hasn't* written his thesis, but he doesn't devote himself to literature”

situation), is not given by the composite past itself. Rather, the tense (i.e. the FIN-part of the utterance) signals an epoch (TT) which includes TU (S), within which the TSit (E), outstretched or not, has taken place, or at least been initiated. There were occurrences in the corpus, however, that were not compatible with this definition of the tense form. These were the ones that, on the basis of their interaction with the TAVD-Ps and/or on the basis of contextual information, were interpreted as displaying neutralization with the simple form *canté*.

The latter scenario was the case for 51% (123 cases) of the 241 occurrences of the composite past that were modified by a TADV. One hundred of these were modified by a TADV-P, eight by a TADV-D, and 15 by a TADV-Q. The rest of the occurrences, 49% (118 cases) of the 241 occurrences of the composite past that were modified by a TADV, were compatible with the mentioned definition proposed by the Real Academia. Sixty-six of these were initially classified as cases of the *perfect of persistent situation*, forty-three were cases of *negated perfect*, and nine were cases of the *experiential perfect*. Five cases were indeterminate as to whether or not they displayed neutralization with *canté*.

5.3.1.2 Systemic and nonsystemic functions of the composite past (*he cantado*)

As I have already mentioned, part of the aim of the present section is to employ corpus evidence to make sense of the somewhat disorderly overview of the values assigned to the composite past by the traditional grammars as presented in section 5.3.1. Ultimately, the objective is to identify the systemic function(s) of the Spanish composite past as it appears in the corpus.

I will begin by identifying and eliminating the values that are reducible to another one and/or those that can only be inferred by taking into consideration the combination of the form's tense morpheme with other elements. The following analysis is based on the assumption that the systemic functions of the composite past can be accounted for on a purely temporal_{tm} basis.

The first sense that will be examined here is the *perfect of persistent situation*, which supposedly is used to describe a situation that started in the past but continues into the present. The corpus contained 292 cases (including the ones that are modified by a TADV) that could be interpreted as expressing this content, that is, 18% of the cases of the composite past in the corpus. All these cases had two things in common: a) the utterances they appeared in alluded to a time period which includes both E and S, and b) the interpretation of E itself as stretched out, or in some cases iterated, so as to include S, was always extracted from the lexical root of

the verb and/or contextual information. The following examples illustrate this state of affairs: “Sí, el que vive en la calle y pide limosna es porque quiere, en realidad. *He luchado* mucho por recoger a los mendigos, pero no he encontrado ningún eco. Consideran que son un problema social minoritario”²⁷¹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 25), “. . . y *he trabajado* en el área económica como cinco años. Y me *ha ido* muy bien, me *ha ido* muy bien”²⁷² (Gutiérrez Marrone 135), “En Bolivia, por ejemplo, hay el mayor porcentaje de . . . de gente que es manejada. Quizás *ha habido* un gran descuido”²⁷³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 207). In the first example, it is the adverbial *mucho* that indicates that the event expressed by the verb form in question is to be perceived as stretched out. Secondly, contextual information lets us know that E, *luchar*, continues into the present, so as to include S. In isolation, the verb form does not express any of this, but might just as easily be interpreted as the *experiential* perfect, which expresses that a given event or situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present.²⁷⁴ The exact same situation presents itself in the second example, where the TADV *como cinco años* has the same function as the one described for *mucho* in the previous example. In the third example, the lexical root of the verb (*haber*) is of a nature that makes it amenable to being interpreted as describing a situation with a certain duration (as opposed to one describing a punctual event, such as *toser* or *abrir*²⁷⁵, for example). Again, it is the contextual information that leads us to the conclusion that the event in question continues into the present. Consequently, for the *perfect of persistent situation*, what remains when information provided by the context and the lexical root of the tense form is removed, is that it expresses a time period that includes both E and S.

The second sense that will be reviewed here is the *negated perfect*, which is the negation of an event or situation that might still present itself in the future. This interpretation was granted to a total of 120 cases, or 7,5% of the total occurrences. Examples from the corpus include: “No se *ha definido* todavía la forma de esta . . . de este tipo de acercamiento, pero estimamos que esto sería lo que . . . lo que la carrera puede ofrecer en cuanto al contacto real y

²⁷¹ **Gloss:** “Yes, the ones that live on the streets and beg it’s because they want to, really. I *have fought* a lot to help the beggars, but I haven’t found any resonance [i.e. people are not interested in helping]. They consider it a minor social problem.”

²⁷² **Gloss:** “. . . and I *have worked* in the area of economics for about five years. I *have done* very well, I *have done* very well.”

²⁷³ **Gloss:** “Bolivia, for example, has the biggest percentage of . . . of people that are manipulated. Maybe there *has been* a big negligence.”

²⁷⁴ Without the mentioned contextual information, the verb form might also be interpreted as displaying neutralization with *canté*, however, it will be argued that this latter sense and the one described in the paragraph in question are not subsenses of one over-arching semantic interpretation, rather, they are two separate, exclusive senses of *he cantado*.

²⁷⁵ **Gloss:** *cough, open*

efectivo²⁷⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 160), “Los candidatos no *han hablado* de educación, casi ninguno; si lo han hecho, lo han hecho muy de pasada y²⁷⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 277). Judging by the corpus evidence, the mentioned sense is not one that can be ascribed to the tense form in question. Firstly, as was argued in section 5.3.1.1, there is no *temporal_{tm}* distinction between a negative and a positive event or situation that continues into the present, so the *negated perfect* and the *perfect of persistent situation* should be treated as one and the same category. Secondly, the information that the event or situation in question is negated is quite obviously one that is derived from the context in which the verb form appears, and not from the form itself. Hence, the idea that *negated perfect* should be a subsense of the Spanish composite past is firmly rejected in the present thesis. The mentioned sense does, however, present a situation where the event occurs within a time stretch that hasn’t been concluded at the moment of utterance.

The third sense that will be reviewed here is the *experiential perfect*, which expresses that a given event or situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present. One hundred and ninety-three cases (12% of the total occurrences) were initially categorized as having this sense. The event(s) indicated by the *experiential perfect*, as opposed to the one expressed by the *perfect of persistent situation* are perceived as terminated before S, albeit occurring within the same stretch of time. Examples from the corpus include: “Así como hay una vocación para la ciencia o para las artes o para la política, la literatura es una vocación. Es verdad que yo incidentalmente *he sido* ministro de estado, asesor de los presidentes²⁷⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 39), “Celina además es una mujer muy culta, maestra, ¿no es cierto? y *ha sido* política; o sea, tiene todo ese bagaje de experiencia²⁷⁹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 139), “Debe estar a unos mil cuatrocientos metros, más o menos, porque yo *he estado* en la propiedad de al lado, pegada a la finca de nosotros, está a mil cuatrocientos²⁸⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 261). The reason why it can be maintained that this sense expresses that E and S occur within the same stretch of time, is that it is incompatible with TADV that exclude S. In other words, if such a TADV were to be added, the reading

²⁷⁶ **Gloss:** “What type of approach this is still *hasn’t been* defined, but we estimate that it would be what... what the career can offer with respect to real and efficient contact”

²⁷⁷ **Gloss:** “The candidates *haven’t talked* about education, almost none of them; if they have, they’ve done it in passing and”

²⁷⁸ **Gloss:** “Just like there is a vocation for science or for art or for politics, literature is a vocation. It is true that I incidentally *have been* state minister, advisor to the presidents”

²⁷⁹ **Gloss:** “Celina, apart from being a very cultivated woman, a teacher, am I right? And she *has been* a politician, in other words, she has all this experience.”

²⁸⁰ **Gloss:** “I think it is located at a distance of about one thousand four hundred metres, more or less, because I *have been* on the neighbouring property, directly beside our summer estate, it’s at a distance of one thousand four hundred.”

would no longer be *experiential perfect*, but rather *neutralization with canté*: “Yo el año pasado he estado en la propiedad de al lado, pegada a la finca de nosotros”²⁸¹ It is, however, perfectly compatible with a TADV that includes both E and S: “Yo este año he estado en la propiedad de al lado”²⁸²

Hence, the three senses that we have reviewed so far all signal a stretch of time that includes both E and S. Consequently, thus far it seems justifiable to postulate that this is one over-arching sense of the composite past, and that E’s temporal_{tm} contour is left unspecified by this tense form, a definition that is compatible with the one proposed by the Real Academia as presented in section 5.3.1. This hypothesis is strengthened by the fact that there are quite a few cases that can be interpreted both as *perfect of persistent situation* and as *experiential perfect*. This situation only presents itself when the E is iterated: “Mire, yo he estado bastante en Brasil y nunca he podido llegar a conclusiones muy simples sobre el problema racial en Brasil”²⁸³ (Gutiérrez Marrone 56). It is possible to interpret this utterance as expressing both that a situation, or chain of iterated events, started in the past and continues into the present (*perfect of persistent situation*), and that a given event or situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present (*experiential perfect*).

The fourth sense that will be presented here is the *perfect of result*. It was already argued in section 5.3.1.1 that this is not in and of itself a subsense of the verb form in question. Almost all the occurrences of *perfect of result* that were modified by a TADV-P were ultimately categorized as cases of neutralization with the simple past perfective, however, it was stated that the mentioned interpretation presented itself across tense structures, and must be attributed solely to contextual information. In other words, a present state can be referred to as being the result of some past situation with the *perfect of persistent situation* (“Tengo aquí amigos que tienen cinco, seis, hasta diez libros, y ahí se quedan. ¿Por qué? Por que se han dedicado a la diplomacia, a la vida social”²⁸⁴ (Gutiérrez Marrone 47)), the *perfect that denotes a time stretch that includes E and S* (“La mujer, en los tiempos que estamos atravesando, ha tomado ya una importancia única”²⁸⁵ (Gutiérrez Marrone 213)), and the *perfect that displays neutralization with canté* (“Yo creo que eso ha pasado con todas, ¿no? Al

²⁸¹ **Gloss:** “I, last year, have been at the neighbouring property, the one that’s right besides ours”

²⁸² **Gloss:** “I, this year, have been at the neighbouring property”

²⁸³ **Gloss:** “Look, I have been to Brasil a lot and I have never been able to reach very simple conclusions about the racial problem in Brasil.”

²⁸⁴ **Gloss:** “I have friends here who have [published] five, six, even ten books, and then they stop. Why? Because they have devoted themselves to diplomacy, to a social life”

²⁸⁵ **Gloss:** “Women, in the times that we are currently passing through, have acquired a very unique importance”

principio éramos muchas más... algunas se *han retirado* ...”²⁸⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 343). Of the 340 cases that were initially categorized as the *perfect of result*, 326 display neutralization with *canté*, eleven are cases of the *perfect of persistent situation*, while four are cases of the *perfect that denotes a time stretch that includes E and S*. Undoubtedly, many of the cases that initially have been categorized as *perfect of persistent situation* and *perfect that denotes a time stretch that includes E and S*, can also be interpreted as expressing that a present state is referred to as being the result of some past situation. It is the context in which the form appears that allows us to arrive at the mentioned interpretation. Furthermore, as I have already mentioned, the simple form, *canté*, is also used with this sense throughout Latin-America, and has also been observed with this meaning in the corpus form La Paz. Consequently, the *perfect of result* is rejected here as a subsense of the composite past.

The fifth sense that will be reviewed here is the *perfect of recent past*. This sense is one that traditionally has been assigned to the verb form in question in the standard peninsular Spanish, and is not generally identified as a denotation of this form in the Spanish of Latin-America (Quesada Pacheco 74). This state of affairs is confirmed by the observation of the corpus evidence. In the corpus, a total of nine cases of the composite past could be interpreted as expressing an event that is understood as recent, as in the following example: “Pero en el sentido de lo que yo veo en el fenómeno que yo *he explicado* hace unos minutos...”²⁸⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 107). The information that the event is recent is provided by the TADV in this case, as in all the other corpus cases. This situation, coupled with the fact that the simple form too is used with this sense in the corpus (“Como... como te digo, mirá [sic], recién *compré* la casa donde está la tienda”²⁸⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 247)) causes us to reject the *perfect of recent past* as a subsense of the composite past. The cases that were initially categorized as *perfects of recent past* all display neutralization with *canté*, firstly, because this latter form can be used with the same sense, and secondly, because the TADVs that accompany the *perfects of recent past* clearly exclude S from the time stretch in question.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁶ **Gloss:** “I think that that has happened with everybody, you know? In the beginning we were much more... Some *have withdrawn*”

²⁸⁷ **Gloss:** “But in the sense in which I see the phenomenon that *I have explained* a few minutes ago...”

²⁸⁸ **Gloss:** “Like... like I’m telling you, look, I recently *bought* the house where the shop is”

²⁸⁹ It is important to distinguish between the *perfect of recent past* and the perfect which simply places S and E within the same time interval. The distinction can be illustrated with the following examples respectively: “Lo *he visto* hace poco” [I *have seen* him a short while ago] vs. “Lo *he visto* hoy” [I *have seen* him today]. The first case is characterized by the fact that the time stretch within which E occurs is *separate* from S, albeit close to it in time. In the second case, the composite form is used because E and S are perceived as occurring within one and the same time interval, and it is irrelevant whether it is a shorter interval (*hoy*) or a longer one (*este año/este siglo*). This distinction has not been made consistently by all linguists, as can be observed by examples provided by Quesada Pacheco (Quesada Pacheco 74-75).

The sixth sense that will be reviewed here is *neutralization with canté*. When we include the relevant cases of the two previous groups examined, we arrive at a total of 951 cases (59% of the occurrences). In other words, more than half of the cases of *he cantado* display neutralization with *canté*, as in the following examples: “Mi padre no admitía ni pongos, ni personas de servicio, y cuando *ha sido prefecto*, etc., nunca *ha permitido* que se le hinquen ni le hagan señales de adoración”²⁹⁰ (Gutiérrez Marrone 24),

Nosotros *hemos jugado* con los hijos de los... es decir, con los que eran de nuestra edad en la época antes de la reforma agraria, especialmente yo. . . . Yo *he vuelto* a Pucarani después de unos trece años más o menos, doce años, ¿no? Después de la reforma agraria del cincuenta y dos, *he vuelto* el sesenta y cuatro... o algo por el estilo. Entonces, lo que yo *he notado* es un cambio bien interesante de tipo generacional. La gente que me conocía, los abuelos ya, diremos, los padres ya que *han trabajado* con mi padre, todavía tenían, diremos, ese respeto, del patrón (Gutiérrez Marrone 101)²⁹¹,

” . . . hace muchos años que Dorotea Terán, hace muchos años que ella se *ha graduado* y *ha sido* abogada”²⁹² (Gutiérrez Marrone 317).

This sense, albeit partially dependent upon contextual information, is not one that is reducible to another category, and it is incompatible with the sense that signals a time stretch which includes both E and S. Therefore, *neutralization with canté* is a subsense of *he cantado* that will be retained here, based on the corpus evidence.

The seventh sense that will be presented here is the purely temporal_{is} one, proposed by Rojo: (OoV)-V. In section 4.2.2, it was argued on a theoretical basis that this representation of the composite past’s semantic content is not satisfactory; an event that transpires before a moment simultaneous to the *origen* is not temporally_{is} distinguishable from one that simply transpires before the *origen*. Furthermore, the corpus offered no examples of the composite past that expressed the mentioned content. In other words, there were no cases of the composite past that expressed a moment simultaneous with, yet separate from, the moment of

²⁹⁰ **Gloss:** “My father doesn’t want service people, and when he *has been* prefect, etc., he never *has allowed* that they salute him or show signs of adoration.”

²⁹¹ **Gloss:** “We *have played* with the children of the... or, with the ones that were of our age in the epoch before the agricultural reform, especially me... I *have returned* to Pucarani after some thirteen years more or less, twelve years, you know? After the agricultural reform of fifty-two, I *have returned* in seventy-four... or something like that. So, What I *have noticed* is a very interesting change in generations. The people that used to know me, that are grandparents now, let’s say, the parents that *have worked* with my father, still had, let’s say, that respect, for their patron”

²⁹² **Gloss:** “. . . many years ago Dorotea Terán, many years ago she *has graduated* and *has become* a lawyer.”

utterance, before which the event or situation transpired. Consequently, (OoV)-V is rejected as a subsense of *he cantado*.

Finally, 30 cases (2% of the occurrences) could not be determined as to their temporal_{tm} content, either because the context did not provide enough information as to the termination or non-termination of the event and/or epoch in question, or simply because the informant interrupts him or herself, rendering the utterance incomplete.

In conclusion, of the 1602 cases of the composite past in the corpus from La Paz, 59% display neutralization with the simple past perfective, thus adopting the temporal_{ts} composition of the latter; E_S or O-V. This use of the form is characterized by the fact that it signals past events that are unequivocally separate from, or terminated before, the moment of utterance. Three hundred and twenty-six of these were initially categorized as the *perfect of result*. While it is maintained in the present thesis that the latter is not a subsense of the verb form as such, in part because the simple form also expresses this content, there are indications in the corpus that the composite form is indeed developing this as a subsense. One state of affairs leads us to this assumption, namely that the number of occurrences of the simple past with the mentioned denotation is vastly inferior to that of the composite form; there are only 23 cases of the simple past perfective expressing relevance for the present moment. One reason for this development might be that a form which expresses the mentioned content will often be surrounded by verb forms in the present tense, which might make the speaker inclined to select a past verb form with a present tensed auxiliary, such as the Spanish composite past. The following example illustrates the mentioned circumstance:

Y suponiendo que la mujer *trae* un hijo de gente extraña, *nace* entre la familia con todos los derechos del hijo. Si el matrimonio no *se ha disuelto* y *se ha contraído* un nuevo matrimonio, los hijos de ese segundo matrimonio *son* hijos del primer matrimonio. (Gutiérrez Marrone 27).²⁹³

Although there are indications that the *perfect of result* might be developing in the La Paz-region, for the reasons mentioned previously, we will not operate with this sense as a subsense of *he cantado* in the present thesis.

Consequently, 59% display neutralization with the simple past perfective, 2% are indeterminate as to their temporal_{tm} composition, and 39% signal a stretch of time which includes both the event time (E) and the speech time (S). Crucially, the latter sense remains

²⁹³ **Gloss:** “And suppose the woman *brings* a child of unknown people, it *is born* within the family with all the rights of the son. If the matrimony *hasn't dissolved* and a new matrimony *hasn't been contracted*, the children of this second matrimony *are* children of the first matrimony.”

indeterminate as to the temporal_{tm} composition of E, i.e. whether it is terminated before S, or stretched out so as to include it. Hence the R-point, (TT) of this sense is characteristically distinct from the R or r that we have seen previously; it is not perceived as one of three separate points collocated relative to each other in chronological order, rather, it is stretched out, and encompasses both E and S:

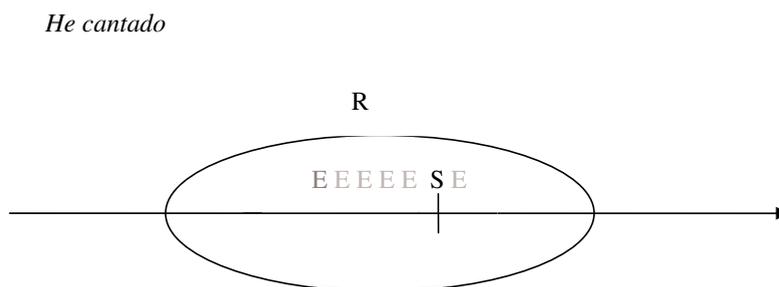


Fig. 8 The temporal_{tm} composition of the composite past (*he cantado*).

As I mentioned, the R point of this tense is intrinsically different from the R point previously defined. This new R point's, or rather R-*interval's*, particular characteristics make it a debatable point whether the mentioned configuration is a temporal_{ts} or an aspectual one. In other words, if temporal_{ts} configurations consist of three separate points, whose internal temporal_{tm} composition is irrelevant, collocated chronologically relative to each other on a time line, the mentioned configuration is not a temporal_{ts} one; the R must be perceived as an outstretched interval. And, if aspectual compositions do not concern themselves with the relative chronological order of points or intervals on a timeline, but allude only to the event's internal temporal_{tm} composition, the configuration in question is not an aspectual one either; the relative chronological order of E and S is specified, as well as their relation to R, and E's internal temporal_{tm} composition is not specified.

In other words, in the cases where this form doesn't overlap with the simple past perfective, the R-interval of this tense is parallel to the R-point previously defined, in the sense that it is required for the temporal_{tm} interpretation of the tense, i.e. it is not merely a tool (r) which accounts for the tense form's potentials for interacting with other contextual elements denoting time.

Consequently, the composite past of the Spanish of La Paz displays two systemic functions, i.e two senses that define its position within the tense system: it either overlaps with the simple past perfective, or it denotes a time interval which encompasses both E and S.

Only two cases do not display systemic functions. They both seem to adopt the temporal_{tm} specification normally ascribed to the pluperfect, namely that an event transpires before another one in the past: “. . . nunca hablaron de Hispanoamérica, porque justamente nos *hemos emancipado* de España, de la... de lo que en esa época se llamaba ‘el yugo peninsular’”²⁹⁴ (Gutiérrez Marrone 38), “Yo entré en la universidad X en 1977 Apenas *hemos estado* una semana con clases y hubo todo el problema que...”²⁹⁵ (Gutiérrez Marrone 299). These are the only two cases of the composite past in the corpus that can not be defined as displaying systemic function. However, these cases cannot be said to display non-systemic function either, since a verb form with a non-systemic function typically acquires a modal interpretation, losing its temporal_{tm} denotation. In order to determine whether the use displayed in the two examples mentioned is one that can be defined as a subsense of the composite past, that is, that this use is an existing trend, or whether they are just odd individual cases, more examples and a more detailed examination of the phenomenon than we have room for here would be required.

A total of 99 cases of the composite past appear in subordinate nominal clauses, however, none are cases of SOT, that is, they all have deictic reference and none of them display shifted interpretation. Ninety-five of the mentioned cases are subordinate to a verb in the present tense, rendering a non-deictic reading impossible in any event. Examples in the corpus include: “No, no creo que *han hecho* algo”²⁹⁶ (Gutiérrez Marrone 56), and “Pero pienso que Dios justamente nos *ha hecho* libres de elegir”²⁹⁷ (Gutiérrez Marrone 298), “. . . obviamente eso significaba que nosotros *hemos pasado* mucho tiempo viajando a la región”²⁹⁸ (Gutiérrez Marrone 99). In the last example, *hemos pasado* displays neutralization with the simple past perfective. Examples such as the two first ones might be what have compelled Rojo to propose the following representation of the composite past’s temporal_{ts} content: (OoV)-V. However, it is the context, and not the verb form itself that provides us with the information that the event expressed by the composite past transpires before another one which in turn is simultaneous with the moment of utterance. The simple form also

²⁹⁴ **Gloss:** “. . . they never talked about Latin-America, because we *have just been emancipated* from Spain, from the... from what was referred to in that epoch as ‘the peninsular yoke’.”

²⁹⁵ **Gloss:** “I entered the University X in 1977 We *have just been* a month in classes and the whole problem arose that...”

²⁹⁶ **Gloss:** “No, I don’t think that they *have done* something”

²⁹⁷ **Gloss:** “But I think that God indeed *has made* us free to choose”

²⁹⁸ **Gloss:** “. . . obviously that meant [past imp.] that we *have spent* a lot of time travelling to the region”

appears subordinate to verbs in the present tense: “. . . pero creo que todos *dejaron* algo en mí”²⁹⁹ (Gutiérrez Marrone 33).

In conclusion, two systemic functions have been identified for the composite past: a) neutralization with the simple past perfective, and b) E and S occur within one and the same time interval (R).

5.3.2 The systemic opposition the simple past perfective (*canté*) – the composite past (*he cantado*)

In section 5.3.1, the following overview of the values assigned to the composite past was presented:

Table 6

Temporal_{ts} and aspectual values traditionally assigned to the composite past (*he cantado*)

HE CANTADO
Perfect of result
Perfect of persistent situation
Experiential perfect
Negated perfect
Purely temporal _{ts} (OoV)-V
Perfect of recent past
Simple past
E and S within the same time interval

It seems impossible to arrive at a specification of the systemic opposition of the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the composite past (*he cantado*) when this overview is contrasted to the representation of the temporal_{ts} and aspectual content of the simple form:

²⁹⁹ Gloss: “. . . but I think that all of them *left* something in me”

Table 7

Systemic temporal_{ts} and aspectual values assigned to the simple past perfective based on corpus evidence

	CANTÉ
Temporal _{ts} value	E directly anterior to S: O-V
Aspectual value	Global

After a scrutiny of the corpus evidence, however, the temporal_{tm} meanings of the composite past have been reduced to the following two separate ones:

Table 8

Systemic temporal_{tm} properties assigned to the composite past (*he cantado*) based on corpus evidence

HE CANTADO

Temporal _{tm} specification 1 (Neutralization with <i>canté</i>)		Temporal _{tm} specification 2 (Non-neutralization with <i>canté</i>)
Temporal _{ts} value	E directly anterior to S: O-V	E and S take place within the same time interval, E initiates prior to S. (The temporal _{tm} composition of E is unspecified).
Aspectual value	Global	

The vast majority of features presented in table 6 are not to be understood as the systemic values of the composite form, rather, they are possible values derived from the interaction between the tense morpheme and the context or the lexical root of the verb form, and subsenses of the two meanings specified in table 8.

Upon greatly reducing the original overview of the contents of the composite past, one would expect a straightforward comparison between the content of this form and that of the simple one in order to arrive at a determination of the systemic opposition between these two verb forms. Nevertheless, since the composite past has two separate meanings, not reducible to a single over-arching one, it is not as uncomplicated to determine the systemic opposition

between the simple past perfective and the composite past as it was for the simple past perfective and the imperfective past (*cantaba*).

Before we venture to examine how the two verb forms as such contrast to each other, we will inspect the neutralization that has been observed between them.

As we have mentioned previously, it has been stated by linguists of the empiricist tradition that the Spanish of the Andes-region exhibits a preference for the composite form over the simple one (Quesada Pacheco 81). This statement is in and of itself rather vague, but is interpreted in the present thesis to mean that, *in cases of neutralization*, the composite form is preferred over the simple one. In other words, in the cases where no neutralization is present, the option to use one form instead of another does not present itself, so it doesn't make sense to state that one form is preferred over the other. In the corpus, there were 1602 cases of the composite past, 951 of which display neutralization with the simple past perfective. There are 1652 cases of the simple past perfective in the corpus, ergo, for the region of La Paz, it seems that preference for the composite form is not present.

Consequently, as regards the neutralization between the simple and the composite past in La Paz, it can be stated that a) it is only partial; the composite form can always replace the simple one, but not vice versa, b) it is not true that the composite form is preferred in circumstances where the simple one may also be used.³⁰⁰

The two verb forms at hand are thus only in semantic opposition to each other in the cases where the composite past exhibits temporal_{tm} specification 2 as illustrated in table 8 above (henceforth composite past₂). In these cases, while both tense forms place (at least part of) E before S, they differ with respect to two major characteristics; 1) for the simple form, E is unequivocally terminated before S, while for the composite past₂, nothing is stated about the temporal_{tm} composition of E, 2) with the composite past₂, E and S are by necessity perceived as occurring within one and the same time stretch, while this is not expressed by the simple form.³⁰¹

With regard to the category of markedness, no relation can be identified between the two forms as such, since one of them has one meaning that is identical to that of the other form. Rather, it can be explored whether there is a relation of markedness between the simple past perfective and the composite past₂. As we have seen, there were several possible criteria for defining two entities as marked and unmarked terms of an opposition, none of which seem to apply to the simple past perfective and the composite past₂: a) one of the senses is more

³⁰⁰ With the possible exception of the *present of result*.

³⁰¹ This does not mean that the mentioned interpretation is an impossibility for *canté* in certain contexts.

normal, less specific than the other (Comrie Aspect 111), b) the meaning of the unmarked category can encompass that of its counterpart (Comrie Aspect 112), c) overt expression of the meaning of the marked category is optional, the unmarked one can always be used (Comrie Aspect 112). Criterion a) is not satisfied because both the simple past perfective and the composite past₂ are more specific than the other one in certain respects; the simple form (*cantê*) specifies the temporal_{tm} composition of E, while the composite past₂ (*he cantado*) leaves this unspecified, and the composite past₂ specifies that E and S must occur within the same time interval, while the simple form leaves this unspecified. This very state of affairs renders criteria b) and c) unfulfilled too. Consequently, there is no relation of markedness between the simple past perfective and the composite past₂.

5.4 Summary

In this chapter we have seen, initially, that *markedness*, *temporal_{tm} adverbials (TADVs)*, *sequence of tenses (SOT)*, and *systemic vs. non-systemic functions* are important factors for the analysis of the verb forms in the corpus.

The notion of *markedness* is relevant for the semantic oppositions between the verb forms in the tense system. Generally, the marked form of an opposition is perceived as semantically more specific than its unmarked counterpart. The decision to classify the tense forms as marked or unmarked terms of an opposition is inextricably linked to their behaviour in context and to their position in different systems of oppositions. Thus, the criteria that were used in the determination of the forms' potential markedness became valid tools in the very specification of the forms' temporal_{ts} and aspectual content.

We saw that Klein's classification of *TADVs*, as well as the components he identifies for his account of an utterance's FIN and INF parts, are invaluable instruments in the analysis of the interaction between the tense forms and the temporal_{tm} adverbials. This analysis in turn is invaluable for the determination of the tense form's temporal_{tm} content.

As regards *SOT*, we identified the need to specify in greater detail what this notion entails. Firstly, it is only applicable to tense forms in nominal subordinate clauses. Secondly, we are only truly justified in classifying an occurrence as a case of *SOT* if: a) the surface form of the verb does not reflect its temporal_{ts} content, and b) its surface form is coloured by that of the superordinate verb. Specifically, there are two types of *SOT*: the subordinate verb loses its deictic reference (*SOT-d*) or it has shifted interpretation (*SOT-s*).

The notion of *systemic vs. non-systemic functions* is only relevant for some of the tense forms, since only a few of them have the potential of displaying non-systemic functions. A

tense form is identified as having non-systemic function when there is a clash between what is traditionally described as its systemic temporal_{tm} content and the reference of temporal_{tm} elements it interacts with in context. Specifically, a form displaying a non-systemic function has lost its temporal_{tm} interpretation and acquires a modal one.

As for the analysis of the tense forms the simple past perfective (*canté*) and the imperfective past (*cantaba*), the initial scrutiny of their interaction with different TADVs, where we identified what semantic contributions the latter did and did not make, allowed us to establish what the semantic contribution of the tense forms had to be. These findings indicated that the traditional overview of these forms' temporal_{tm} contents should be greatly reduced, a recognition that was confirmed by the subsequent analysis of the forms' systemic and non-systemic functions. Most of the subsenses previously identified for these forms were not senses of the tense forms as such, but rather a product of the interaction of the latter with contextual elements and/or certain lexical roots. Furthermore, Rojo's rendition of the temporal_{ts} opposition between these tense forms was rejected, and it was found that they have identical temporal_{ts} reference, and consequently that an aspectual opposition is present between them. Ultimately, they were both assigned the following temporal_{ts} content: "E directly anterior to S: O-V". They are in opposition only by virtue of their aspectual contents: simple past perfective: "Global", the imperfective past: "Reference to the internal temporal composition of the event or situation". Only the imperfective past displayed non-systemic functions; 17 cases acquired a modal interpretation. Finally, only the imperfective past displayed unequivocal cases of SOT, and these were instances of SOT-s (shifted interpretation). The simple past perfective displayed only one possible SOT case, which would be a case of SOT-d.

The analysis of the composite past (*he cantado*) advanced along the same lines as what has been described for the previous two tenses. The traditional overview of this tense's temporal_{tm} contents was greatly reduced, and furthermore, the examination of the corpus evidence suggested that there is indeed a neutralization present between the simple and the composite form in the region where La Paz is situated. However, the mentioned neutralization is only partial; the composite form can always be used in stead of the simple one, but not vice versa. This finding lead us to define *two* systemic functions for the composite past; one where it is identical to the simple past perfective: "O-V, global", and one where it is in semantic opposition to the latter form; "E and S take place within the same time interval, E initiates prior to S, (and the temporal_{tm} composition of E is unspecified)." Of the 1602 cases of the

composite past in the corpus, 59% displayed neutralization with the simple past perfective. Finally, no cases of SOT or non-systemic functions were identified for the composite past.

6. CONCLUSIONS

In this thesis we have attempted to narrow the gap between empiricism and theory within the field of Spanish verb tenses. Within Hispanic linguistics this gap has traditionally been large. Our line of attack in the pursuance of a successful interaction between empirical analyses and theoretical reasoning has been to employ corpus evidence for the testing and evaluation of tense theories and standard descriptions of the Spanish verb tenses' content respectively. This approach has also allowed us to describe the content of the relevant tenses in the Spanish of La Paz.

In order to arrive at this goal, we initially specified what we consider to be the existential status of human language as conceived for the purpose of grammatical studies like this. We view it as a social, supra-individual, conventional system of symbols. The contents of the linguistic entities emerge from the very act of communication. Language's status as a social, supra-individual entity justifies the use of corpora, with various different informants, as empirical basis for the study of it. A linguist who employs a corpus in his examination of a particular linguistic phenomenon will observe the different contexts in which a form appears and thereby derive information about its use and meaning. This, however, does not entail that a form's array of different contexts *is* its semantic content. The range of contexts in which a form appears is in any event infinite, so it is more likely that we *abstract* a form's meaning by studying its different contexts.

For the analysis of the three verb tenses in question, an examination of the grammatical categories of *tense* and *aspect* was required.

Tense is a deictic category which has to do with the order relation between points in time, the central one of which is the speech point. Each of the points is an abstraction, i.e. the points' internal temporal_{tm} composition is irrelevant. We reviewed the tense theories of Reichenbach, Comrie, and Hornstein respectively. They all operated with the three points S, E, and R. It was decided, in accordance with Comrie's suggestion, that R be removed from any tense configuration where it overlaps with E or S, as this simply gives absolute time reference. Norbert Hornstein's theory was criticized for treating certain linguistic tools, specifically the R point and the extrinsic ordering of the time points, as if they were objects of study in their own right. We stipulated that the R point has two functions: and *internal* one, whereby it mediates the relation between the other two points, and an *external* one, whereby it

signals how the verb form in question interacts with other temporal_{tm} elements in the context. In the instances where this point only exhibits its *external* function, it is to be regarded as a mere linguistic tool, not part of the semantic content of the verb form, and can be represented thus: r.

Aspect is not a deictic category, and does not describe the order relation between points in time; rather, it describes the internal temporal_{tm} configuration of events or situations. Specifically, aspectual oppositions (like the temporal_{ts} ones) are part of a closed group of systematic oppositions, which makes them likely to be expressed by inflectional morphemes in various languages. However, the optimal definition of the category of aspect might by necessity be partially language-specific. At the end of section 4.1.2.2.1, we asked ourselves whether it is possible that semantic (aspectual) distinctions expressed by grammatical morphemes could be of a universal nature. Evidently, this is not a question that could be answered by studying the aspectual oppositions of a single language, but it is possible to look for aspectual distinctions that have been claimed to be universal in the grammatical morphemes of specific languages. As regards the two simple past tenses in Spanish, it seems that their temporal_{tm} morphemes indeed do express the universal aspectual opposition of *perfective* vs. *imperfective*.

Subsequent to the specifications of the terms *tense* and *aspect*, the tense theories of Guillermo Rojo and William E. Bull were examined. These linguists treat verb tense in Spanish. Three major modifications were suggested for the theories in question: a) there should only be one axis of orientation, b) the vector formulae should not have a potential for limitless complexity, and c) there is no need for a reference point for the absolute tenses. The last modification led to the crucial conclusion that aspectual oppositions must be included in the description of the Spanish tenses in order to give an exhaustive account of the oppositions between them. We arrived at these conclusions on a purely theoretical basis, so the findings would be further tested on empirical evidence.

Of the preliminary considerations, which were reviewed directly prior to the analysis of the verb tenses, it was the phenomenon of SOT (*sequence of tenses*) that required the most substantial revision. The existing descriptions of the phenomenon in question were somewhat inconsistent and needed further specifications before SOT could be assessed in connection with corpus data. According to the findings in chapter 5.1.3, this phenomenon is only applicable to tense forms in nominal subordinate clauses. Furthermore, we are only faced with a true case of SOT when the form of the verb of the subordinate clause is coloured by that of

the superordinate one *and* we have shifted interpretation or loss of deixis on the part of the subordinate verb.

In the analysis of the corpus data we reviewed the three tenses the simple past perfective (*canté*), the imperfective past (*cantaba*), and the composite past (*he cantado*), or more specifically, the opposition between the simple past perfective and the imperfective past on one hand, and the simple past perfective and the composite past on the other.

As regards the two simple forms *canté* and *cantaba*, there is no indication that they are used differently in La Paz from other Spanish-speaking countries or from what is described for standard Spanish. Hence, corpus evidence can be used to refute or uphold existing standard Spanish accounts of these tense forms. For both of them, the initial overview of their temporal_{ts} and aspectual contents was greatly reduced upon a scrutiny of corpus evidence. The corpus cases that were arranged into many of the initial categories, could only be attributed their temporal_{tm} interpretation if information provided by the immediate context was taken into account. It was shown that many of the categories were actually sub-categories, or context-dependent interpretations, of a less specific, over-arching category. Ultimately, the two tense forms were attributed the following temporal_{ts} and aspectual contents: the simple past perfective (*canté*): O-V, global; the imperfective past *cantaba*: O-V, reference to the internal temporal composition of the event or situation. In other words, and unlike Rojo's claim, these tense forms are in opposition to each other exclusively on an aspectual level. It may be argued that the aspectual content of the imperfective past should be further subdivided into *habitual* vs. *durative* since all the corpus cases fell into one of these two categories. However, since these two interpretations, without exception, are represented by one and the same form, (and not only in Spanish, according to Comrie (Aspect 26)), and since extensive contextual information was needed to arrive at a specification of one interpretation or the other, this thesis starts from the idea that the imperfective past's aspectual content is fully accounted for by the initial description (reference to the internal temporal composition of the event or situation). Nevertheless, in a class-room situation, it might be pedagogically justifiable to mention *habitual* and *durative* as subsenses of the Spanish past imperfective.

With the aim of describing the temporal_{tm} opposition between the simple past perfective and the composite past, we examined the use of the latter form in the corpus, with the description of the first one fresh in mind. It was found that the composite past exhibits two distinct sub senses; one which is particular for the region in which La Paz is situated, and which is at odds with traditional descriptions of this verb tense, and one which is in accordance with what has been described as the meaning of this form elsewhere in Latin-

America. In the first case, the meaning of the composite past overlaps with that of the simple past perfective; “O-V, global” (59% of the corpus cases displayed neutralization with the simple past perfective), while in the second case, it has the following interpretation: “E and S take place within the same time interval, E initiates prior to S, (and the temporal_{tm} composition of E is unspecified)”. The latter description is an over-arching sense, which accounts for the sundry more specific and partially context-dependent descriptions presented by Spanish grammars and empirical studies alike. Consequently, temporal_{ts} specifications alone are not sufficient when we wish to account for the distinctions between the simple and the composite past.

Finally, it must be mentioned that the percentages presented in the analysis chapter should not be understood as exact, but rather as indications of a tendency, since the categorization of corpus data inevitably is subject to a fair bit of interpretation on the part of the researcher.

At the end of chapter 3.1, I stipulated that, subsequent to the testing of theories against the tense forms of the corpus from La Paz, I would determine whether they differ from the standard variant to such an extent that a modification of the grammar is impossible. My conclusion is that they don't, hence, a modification of the grammar is indeed possible, and it could be done in accordance with the following main conclusions based on the analysis of corpus evidence and the review of tense theories: a) There must be a considerable reduction in the number of subsenses for each tense form, b) the tense configurations' potential for complexity must be decreased, c) the R point must be dispensed with for absolute tenses, d) aspectual distinctions are compulsory for the exhaustive account of the semantic oppositions between the forms of the Spanish tense system. For the composite past, we might consider modifying the grammar in an additive manner, by including the alternative meaning present in the Andes-region, namely *overlap with the simple past perfective*.

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