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The Use of Tense and Aspect Markers by Korean Learners of English

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The present study investigates how Korean learners use English tense and aspect markers in their learner language. This study tests the hypothesis that even nontarget-like learner language shows a consistent pattern in using temporal system and that the same or similar tendency is universally observed in child first language acquisition and in adult second language acquisition. This tendency is referred to as Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis, which describes the phenomenon that aspect is marked before tense in early stage of language acquisition. In order to examine this assumption, both oral and written narratives from nine Korean students were collected. They were asked to tell the story after watching 10-minute silent film excerpt. The findings indicate that: (1) Learners tend to use past morphology with telic (accomplishment/achievement) verbs and state verbs also show a higher affiliation with past morphology but the rate is lower than that of telic verbs; (2) Learners show a strong association of progressive marker with activity verbs and unlike POA assumptions, over-generalization of progressive to stative verbs is observed; (3) A developmental pattern is not observed across the different levels of groups. The results of the study accord with the Primacy of Aspect phenomenon with classroom learners, providing a way to investigate learner language in terms of tense and aspect.

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning a second language is not simply a matter of memorizing the

grammatical features of a target language. It includes learners' efforts to connect a form and its associated meaning. At the beginning stages of second language acquisition, learners do not show target-like use of language. Until learners reach a target-like norm, they participate in the process of constructing their own rules by which they interpret and produce utterances. This process is well captured in interlanguage theory, which assumes that learners' language is similar to other primary language in the sense that it show its own systematicity and consistency. Interlanguage is said to be systematic because learners behave 'grammatically' in the sense that they rely on the rules they have internalized.

Previous studies of tense and aspect have attempted to show such systematicity and consistency in learner language. The pattern in the use of tense and aspect markers by second language learners are often non-target-like or innovative. There have been interesting observations made on the relation between verbal morphology and lexical aspectual meaning of verbs. That is, learners tend to associate the verbal morphology with lexical aspectual meaning at least during some stage in their process of second language acquisition.

Since tense and aspect is an important grammatical feature in second language learning, it is worth taking a closer look at learner language to find out the characteristics of interlanguage system in terms of tense and aspect. The present study aims to describe how Korean learners use English tense aspect markers in oral and written narratives. Such a description of learner language can be a good starting point for further research on Korean learners' acquisition patterns of L2 grammar.

1. Background

Before describing the theoretical framework for the study, a brief overview of the English tense and aspect system is in order. Temporal expression is generally divided into tense and aspect. Tense refers to temporal deixis, the relation of a given situation to a reference time, usually the time of utterance. Aspect is not concerned with the relation of the situation to any other time, but rather with the 'internal temporal constituency of one situation' (Comrie, 1976). Aspect is further subdivided into a 'grammatical aspect' and 'inherent lexical aspect'. The grammatical aspect (what Smith (1997) calls *viewpoint aspect*)

refers to aspectual distinction marked explicitly by linguistic devices, usually auxiliaries or inflections, as in English progressive and Spanish, Russian, or Greek perfective and imperfective. Thus, example (1) shows a difference in tense, whereas example (2) shows a contrast in grammatical aspect, although both are in the past tense.

1) Tense
   a. John *sings*.
   b. John *sang*.
2) Grammatical aspect
   a. John *sang*.
   b. John *was singing*.

A single verb may show contrasting a grammatical aspect as in example (2), but its inherent aspect does not change. In the case of the verb *sing*, it has intrinsic duration, whether in simple past or past progressive. A different predicate, *sing a song* also has duration but it includes a specific endpoint on which the singing of song is completed. These differences are captured in Vendler's (1967) classification of lexical aspect (called *situation aspect* in Smith (1997)) which is based on a classification system traced back to Aristotle.

In the Vendler framework, there are four lexical aspectual classes: states, activities, accomplishment, and achievement. Each of Vendler's categories of inherent aspect can be characterized in terms of the semantic features TELIC, PUNCTUAL, and DYNAMIC. TELIC denotes having an inherent endpoint, PUNCTUAL having no duration, and DYNAMIC denotes that energy is required for the situation to exist or continue. Therefore, accomplishment and achievement are both telic, but only achievement is punctual. Activities are dynamic but are atelic and nonpunctual. These characterizations are captured in Table 1 and examples of the aspectual classes in English are given in Table 2.

TABLE 1

Feature Analysis of the Four Verb Classes (Andersen, 1991, p. 311)

Features	States	Activities	Accomplishment	Achievement
PUNCTUAL	−	−	−	+
TELIC	−	−	+	+
DYNAMIC	−	+	+	+

TABLE 2
Examples of Aspectual Categories in English

States	Activities	Accomplishment	Achievement
have	walk	run a mile	escape
want	sleep	buy a flower	enter
love	run	go to the fountain	notice

With slight differences in classification from study to study, verb categorization is an important part of the studies which investigate how first and second language learners acquire the form and meaning of verbs in their developmental process.

2. Previous Studies on Lexical Aspectual Classes

An observation has been made regarding a tendency of using tense and aspect markers among first and second learners, which is often described as the Defective Tense Hypothesis (Andersen, 1991) or Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis (Robinson, 1990). Both hypotheses refer to the tendency that inherent aspectual distinctions are encoded by verbal morphology prior to tense distinction. This phenomenon has been first observed in the area of child language development on tense and aspect. Bronckart & Sinclair (1973) found that children under six years old use French verb forms to express a lexical aspect, which adults use to express tense. In a series of experimental production tasks, children use perfective past forms for the events which have a clear end result, but primarily the present tense for events with no result. Antinucci & Miller (1976) found a similar tendency in their longitudinal study based on the conversational data of one English- and seven Italian-speaking children. In general, studies in child language acquisition find that when children begin to inflect verbs, the distribution pattern of the verbal morphology is constrained by the inherent lexical aspect of the verb: past inflections appear first with verbs that could be considered telic or punctual, while imperfective or progressive inflections associate more with durative predicates.

Along the same line, Weist, et al. (1984) use experimental and naturalistic data on the acquisition of Polish. They claimed that children make both tense and aspect event at early stages, which provides counterexamples to the

Primacy of Aspect Hypothesis[1]. A more problematic case is found in Li's(1989) study on children's acquisition of Mandarin. By using three experiments (comprehension, production, and imitation), Li argues that no support is found for Punctual-Nonpunctual distinction and State-Process distinction[2] but that the results support Slobin's (1985) result-process distinction. He finds that achievement with the Mandarine perfective marker *-le* did not result in significantly higher comprehension than activity verbs. Moreover, achievement verbs were better understood with *-zai* (progressive marker) than *-le* (perfective marker). This contradicts one of the predictions of the POA hypothesis: strong associations between the perfective marker and punctual verbs.

Another important findings in Li (1989) is the incorrect overgeneralization of the progressive marker *-zai* to stative verbs in the production task. This contradicts one of the predictions of the POA hypotheses: no overextension of progressive markers to stative verns. In sum, Li's study presents important challenges to the POA hypothesis for further investigation.

Second language acquisition studies found parallel relationships: learners from a variety of language background use target inflections to mark aspectual distinction in non-native-like forms. Most studies on adult L2 learners and naturalistic L2 acquisition (Flashner, 1989; Kumpf, 1984; Robinson, 1990). The results generally support POA except for one major differences regarding the use of the progressive on stative verbs. Most of the relevant studies have English or Spanish as the L2. The English data generally show that (1) past morphology is strongly associated with achievement or accomplishment verbs or both

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1) The Primacy of Aspect phenomenon has been observed repeatedly in L1 acquisition. The descriptive claims of the POA hypothesis can be summarized as follows (Andersen & Shirai, 1996):
   1. Children first use past marking (e.g. English) or perfective marking (e.g. Chinese and Spanish) on achievement and accomplishment verbs, eventually extending its use to activity and stativity verbs.
   2. In languages that encode the perfective-imperfective distinction, imperfective past appears later than perfective past, and imperfective past marking begins with stative verbs and activity verbs, then extending to accomplishment and achievement verbs.
   3. In languages that have progressive aspect, progressive marking begins with activity verbs, then extends to accomplishment or achievement verbs.
   4. Progressive markings are not incorrectly overextended to stative verbs.

2) Bickerton (1981) made a distinction between Punctual-NonPunctual and State-Process in his discussion of pidgin and creole languages.

(Flashner, 1989; Bardovi-Harlig, 1995; Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström, 1996; Robinson, 1995), and (2) *-ing* is strongly associated with durative verbs, with activity verbs receiving *-ing* (Bardovi-Harlig, 1995; Robinson, 1995; Bardovi-Harlig & Bergström, 1996). The results regarding the use of *-ing* is of particular interest because they are different from what is found in L1 studies in that progressive markers are sometimes overextended to stative verbs in some of the L2 learners.

As pointed out in Schumann's study (1987), it may be difficult for second language learners to consistently maintain target-like use of verbal morphology in their production, learners tend to use calendric reference, time adverbials or sequential narration of events rather than rely on verbal morphology. Thus, it will be interesting if a similar pattern is found in learner language despite their nonnative-like use of target language features in beginning and advanced stages alike. Given considerations to earlier studies, the present study aims to provide a basic picture of how Korean learners of English use verbal morphology. Unlike studies done with learners in a naturalistic setting, this study investigates classroom learners who have first started to learn English in their home country and thus have not had much access to English-speaking environments.

II. METHOD

1. Research Questions and Hypotheses

The general question of this study is how Korean learners of English use verbal morphology in their narratives. Do they show the same tendency for POA?; Are there any developmental patterns found according to different levels of groups? More specifically, the hypotheses of the study can be stated as follows:

1) Learners use the Past inflections mainly with Accomplishment and Achievement verbs and extend its use to Activity and Stative verbs.
2) Learners use the Progressive markers mainly with Activity verbs and then extend its use to Accomplishment and Achievement verbs but it is not overextended to Stative verbs.

3) A similar pattern is found in oral and written narratives in the association of verbal morphology and the lexical aspectual meaning of verbs.

2. Procedure

Ten Korean learners participated in the study. Among them, eight were graduate students at the University of Texas at Austin and two of them were ESL students in the Texas Intensive English Program at the time of the study. The average time they spent in the United States was 2.2. years, ranging form 0.25 to 4 years. The participants were given a questionnaire on which they provided information about their TOEFL and GRE scores, self-evaluation of their English and their attitudes toward learning English[3].

They were shown a ten-minute excerpt from the silent film *City Lights*[4] and were asked to retell the story orally and in writing. This film was chosen because the first part of it consists of three discrete scenes so that learners could follow the story without difficulties. Their oral narratives were audio-taped and the writing tasks were carried out either on paper or on computer after the oral narration. Participants were encouraged to speak or write as much as they could and were given approximately 40 to 50 minutes to complete both tasks. The tape-recordings were transcribed and the written narratives were collected for analysis.

In order to compare the results to the patterns of native speakers, two native speakers, who were experienced teachers of ESL and graduate students in the Foreign Language Education program at the University of Texas at Austin, were given the same tasks and the results were also analyzed.

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3) This questionnaire was designed to obtain demographic information, which may not be specifically related to learners' use of tense and aspect. The subjects' responses revealed that their interaction with native speakers is very limited though they have been living in the American academic setting. They feel more confident in writing than speaking. Most of them positively believe that their English will improve over time. It is interesting to observe that their scores on standardized tests (TOEFL/GRE) do not seem to reflect learners' confidence in using tarket language. Though it is of interest to examine individual difference or learner variations, this will not be discussed in the present study.

4) The first scene of the film starts with monument donation ceremony. The two other scenes can be titled as "On the road" and "A blind flower girl."

III. DATA ANALYSIS

1. Subjects

The subjects in this study are compared on the basis of their appropriate use of past morphology rather than on the basis of their standardized test scores. Bardovi-Harlig (1995) claimed that grouping learners according to appropriate use of tense excludes less relevant variables and thus facilitates the comparison of learners on the single relevant variable of development of tense. Subjects were ranked separately for written and oral data. Both oral and written narratives of subject 5 were excluded because they are movie reviews lacking a narrative structure. The profile of learners' narratives is as follows:

TABLE 3
Profile of Learner Narratives

% appro. use of Past	Written (subj #)	Groups	Oral	Groups
10-59			2, 9*	1
60-69			7	1
70-79			3, 6	2
80-89	4, 6, 9, 10	1	1, 4, 10	3
90-99	2, 3, 7	2	8	3
100	1, 8	3		
Total	9		9	

*Random numbers are assigned to the subjects by the investigator so that they will not be identified.

As shown above, learners show a higher percentage of appropriate use of past morphology in the written narratives than in the oral narratives. In the oral narratives, learners show more variation and the percentage of the appropriate use of verbal morphology is lower than that of written narratives. The participants were more concerned about the "correct" form in written narratives and this often led them to keep correcting what they have written, though they were not asked to pay attention to correct forms. On the other hand, learners paid more attention to narrating the story itself in the oral task rather than to grammatical accuracy.

For the analysis, the subjects were divided into three groups at different points of written and oral narratives. The same division points cannot be used for written and oral narratives because the range of accuracy is quite different and

the number of participants in the study is too few to divide them accordingly.

2. Coding Procedure

Each verb form was classified on the basis of verbal morphology. The tense and aspect morphology used by participants includes simple past, past progressive, present, present progressive, Ø-progressive and base form. All verbs that showed knowledge of the past, including regularized form such as *selled* and present/past perfect were classified as past. Regardless of tense markers (present or past), progressive forms including Ø-progressive were classified together under *-ing* category. Present form showing third-person subject-verb agreement (*he goes*), and base form without agreement (*he go*) were classified separately to see when learners tend to drop the tense markers. The total number of verbs used (token) was scored and this is used to identify subjects and to place them into groups outlined in the preceding section.

The narratives were then coded for the inherent aspectual meaning of verbs. Each verb phrases was assigned to one of four aspectual classes according to the tests established for aspectual categories by Vendler (1967) and Dowty (1979). For the analysis of narratives, the test by Dowty (see Appendix B) were used as the primary determinant of aspectual class. The following cases were excluded from analysis[5].

1) unclear cases that are difficult to interpret.
2) highly frozen expressions such as *I don't know, I mean, I think, I guess*, etc.
3) verbs in contexts such as Do-auxiliary, modal auxiliary, periphrastic forms (*be going to* , *have to*), where only base forms appear.
4) verbs do not conjugate for past tense such as *hit* and *put*.
5) copulas.

IV. RESULTS

1. Past

In both oral and written tasks, past forms are not used equally with all verbs. Instead, the use of past morphology is influenced by aspectual meaning of the

5) This exclusion is based on the coding procedure in Shirai (1991).

verbs. Examples of aspectually-determined tense marking are as follows (the subject's writing is preserved):

1) And he *paid* (ACT) her and there was a somebody just *enter* (ACH) the car and *drove away* (ACH). She thought that it was him and she *told* (ACH) him that you have to have changes. So Charlie just *snaked away* (ACH) and *watched* (ACT) her and she *washed the vase* (ACC) for the flowers and she *poured the water* (ACH) into his face. (S11)
2) When he *was struggling* (ACT) to get out of the knife, the national anthem was played and the official and the people *stopped* (ACH) shouting to him and paid a sincere tribute to the anthem ... After the anthem was played, he finally *got out of the knife* (ACH), and *disappeared* (ACH). (W7)

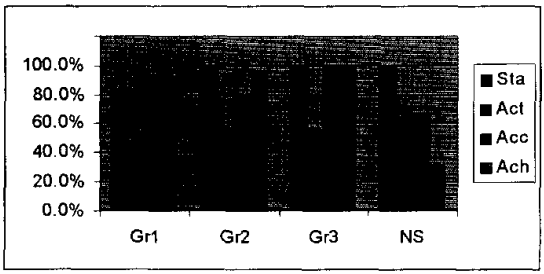
The following figures give the distribution of verbal morphology by aspectual class in written and oral narratives, respectively.

FIGURE 1

Percentage of Inherent Aspect with Past Inflections by Groups (Written)

	Sta	Act	Acc	Ach
Group 1	83.3 (15)*	47.4 (18)	92.9 (13)	92.6 (12)
Group 2	100 (15)	54.5 (18)	77.8 (7)	96.2 (25)
Group 3	100 (8)	55.0 (11)	100 (10)	100 (28)
Native	100 (3)	62.5 (20)	66.7 (2)	31 (100)

*Raw numbers are given in parentheses.



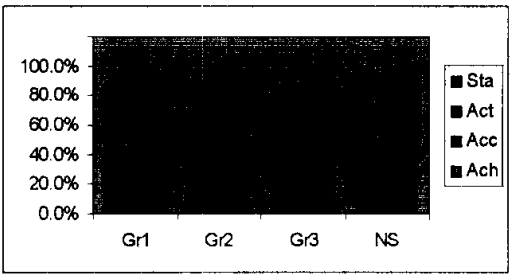
The written narratives show a strikingly high use of past morphology with stative verbs, which is not observed in earlier studies of POA. According to Barlovi-Harlig (1995), the main competing form to simple past in state verbs is

the nonpast because the nonpast meaning is consistent with the enduring quality of state verbs. However, the present study shows that learners are not much influenced by lexical meaning of the verbs but instead, they can use past tense marking consistently with stative verbs throughout the text. With activity verbs, both learners and native speakers show a consistent use of past morphology. Learners use past inflections more frequently with accomplishment and achievement verbs than native speakers. In particular, there is a great difference between learner groups and native speakers in the use of past morphology with achievement verbs. The results show that the past morphology is mainly used with telic verbs with state verbs also being strong candidates for past morphology. Thus it cannot be shown that the use of past morphology is extended to activity and stative verbs because of higher association of stative verbs with past morphology. This high rate of past morphology with state verbs can be inflated due to the frequent use of *be* because the past forms of copulas are acquired in earlier stage and thus learners tend to use the past morphology consistently. As copulas were excluded from the analysis in this study, the high rate cannot be attributed to its frequent use. Instead, it can be conjectured that learners already reach the level of proficiency that could show a consistent tense marking without being much influenced by the lexical meaning of the verb. The results in oral narratives are given below:

FIGURE 2

Percentage of Inherent Aspect with Past Inflections by Groups (Oral)

	Sta	Act	Acc	Ach
Group 1	85.7 (18)	44.4 (12)	90.0 (9)	88.2 (15)
Group 2	90.0 (9)	25.9 (7)	100. (8)	81.0 (17)
Group 3	81.3 (13)	35.5 (11)	93.3 (14)	97.5 (39)
Native	100.0 (10)	48.3 (14)	100.0 (4)	97.4 (37)



Like the results shown in the written task, a strong affiliation of past morphology with telic verbs is observed. According to the POA assumptions, activity verbs are expected to show a higher association with past morphology than stative verbs. However, unlike the prediction, stative verbs show a higher use of the past morphology than activity verbs. Therefore, it cannot be said that the past morphology is extended from telic verbs to atelic verbs because of an unexpectedly lower use of the past marker with activity verbs. The same tendency is using tense marker is found in the native speakers' narration. It should be noted that the oral narration by the native speakers shows a different pattern from their written narration. That is, they use the past morphology more frequently with telic verbs in oral narration.

The findings in both oral and written generally indicate that past verb forms are more frequently associated with telic verbs. While state verbs how a high association with past morphology, the rate is still lower than that of telic verbs. The low rate of past morphology with activity can be attributed to high rate of progressive with activity verbs., which will be discussed below.

2. Progressive

In the English narratives, base or present forms are the default form for activities but progressive forms (present progressive, past progressive, and Ø -progressive) turn out to be a strong competitor as shown in examples in (3) and (4):

3) And they found that Chaplin *was sleeping* (ACT) on the statue. So people seemed to be angry. They *were yelling* (ACT) at him ... and then he *was walking* (ACT) in the street. He *was looking* (ACT) at the small girl's ... (S3)
4) On the way to somewhere he saw another statue in the shop window. He *was appreciating* (STA) it. There is a metal block on which he *was standing* (ACT). Actually it *was moving up and down* (ACT), but he didn't notice that ... He saw a pretty woman selling flowers. (W10)

Activities are the only category in which progressives are found to a noticeable extent with almost all participants in both written and oral production.

The following figures, 3 and 4 show the use of progressive in learner narratives.

FIGURE 3

Percentage of Inherent Aspect with Progressive Inflections by Groups (Written)

	Sta	Act	Acc	Ach
Group 1	5.6 (1)	50.0 (19)	7.1 (1)	0.0 (0)
Group 2	0.0 (0)	30.3 (10)	11.1 (1)	3.8 (1)
Group 3	0.0 (0)	45.5 (9)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Native	0.0 (0)	37.5 (12)	33.3 (1)	0.0 (0)

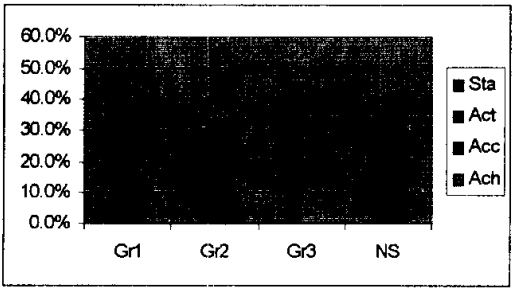
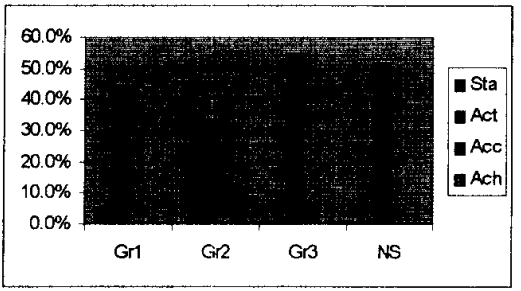


FIGURE 4

Percentage of Inherent Aspect with Progressive Inflections by Groups (Oral)

	Sta	Act	Acc	Ach
Group 1	4.8 (1)	44.4 (12)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Group 2	0.0 (0)	33.3 (9)	0.0 (0)	9.5 (2)
Group 3	0.0 (0)	54.8 (15)	6.7 (1)	0.0 (0)
Native	0.0 (0)	51.7 (15)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)



Regarding the POA predictions of progressive use, the results of both written

and oral tasks accord with the hypothesis 2: the progressive markers are predominantly used with activity verbs. The high use of progressive with activity verbs could be the reason that activity verbs are less used with simple past. The data do not show that this tendency is weakened with the increase of proficiency levels so that progressive markers can be extended to other classes of verbs. Interestingly, native speakers' oral narratives show an absolute affiliation to the progressive marker with activity verbs, which is quite opposite the POA predictions. The written narratives by native speakers differ from the oral ones in that they seem to extend the use of the progressive marker with accomplishment verbs. However, they do not further extend the use of the progressive to achievement verbs.

Unlike first language acquisition research, the overgeneralization of the progressive to stative verbs was observed with Group 1 learners in both oral and written narratives. Such an overgeneralization of the progressive has been reported for untutored adult second language learners (Robison, 1990). However, such an overextention is only found in a lower group. In his oral interview with Puerto Rican college students, Robison (1995) observed an increasing use of *-ing* with activity verbs with proficiency level. The written narratives by learners show a similar pattern, which suggests that learners have a salient concept of ongoingness of a situation and thus encode the meaning by use of the progressive morphology.

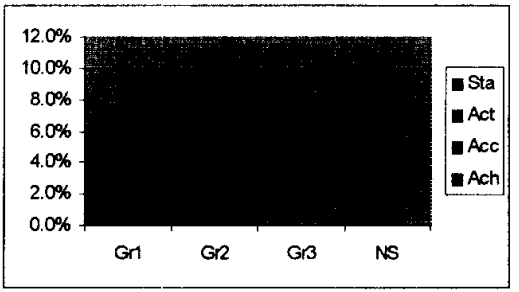
3. Base/-s

The use present *-s* and the base form is observed as follows:

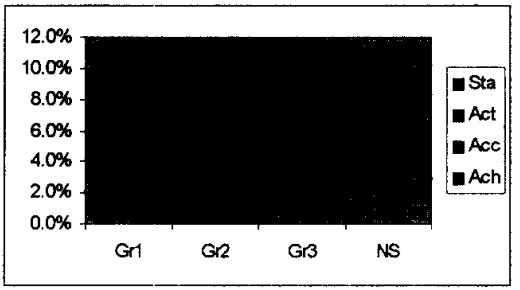
FIGURE 5
Percentage of Inherent Aspect with Base/*-s* by Groups (Written)

	Sta	Act	Acc	Ach
Group 1 Base	0.0 (0)	2.6 (1)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
-s	11.1 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	7.4 (2)
Group 2 Base	0.0 (0)	6.1 (2)	11.1 (1)	0.0 (0)
-s	0.0 (0)	9.1 (3)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Group 3 Base	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
-s	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Native Base	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
-s	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)

Base (written)



-s (written)



Since the story took place in the past, most of the verbs describing the scenes are expected to be written with a past morphology. No base and *-s* forms are used in the narratives of Group 3 and the native speakers, suggesting that they consistently use the past morphology in past time contexts. On the other hand, base and *-s* forms are found in the narratives of Group 1 and Group 2 which are less accurate in their use of past morphology. For example, verbs like 'she *sells* the flowers,' 'he *sit*,' 'he *try* to,' tend to be used in nonpast forms. It may be because these verbs are often heard in present tense and thus learners use them without paying much attention to the correct tense marking. It is worth noticing that learners in Group 1 use *-s* mostly with state verbs, which is accordance with Andersen's (1991) observation. And it seems to be that *-s* relates more to lexical aspectual meaning at the lower level but more to tense at the higher level.

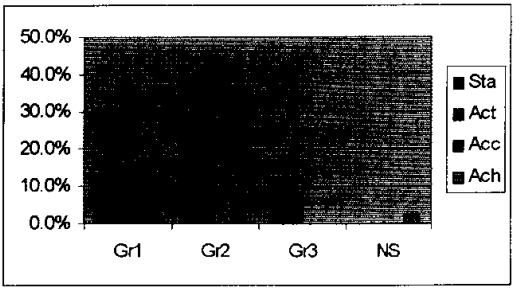
In the oral narratives, learners show more frequent use of the base form than in their written narratives. The percentages are given as follows:

FIGURE 6

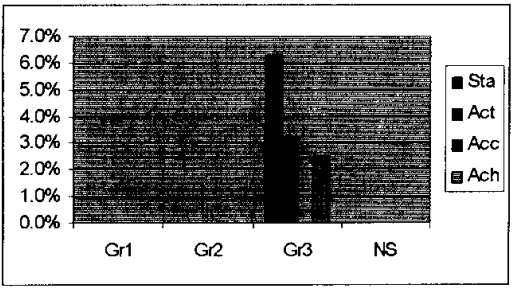
Percentage of Inherent Aspect with Base/*-s* by Groups (Oral)

	Sta	Act	Acc	Ach
Group 1 Base	9.5 (2)	11.3 (3)	10.0 (1)	11.8 (2)
-s	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Group 2 Base	10.0 (1)	40.7 (11)	0.0 (0)	9.5 (2)
-s	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
Group 3 Base	12.5 (2)	6.5 (2)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)
-s	6.3 (1)	3.2 (1)	0.0 (0)	2.5 (1)
Native Base	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	2.6 (0)
-s	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)	0.0 (0)

Base (oral)



-s (oral)



The results above indicate that learners do not maintain a past tense marker throughout the narratives. They often fall back on base forms. In oral narration, learning often drop *-s* even when it is necessary and replace it with a base form. This explains why Group 1 and Group 2 learners do not show any *-s* form in the oral narratives. Like written narration, a higher percentage of *-s* is

observed only at a higher level. It shows that learners are aware of tense distinction and attempt to mark it but it is not appropriate in the past time context. The native speakers do not show any present tense forms because their stories proceed in past time contexts.

Activities verbs are often associated with a base form in both written and oral narratives by learners. The verbs that learners tend to use *-s* or base form are *try, want,* and *sell.* This might be partially because activity verbs are most frequently used in everyday life, so they do not carry much sense of something happened in the past. The results indicate that learners even in the higher levels have difficulties maintaining tense markers consistently, and tend to rely on the sequence of events rather than coherently mark tense. However, one should be cautious when interpreting these data because the percentages may have been inflated due to the small amount of data.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study shows that learners tend to use the past tense marker with event verbs and progressive with activity verbs in both oral and written narratives. However, the results indicate that state verbs are also strongly associated with past morphology. It appears that the use of tense markers by the classroom learners is, at least partially, affected by lexical aspectual meaning of the verbs. The higher affiliation of past tense with accomplishment/ achievement verbs suggests that learners find telic verbs to be the best examples of past tense markers. Andersen (1991) observed the same tendency, stating that "inflections are more naturally attached to a lexical item if the meaning of the inflection has direct relevance to the meaning of the lexical item" (p. 318). In the present study, however, a developmental pattern in the use of past morphology and progressive marker is not observed due to the small number of subjects. Thus conclusions cannot be drawn about whether second language learners eventually extend their use of tense marking into other class of verbs with the increase of proficiency level. In addition, the higher use of past morphology with stative verbs should be more closely examined to decide if it is weakening the POA hypothesis.

In conclusion, this study attempts to examine how Korean learners of English

use tense and aspect markers in terms POA hypothesis. The small amount of data can be problematic to make a generalization but the learner language data in this study can provide a basic picture of Korean learners' interlanguage system. With more subjects in each group, more convincing conclusions can be drawn.

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Appendix A (Questionnaire)

This questionnaire consists several questions about your personal infomation. Please mark the answers that you feel most relevant to you. If there is any question that you feel uncomfortable, you may not answer the question. The information obtained here is completely confidential and will not be disclosed without your permission. You are free to withdraw from the questionnaire at any time you do not want to complete it.

1. How long have you been in the United States? (Please specify)

_____

2. You are a(n)
   a. undergraduate student studying _____
   b. graduate student studying _____
   c. ESL student
   d. other (please specify) _____

3. How much time do you use English in everyday life?
   a. more than 5 hours
   b. about 2 hours
   c. less than 1 hour
   d. seldom (e.g. less than 30 minutes)

4. Which language do you speak most of the time?
   a. Korean b. English c. Other(s) _____

5. Do you have anybody that corrects your English?
   a. yes b. no

6. Do you want to use English a lot more than now?
   a. yes b. no

7. Do you spend some time regularly studying to improve your English (apart from the academic works)?

a. not at all
b. less than 30 minutes per week
c. less than 2 hours per week
d. more than 2 hours per week
What kind of activities are you doing now? _____

8. Do you feel that your English has improved since you came to the United States?
a. improved a lot
b. improved a little bit but not very noticeable
c. not improved at all
d. I don't know

9. Do you fell confident when you speak in English with your classmates?
a. no, very nervous and anxious
b. a little bit confident but still hesitant
c. relatively confident
d. very confident

10. If you are invited to a party by one of your American classmates, you will
a. never go because you cannot feel comfortable at the party.
b. try to go to the party if you can go with other Koreans.
c. go to the party if you are not terribly busy.
d. go to the party by any means.

11. What is the most difficult thing for you when you are speaking English with native speakers?
a. cannot understand what they are saying.
b. cannot find proper words that you want to say.
c. do not know the correct use of the words or pronunciation
d. other(s) _____

12. Do you like living in an English-speaking culture?
a. like it very much.
b. not dislike but preer to speak Korea.

c. neutral.
d. very much dislike it.

13. In which do you feel more confident?
a. speaking b. writing c. no difference

14. Do you think that your English will improve if you try to keep practicing?
a yes, very positive about it.
b. no, my English will not greatly improve no matter how hard I might try.
c. I don't know.

15. Can you tell me your TOEFL and GRE (verbal) scores? (You may not disclose your scores if you don't want to.)
TOEFL: _____
GRE (verbal): _____

Appendix B

Tests for Determining Aspectual Class in English

Classes distinguished by test	Test	Examples
ACT vs ACC	almost	He almost sang (he didn't sing)/ he almost sang the whole song. (ambiguous w/ACC, he didn't finish the song or he didn't sing at all.)
ACT vs ACC; ACC vs ACH	stop/finish + participle	John stopped reading. (John DID read.) John stopped reading a book. (John didn't finish reading it.) *John finished walking. (ACT) John finished painting a picture. (ACC) *John finished noticing the painting. (ACH)
STA, ACT vs ACC, ACH	in + temporal adverbials	John *ran/ran a mile in an hour.
STA, ACT vs ACC, ACH	for + temporal adverbials	John ran/*ran a mile for an hour.
STA, ACH vs ACT, ACC	still	They are still *liking the girl/walking/
STA, ACH vs ACT, ACC	present perfect + progressive	He has been *liking the girl/walking/ painting a picture/*stealing the bread (noniterative meaning)