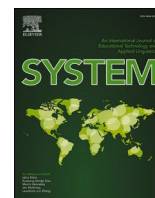




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Tense-aspect SLA research and Spanish Language Teaching: Is there an influence of research on teaching?

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the relationship between research findings and teaching practice by examining the declared practices and pedagogical content knowledge of teachers in Spanish language teaching (SLT) when teaching the meanings and forms of past tense. Data from an online questionnaire was used to investigate in which order teachers taught three Spanish past forms (preterite, imperfect, and present perfect), their justification for teaching it in a specific order, the main concepts in their pedagogical content knowledge, and whether they thought there was an influence of research in their teaching. A total of 293 teachers of Spanish participated in the study, and results showed that the most common order of teaching past tenses was beginning with the present perfect, followed by the preterite and the imperfect forms, and that the order of teaching was related to the location where Spanish was being taught. The most common justification for teaching in a specific order was the influence of textbooks. Regarding the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge for the teaching of tense-aspect, the most common concepts were related to tense features. Data regarding the influence of research showed that more than half of the participants thought that research was relevant for teaching. Finally, a cluster analysis provided evidence for three distinct profiles of SLT teachers based on their pedagogical content knowledge when teaching tense-aspect.

The debate regarding the relationship between second language acquisition (SLA) research and language teaching (LT) has developed over the years in the fields of applied linguistics, second language acquisition, language teaching, and instructed second language acquisition (ISLA) (see, for instance, the recent debates about transdisciplinarity by [Byrnes & Duff, 2019](#) and [The Douglas Fir Group, 2016](#); see also [Gass, 2019](#); [Long, 2015](#); [Mackay, Birello, and Xerri, 2020](#); [Marsden & Kasprowicz, 2017](#); [Muñoz-Basols, Rodríguez-Lifante, & Cruz-Moya, 2017](#); [Ortega, 2018a, 2018b](#); [Toth and Moranski, 2018](#), and the discussion about SLA and ISLA in [Loewen, 2020](#); [Sato and Loewen, 2019](#); and [Spada, 2019](#)). The current study investigates the connection between SLA research and LT by examining data from Spanish language teachers worldwide and their views regarding how past tense-aspect is taught and whether their declared teaching practices are influenced by studies of tense-aspect in SLA. The article has five sections. It begins with a review of current research on the connection between SLA research and LT. The second section provides some background on Spanish past tenses and findings from SLA and language teaching studies. The third section includes a study that investigates the justifications of Spanish teachers for their declared practices when they teach the past tenses and the connections they establish with research results. The fourth and fifth sections include the discussion of the results and a conclusion, respectively.

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1. Empirical studies on the relationship between SLA research and LT practice

Previous studies that investigate the relationship between SLA research and LT can be broadly divided into essay-style publications, which explore and problematize the relationship between research and practice, and empirical studies, which design specific data-based studies that address the connection between SLA research and LT (Comajoan-Colomé, 2021). This section focuses on the empirical studies that have investigated the specific factors that facilitate or hinder the connection and whether teachers engage with research (Borg, 2010).

In one of the earlier studies, Borg (2009, 2013) designed a questionnaire and a follow-up study in which more than 500 teachers of English around the world answered questions regarding whether they read research in LT and the reasons for doing so. The results showed that most teachers (51.9%) reported reading research sometimes and only 15.6% did so often. The reasons for reading research only sometimes were lack of time, lack of access to books and journals, and lack of practical relevance.

Nassaji (2012) conducted a study based on a written questionnaire that provided quantitative and qualitative data from 201 teachers in Canada and Turkey. Regarding the relevance and usefulness of SLA research for classroom teaching, most teachers (79%) agreed or strongly agreed that knowing SLA research improved L2 teaching, but only 28% thought SLA provided practical suggestions for improving L2 instruction.

Sato and Loewen (2018) studied how 12 EFL university teachers in Chile described L2 research, what they felt about it, and the obstacles they encountered in applying research. The interview data showed that their views of L2 research were quite consistent with those of researchers, even though very few were aware of the current interest in instructed L2 research. Regarding their feelings, they were mostly positive, and they thought that research was relevant and useful. The most common obstacles in applying research were lack of time and difficulties in finding financial support to access research.

Two large online studies examined the relationship between research and practice in foreign language teaching in the United Kingdom and in Spanish language teaching (SLT) worldwide. Marsden and Kasprovicz (2017) conducted two online surveys with questionnaires and obtained 183 and 391 responses, respectively, from foreign language education teachers in primary and secondary education in the UK. The main factors that prevented teachers from engaging with research were practical constraints, access to research, understanding of the contents of research works, and negative perceptions of research. Muñoz-Basols et al. (2017) conducted a study with 1675 teachers of Spanish as a foreign language around the world who taught at different educational establishments: 27.8% taught at the university, 23.4% at private language schools, 21.6% at secondary schools, 9.7% at primary schools, 5.8% at branches of the Instituto Cervantes, and 11.7% at other types of educational institutions. Their answers provided evidence for three main findings regarding the connection of research and teaching: 39% of teachers tended to attend conferences and do research in Spanish teaching (33.1% said they did not); research was increasingly important in their teaching profile; and the main constraints for not doing more research were lack of training, lack of professional recognition, and lack of support from their institutions.

Finally, Comajoan-Colomé (2021) investigated the relationship between SLA research findings and the declared practices of L2 Catalan teachers when they taught past tenses and the survey results found that half of the participants declared that their practices had been influenced by research results. However, the teachers' answers were more closely connected to matters of teaching methodology, teacher training, and teaching methodologies than to specific references to research findings.

2. SLA research and the teaching of tense-aspect in SLT

2.1. The acquisition of L2 Spanish tense-aspect

Spanish has a morphologically and semantically rich tense-aspect system, which has been widely described in linguistics and SLA (Bardovi-Harlig, 1995, 2000; Comajoan, 2014; Comajoan-Colomé & Pérez Saldanya, 2018; Geeslin, Long, & Solon, 2021; Montrul, 2004; Salaberry, 2008). Past tense-aspect information in Spanish is encoded via morphological and lexical information. Spanish has three main past tense-aspect types of morphology (the other types of past morphology, such as the pluperfect, are not the focus of this study). Present perfect forms (e.g., *He comprado el periódico*, "I have bought the newspaper") are used for perfect (experiential, resultative) and perfective meanings. Preterite forms (e.g., *Compré el periódico*, "I bought/have bought the newspaper") are used for perfective meanings; that is, bounded events. Finally, imperfect forms (e.g., *Compraba el periódico*, "I bought/was buying/used to buy the newspaper") are used for past imperfective meanings (habitual, continuous, and progressive) (García Fernández & Camus Bergareche, 2004; Lunn, 1985; Pérez Saldanya, 2004).

Peninsular and Latin American Spanish (including US varieties of Spanish) differ in an important way in the use of past tense-aspect forms, namely in the use of present perfect. As argued by Soler (2017) and Moreno-Fernández (2019), it is an oversimplification to use labels such as "Peninsular" and "Latin American" Spanish since there is macro- and microvariation within such varieties. In this article, they are used to refer to the characterization of the two macro-varieties of Spanish that are mostly presented in SLT materials (see Real Academia Española, 2009; 2010 for a full description of uses of past tenses in different varieties of Spanish, Moreno-Fernández, 2019 for a discussion of the connections between Spanish dialectology and SLT, Soler, 2015, 2017 for the acquisition of the present perfect in Spanish and its connection to dialectal differences, and Quijada & Gómez, 2021 for dialectological differences within Spain and pedagogical descriptions of the present perfect).

In Peninsular Spanish (Spain), the present perfect is used for past perfective hodiernal (within the day) actions, e.g., *Hoy me he levantado a las seis* (literally, "Today I have gotten up at six") except in some territories in northern Spain (Galicia, Asturias, and some parts of Cantabria), where the preterite is more widely used (i.e., *Hoy me levanté a las seis*, "Today I got up at six") (Howe & Schwenter, 2003, pp. 61–75). The hodiernal use of the perfect has not spread to Latin American varieties of Spanish, which employ the preterite

instead, except in Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, and northern Argentina (Aleza Izquierdo, 2010, p. 50). Other uses of the present perfect (e.g., resultative and experiential) are shared by most varieties of Spanish (e.g., *Nunca he estado en Japón*; “I have never been to Japan”).

Lexical aspect refers to the aspectual information provided by the lexical properties of verbs and their predicates. A common classification of lexical aspect is that of Vendler (1967, pp. 97–121), which classifies predicates into four categories: states, activities, accomplishments, and achievements. States are predicates that do not need energy input in order to happen and are stable in both bounded and unbounded periods of time (e.g., *ser-estar* “be,” *parecer* “seem”). Activities are durative but without a clear endpoint (e.g., *correr* “to run,” *comer* “to eat,” *escribir* “to write”). Accomplishments are durative but have an inherent endpoint (*correr una carrera* “to run a race,” *comer un bocadillo* “to eat a sandwich,” *escribir una carta* “to write a letter”). Finally, achievements are punctual (*llegar* “to arrive,” *caerse* “to fall,” *encontrar las llaves* “to find the keys”). States and activities are grouped under the *atelic* category (without an endpoint), whereas accomplishments and achievements are *telic* (with an endpoint).

The acquisition of tense-aspect morphology in L2 Spanish is one of the most studied topics in SLA, and two main variables stand out: the lexicoaspectual characteristics of predicates and discourse grounding in narratives (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Comajoan, 2014; Salaberry, 2008; Salaberry & Comajoan, 2013). Whereas lexical aspect and discourse grounding are the two most studied factors for the acquisition of L2 tense-aspect, they coexist with other theoretical frameworks and methodologies (e.g., syntactic approach: Domínguez, Arche, & Myles, 2017; Montrul, 2004; processing and statistical studies: Rastelli, 2020; see reviews in Comajoan, 2014 and Salaberry, 2008).

According to the Aspect Hypothesis, perfective forms (e.g., Spanish preterite) emerge earlier than imperfective forms (e.g., Spanish imperfect) and do so in telic predicates (with an inherent endpoint). In contrast, imperfect forms emerge in atelic predicates (states and durative activities) and later spread to telic predicates. In connection with the Aspect Hypothesis, Salaberry (2008) argued that beginner classroom learners were not influenced by the lexical characteristics of predicates but rather learners used the preterite as a default form for all past meanings (the Default Past Tense Hypothesis) (see Bardovi-Harlig & Comajoan-Colomé, 2020 for a review on the different positions regarding the Aspect Hypothesis).

Regarding the role of discourse grounding, the Discourse Hypothesis argues that when producing narratives learners use emerging morphology to distinguish the foreground, the main story line that carries the action of the narrative forward, from the background, which sets the scene, evaluates the actions of the foreground, and often includes descriptive sections. Initially, when building narratives, L2 learners mark the foreground of narratives with perfective forms (i.e., Spanish preterite) and only later use preterite forms in the foreground in combination with emerging imperfect forms in the background. Eventually, as learners’ interlanguage develops, they can produce a combination of perfective and imperfective forms in elaborate narratives containing foreground and background.

2.2. The teaching of L2 Spanish tense-aspect

The implementation of a specific approach in the classroom is connected to the teacher’s knowledge base, which is made up of several categories of knowledge (Johnston & Goettsch, 2000; Sanchez & Borg, 2014; Shulman, 1987), including content knowledge, general pedagogical knowledge, and pedagogical content knowledge. This paper investigates teachers’ conceptualizations of Spanish tense-aspect when they teach the past tense in the classroom, which is a type of pedagogical content knowledge; that is, what they know about tense and aspect and how to teach it.

The types of pedagogical content knowledge to teach Spanish tense-aspect that are investigated in the current study are based on previous linguistic, SLA, and LT research that focused on tense-aspect and how L2 teachers implement the teaching of tense-aspect in SLT (e.g., Ayoun, 2013; Binnick, 1991; Blyth, 1997, 2005; Comrie, 1976, 1985; Espinosa, & Ruiz Campillo, 2012; Ibarretxe-Antuñano, Cadierno, & Castañeda, 2019; Llopis-García, Real; Negueruela & Lantolf, 2006) and include the following:

1. The linguistic notion of verbal aspect, focusing on how the speaker views a situation in terms of aspect information (e.g., duration, boundedness)
2. The linguistic notion of tense (i.e., the deictic nature of tense: present, past, and future) and its interaction with the notion of aspect
3. The general discursive functions of tense-aspect in textual genres (e.g., use of tenses in narratives, descriptions, argumentations, etc.)
4. The discursive functions of tense-aspect in narratives, focusing on action (foreground) vs. description (background) (i.e., the Discourse Hypothesis)
5. The role of lexical aspect in the emergence and development of past morphology (i.e., the Aspect Hypothesis)
6. The association of specific temporal expressions (adverbials and adverbial clauses) with specific tense-aspect forms
7. Cognitive linguistic explanations for the use of tense-aspect, deriving tempo-aspectual information from spatial information (i.e., the imperfect is used when the event is viewed from inside, and the preterite is used when viewed from outside). Cognitive linguistics was included in the questionnaire because SLT has been highly influenced by (applied) cognitive linguistics (Tyler & Huang, 2018), especially in Spain-Europe, both in research and the design of teaching materials (Castañeda, 2014; Ibarretxe-Antuñano et al., 2019).

Results from previous research on teachers' pedagogical content knowledge have showed that there are considerable gaps in the teachers' understanding of grammar and that teachers' experience as language teachers and language learners seem to be more influential than research studies or particular methodologies (Borg, 2003). In addition, classroom practices and teacher beliefs interact in complex ways; that is, factors such as the society where teachers teach, institutional culture, prescribed curricula, teacher perceptions of student needs, and teacher biographies play a role in how teachers implement grammar instruction in the classroom (Bastons, Comajoan-Colomé, Guasch, & Ribas, 2017; Borg, 2003; Sanchez & Borg, 2014).

An examination of SLT textbooks shows that the past tenses are introduced and sequenced in different orders. In general, there is a difference between teaching materials produced in Spain/Europe and those produced in the United States. Teaching materials in Spain/Europe tend to introduce the present perfect as the first past tense in its hodiernal use in the beginning levels (e.g., *Hoy/Esta mañana he ido al parque*, "Today/This morning I went to the park"), followed by the preterite and the imperfect (Amenós, 2010; Bustos, 2021; Cruz, 2002; Muñoz, 2018; Soler, 2015, 2017). In contrast, beginner textbooks in the United States start with the preterite, followed by the imperfect, and the present perfect is mostly relegated to a grammatical note on dialect variation stating that the present perfect is not used in its hodiernal use in Latin American Spanish. In this article, the teachers' justifications for the order in which they taught the past tenses were considered a proxy to investigate whether the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge to teach tense-aspect integrated SLA research findings.

In sum, the current article investigates the research-practice relationship not in a general or abstract manner, but rather examining the teachers' declared practices when teaching L2 Spanish tense-aspect. More specifically, the research questions for the study were the following two: a) What are L2 Spanish teachers' justifications for the way they teach past tense-aspect in the classroom? b) To what extent do their justifications incorporate knowledge from SLA research?

3. Study: methodology

3.1. Data collection

To answer the research questions in the study, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to teachers of Spanish worldwide via a Google questionnaire (available on the IRIS digital repository). The questionnaire was in Spanish in the original. The translations in this article are provided by the author of the article, and capitalization in the questions follows the original version.

The questionnaire was divided into three main sections: a) biographical information: L1, birthplace, place of residence, and levels taught; b) teaching the past tenses in Spanish L2: order of teaching of the different tenses, justification of the order, pedagogical content knowledge for teaching the tenses; and c) open question regarding the influence of research in teaching the past tenses. The current study focuses on four questions from the questionnaire. Question 1 asked teachers about the order in which they taught past tenses in the classroom:

Question 1. In which ORDER DO YOU TEACH the forms and uses of the following tenses when you present them for the FIRST TIME? The numbers refer to the order: 1 = first, 2 = second, 3 = third.

1. Imperfect 2. Preterite 3. Present Perfect.
 1. Imperfect 2. Present Perfect 3. Preterite.
 1. Preterite 2. Present Perfect 3. Imperfect.
 1. Preterite 2. Imperfect 3. Present Perfect.
 1. Present Perfect 2. Preterite 3. Imperfect.
 1. Present Perfect 2. Imperfect 3. Preterite.
- Other:

Question 1 did not overtly allow for the simultaneous teaching of the past forms, and only a few teachers included this option in the "other" category.

Question 2 enquired about the teachers' justifications for the order in which they taught the past tenses. Participants were asked for the justifications in two formats. In the first one, they were asked to select as many justifications as they wished. In the second format, participants were asked the same question, but they were only allowed to select one justification:

Question 2. How do you JUSTIFY the ORDER that you follow when teaching the forms and uses of the past?

1. Because there is a progression from easier to more difficult in the FORMS.
2. Because my experience shows me that the order I follow is the most appropriate.
3. Because there is a progression from more difficult to easier in the FORMS.
4. Because it is the way it is presented in the textbook or materials I use.
5. Because there is a progression from more difficult to easier in the USES.
6. Because I have read articles and books about the topic and I have incorporated it into my way of teaching.
7. Because there is a progression from easier to more difficult in the USES.
8. Because I was taught to do it this way in my teacher training.
9. Other:

Table 1

Question to elicit data on the pedagogical content knowledge of teachers when they teach tense-aspect in SLT. The concepts in the right column of Table 1 were not included in the questionnaire. They are the labels that are used in the remainder of the article to refer to the concepts in the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge to teach L2 Spanish tense-aspect.

Item in questionnaire	Concept
Question 3: Mark how often you establish relationships with the following concepts when you teach the forms and uses of past at the beginner and intermediate levels. 1 = Never, 2 = A few times, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always When I teach the uses of the past in L2 Spanish at the beginning and intermediate levels, I establish relationships with ...	
1. The perspective that the speaker has about a specific situation (the speaker perceives the action as closer or farther away in time). <input type="radio"/> 1. Never <input type="radio"/> 2. A few times <input type="radio"/> 3. Sometimes <input type="radio"/> 4. Often <input type="radio"/> 5. Always	Aspect-speaker perspective
2. Temporal concepts like duration, whether or not the action is finished, whether or not the action takes place before or after the moment of speaking, etc. <input type="radio"/> 1. Never <input type="radio"/> 2. A few times <input type="radio"/> 3. Sometimes <input type="radio"/> 4. Often <input type="radio"/> 5. Always	Tense-aspect
3. Discursive functions and genres (descriptions, narratives, telling stories, etc.). <input type="radio"/> 1. Never <input type="radio"/> 2. A few times <input type="radio"/> 3. Sometimes <input type="radio"/> 4. Often <input type="radio"/> 5. Always	Discourse
4. Discursive aspects of foreground and background (action and description) in narratives. <input type="radio"/> 1. Never <input type="radio"/> 2. A few times <input type="radio"/> 3. Sometimes <input type="radio"/> 4. Often <input type="radio"/> 5. Always	Grounding
5. Semantic and lexical characteristics of verb predicates (if they are static, punctual, durative, etc.). <input type="radio"/> 1. Never <input type="radio"/> 2. A few times <input type="radio"/> 3. Sometimes <input type="radio"/> 4. Often <input type="radio"/> 5. Always	Lexical aspect
6. Specific temporal expressions ("when I was little", "always", "sometimes", "one day", "yesterday", etc.). <input type="radio"/> 1. Never <input type="radio"/> 2. A few times <input type="radio"/> 3. Sometimes <input type="radio"/> 4. Often <input type="radio"/> 5. Always	Temporal expressions
7. Cognitive perceptions that speakers have regarding space and time (for instance, imperfect shows the action from WITHIN). <input type="radio"/> 1. Never <input type="radio"/> 2. A few times <input type="radio"/> 3. Sometimes <input type="radio"/> 4. Often <input type="radio"/> 5. Always	Cognitive

In order to tap into the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge for teaching tense-aspect, Question 3 asked participants to mark how often they established relationships with the seven concepts that were identified as instances of pedagogical content knowledge for the teaching of L2 Spanish tense-aspect. The first column of Table 1 provides the wording for each of the concepts in the questionnaire.

Finally, Question 4 was an open question that explicitly asked about the influence of research in the teachers' teaching of tense-aspect forms in SLT:

"From your point of view, has research in language teaching-learning (language teaching, pedagogy, second language acquisition, etc.) influenced you in your approach to teaching the forms and uses of the past? In what sense has it influenced you? If it has not influenced you, write 'no'."

3.2. Participants

The questionnaire was sent to online Spanish teaching discussion groups and to Spanish language university departments worldwide. Through snowball sampling, participants distributed the questionnaire to other potential participants. The data were collected between February and March 2018. A total of 293 teachers of Spanish answered the questionnaire. Most of the participants were women (77%). The average age of the participants was 42. Most of them were born in Spain (51%), followed by Latin America (17%), Europe (excluding Spain, 15%), and the USA (14.5%). The remainder were born in Africa and Asia. Initially, Spain and the rest of Europe were classified separately to observe if the results in the two areas differed. Since it was observed that they did not, it was decided to group Spain and the rest of Europe under one single category (Spain-Europe). Only one of the participants in the study taught in Canada, and it was included in the USA group. Initially, more refined geographical categories were created for Latin America (e.g., Mexico, Argentina, etc.), but they were not used for the final analysis for two reasons. First, there were no differences in the results according to the categories; second, the data for some areas had very few tokens, which was an obstacle for the statistical analysis and further generalizations.

The largest percentage of teachers taught in Europe (excluding Spain, 36.5%), followed by the USA (24%), Spain (21.5%), Latin America (9%), Asia (6.5%), and Africa (2%). The remainder taught in Australia or online. More than half of the participants (51.9%) taught at the university. The other half of the participants taught at secondary schools (19.8%), private language schools (16.4%), branches of the Instituto Cervantes (3.8%), or other types of institutions (5.1%) (3.1% of the participants did not report the educational institution where they taught). Most participants had degrees related to language teaching (Master's degree, 42%; undergraduate degree, 33%; or Ph.D., 13.7%). More than one-third of the participants had 15 years of experience (36%), 20.5% had between 10 and 15 years of experience; 17%, 5–10 years; 15%, 2–5 years. Only 12.5% had less than two years of experience.

3.3. Data analysis

The quantitative answers to the questionnaire were coded and analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics using descriptive statistics and cluster analysis. The internal validity and reliability of the instrument was tested using three measures. First, the questionnaire was piloted by distributing it to four SLT teachers, who answered the questionnaire and commented upon the writing style and clarity. Second, the questionnaire was validated by two applied linguists who are teachers of Spanish, who suggested small changes in

terminology and writing style. Third, Cronbach's alpha (0.66) for the seven items in question three indicated that the reliability was acceptable. It was determined that the alpha score was "acceptable" following standard practice of accepting the .7 cut off for "good" reliability. The alpha score in the questionnaire may have been affected by the low number of items in the scale and the variability within the participants sample (Field, 2018).

The interrelationships among the responses from the participating teachers were established and configured into various teacher profiles using a series of Two-step Cluster Analyses, a statistical technique for explanatory analysis of how data structures into different groupings. The following variables were included in the cluster analysis: a) Concepts related to the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge for the teaching of tense-aspect (Question 3: aspect-speaker perspective, tense-aspect, discourse, grounding, lexical aspect, temporal expressions, and cognitive linguistics), b) order of teaching (Question 1), c) justification for the order of teaching (Question 2), d) influence of research (Question 4, "Influence of research," coded as "yes" or "no"), and e) participant characteristics (place of teaching, years of experience, and training). A Two-Step Cluster Analysis was chosen because it is considered more appropriate than K-means and hierarchical clustering when using a combination of categorical and continuous data (Winke & Gass, 2018). Three clusters were forced in the analysis to avoid polarized data. The cluster quality of the analysis was poor/regular (silhouette measure of cohesion and separation of 0.1 and 0.2), but it was nevertheless performed for exploratory purposes.

3.4. Results

3.4.1. Frequency analysis

The results regarding the order in which the tenses are taught showed that there was not one particular order that was followed by the majority of the teachers. The largest proportion of teachers (40%) claimed that they taught in the following order: 1) present perfect, 2) preterite, 3) imperfect (Fig. 1). The next most common order (25% of teachers) was to begin with the preterite, followed by the imperfect and the present perfect. The other combinations were used less frequently (13% or fewer).

The results from Fig. 1 were closely related to the geographical location where teachers taught (Table 2). Most teachers in Spain and Europe (55.5%) taught in the following order: 1) present perfect, 2) preterite, 3) imperfect. However, in the USA, most teachers (69.5% of the participants in that area) followed a different order: 1) preterite, 2) imperfect, 3) present perfect. Finally, for teachers in Latin America, results varied considerably: the most common order was the same as in Spain-Europe, followed by the one from the USA.

When asked about the justification for the order of teaching Spanish tenses, participants could first select one or as many justifications as they wished from Question 2, and next they were asked to select just one.

Most of the participants (54.3%) chose more than one option when they were given the possibility to select one or more of the justifications. All options that were presented to the participants in the questionnaire were selected, and no single justification (or combination of justifications) was given by more than 19% of participants. The most frequent justification was the influence of textbooks (Fig. 2). Fig. 2 includes single or combinations of two justifications that were mentioned by at least 5% (14) of the participants. The results show that, after the most common justification—the influence of textbooks—the other justifications in the order of frequency were the difficulty of forms combined with experience in teaching (9.5%), the difficulty of use (8%), and experience combined with textbook influence (7%).

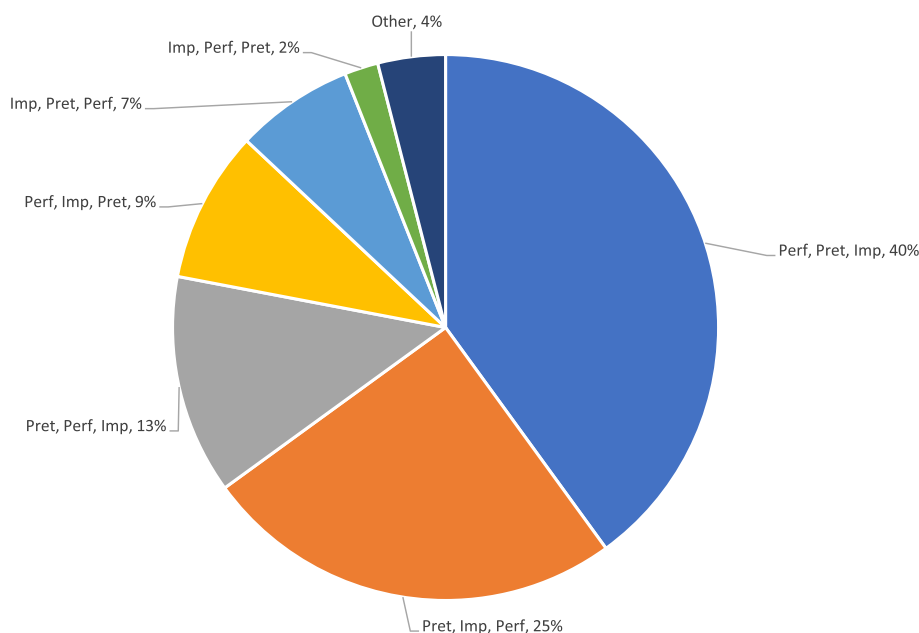
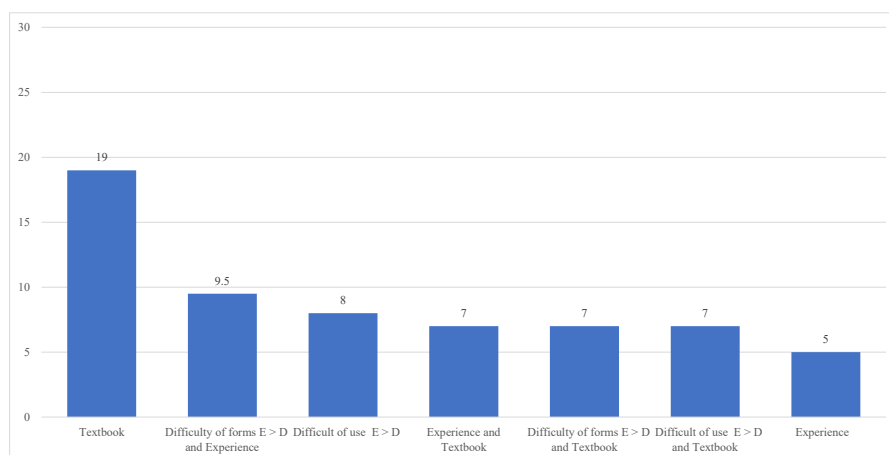
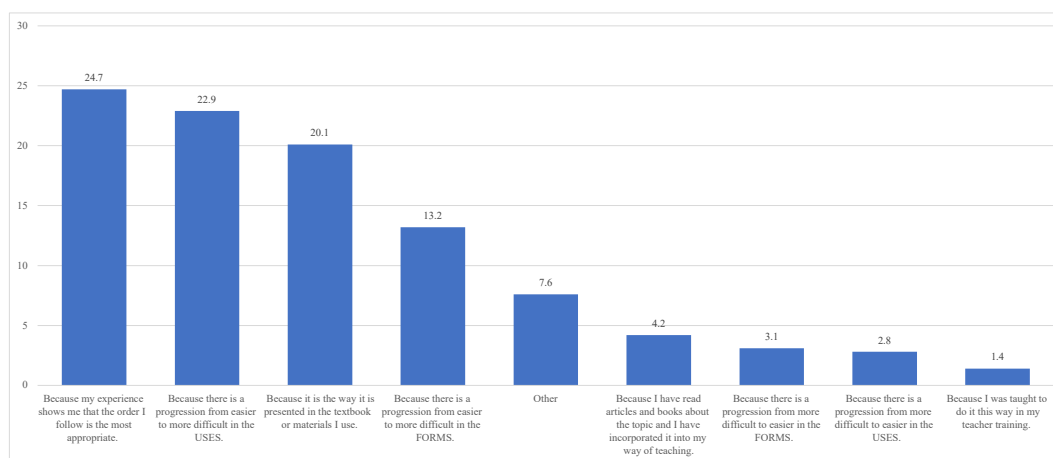


Fig. 1. Order of teaching of tense-aspect forms in SLT (percentage of participants). Perf = Present perfect; Pret = Preterite; Imp = Imperfect.

Table 2

Order of teaching of tense-aspect forms according to the place where teachers were teaching (percentage of participants within a geographical area).

Order of teaching	Spain	Europe	USA	Latin America
Present Perfect-Preterite-Imperfect	55.5% (34)	56% (58)	7.5% (34)	36% (9)
Preterite-Imperfect-Present Perfect	8% (5)	7.5% (8)	69.5% (46)	24% (6)
Preterite-Present Perfect-Imperfect	18% (11)	13.5% (14)	3% (2)	24% (6)
Present Perfect-Imperfect-Preterite	6.5% (4)	15.5% (16)	1.5% (1)	12% (3)

**Fig. 2.** Justification of order of teaching tense-aspect forms when one or more options could be selected (percentage of participants on the vertical axis). E > D = from easy to difficult.**Fig. 3.** Justification of order of teaching tense-aspect forms when only one option could be selected (percentage of participants on the vertical axis).

Justifications relating to research and teacher training were mentioned by less than 5% of the participants; therefore, they do not appear in Fig. 2: The two items in the questionnaire that referred to research and teaching (“Because I have read articles and books about the topic and I have incorporated it into my way of teaching”, and “Because I was taught to do it this way in my teacher training”) were selected on their own by 6 (2.1%) and 4 (1.4%) teachers, respectively. These two justifications were selected in combination with other justifications by 17 teachers (5.8%).

When only one of the options could be selected, the most frequent justification for the teaching of tenses was the teacher’s experience (24.7%), followed by the progression from easier to more difficult in the uses of tenses (22.9%), and their presentation in textbooks (20.1%) (Fig. 3).

Regarding the pedagogical content knowledge of teachers for the teaching of past tenses in SLT, the results showed that the highest score was for tense-aspect concepts (average frequency: 4.2 out of 5), which in the questionnaire were described as “temporal concepts

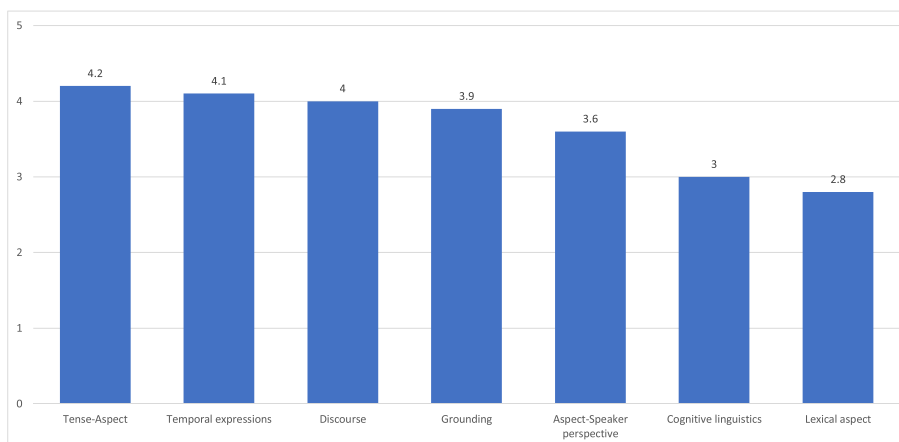


Fig. 4. Concepts for the pedagogical content knowledge for teaching tense-aspect forms in SLT (average frequency, from 1 (never) to 5 (always), on the vertical axis).

like duration, whether or not the action is finished, whether or not the action takes place before the moment of speaking, etc.”, followed by temporal expressions (4.1), discourse (4) and grounding (3.9) (Fig. 4). Two more concepts (aspect-speaker perspective and cognitive linguistics) were in the “sometimes” range. The concept that was least frequently related to tense-aspect teaching was lexical aspect.

Finally, participants were directly asked in an open question if research had influenced their way of teaching past tense-aspect morphology. More than half of the respondents (58%) mentioned that research had influenced them, whereas 42% said it had not. Most of the positive comments were brief and emphasized specific contextual characteristics of L2 teaching, such as learner needs.

3.4.2. Cluster analysis

The cluster analysis results provided evidence of three main teacher profiles. Table 3 includes the highest percentage figures for each of the investigated variables in each cluster and refer to the percentage of participants who selected the answers in the questionnaire. For instance, in Cluster 1, 50.9% of the participants marked “often” for the item in the questionnaire referring to discourse grounding as one of the concepts for the pedagogical content knowledge for teaching tense-aspect. Cluster 1 was the largest one (41.5% of the teachers) and included teachers who focused on tense-aspect and temporal expressions, taught in the preterite-imperfect-present perfect order, and considered that research had not had a major role in their teaching of past tenses. Cluster 2 teachers (30% of the participants) tended to teach in the present perfect-preterite-imperfect order, taught mostly in Spain or Europe, and considered only to some extent that research had had an influence in their teaching. Finally, Cluster 3 was similar in size to Cluster 2 and included teachers who focused on the discursive characteristics of tenses, taught in the present perfect-preterite-imperfect order, and clearly thought that research had influenced their teaching.

4. Discussion

The research questions for the current study investigated the SLT teachers’ justifications for the way they declared that they taught past tense-aspect in the classroom and to what extent their justifications incorporated knowledge from SLA research. The main finding of the study was that the teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge was not closely connected to research findings for two reasons.

First, the results indicated that teacher training and research were selected by very few teachers when asked for a justification for the order in which they taught tense-aspect forms. In contrast, the largest number of teachers chose the influence of textbooks, the difficulty of forms, and their experience as justifications for their choice of order in which to teach tense-aspect. These results are in line with previous research that showed that it is difficult for teachers to keep up to date with research, mainly due to lack of time and difficulty in understanding the specialist discourse (Borg, 2009, 2013; Muñoz-Basols et al., 2017; Nassaji, 2012). In addition, the results of the study confirm Borg’s (2003) findings regarding the small impact of research results compared to experience and other variables.

The results show that textbooks are still the top influencers in language teaching. The influence of textbooks for the teaching of L2 tense-aspect has been discussed previously and it has been argued that, in their effort to present tense-aspect meanings and forms in a pedagogical manner, textbooks often provide PPP (presentation, practice, production) sequences and end up providing simplistic rules-of-thumb that are disconnected from research results (Aski, 2003, 2009; Comajoan, 2015; Cubillos, 2014; Fernández, 2011; Frantzen, 1995; Llopis-García, Real Espinosa, & Ruiz Campillo, 2012; Martín Peris & Cubillos, 2014; Soler, 2015). The fact that tense-aspect is intrinsically connected to learner perspective and discursive variables (e.g., foreground and background in narratives; pragmatic uses of the imperfect) makes it difficult to reduce tense-aspect meanings to simple rules. For this reason, alternative approaches, such as those based on cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis have begun to emerge in recent years (e.g., Alonso-Aparicio & Llopis-García, 2019; Comajoan-Colomé & Llop, 2021; Soulé & Granda, 2015). However, it may be premature to foresee in the

Table 3

Profiles of L2 Spanish teachers based on their pedagogical content knowledge, order of teaching and its justification, and teacher characteristics. Relevant qualitative differences are highlighted in grey.

Cluster 1, 41.5% (n=108)	Cluster 2, 30.0% (n=78)	Cluster 3, 29.5% (n=74)
Concepts in pedagogical content knowledge when teaching past:	Concepts in pedagogical content knowledge when teaching past:	Concepts in pedagogical content knowledge when teaching past:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grounding (often, 50.9%) – Discourse (often, 42.6%) – Tense-aspect (always, 67.6%) – Temporal expressions (always, 49.1%) – Lexical aspect (sometimes, 31.5%) – Cognitive linguistics (very little, 31.5%) – Aspect-speaker perspective (always 29.6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grounding (often, 46.2%) – Discourse (often, 46.7%) – Tense-aspect (often, 55.1%) – Temporal expressions (often, 38.5) – Lexical aspect (sometimes, 30.8%) – Cognitive linguistics (often, 26.9%) – Aspect-speaker perspective (often, 37.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Grounding (always, 83.8%) – Discourse (always, 85.1%) – Tense-aspect (always, 79.7%) – Temporal expressions (always, 68.9%) – Lexical aspect (always, 29.7%) – Cognitive linguistics (always, 37.8%) – Aspect-speaker perspective (always, 52.7%)
Order of teaching:	Order of teaching:	Order of teaching:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Preterite-imperfect-Present Perfect (49.1%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Present Perfect-Preterite-imperfect (51.3%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Present Perfect-Preterite-imperfect (56.8%)
Most common justification for order:	Most common justification for order:	Most common justification for order:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Difficulty of use, from easy to difficult (35.2%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Experience (39.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Experience (27.2%)
Teacher characteristics:	Teacher characteristics:	Teacher characteristics:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Place of teaching: USA (42.6%) – Influence of research: No (59.3%) – Training: MA (30.6%) – Years of experience: more than 15 (29.6%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Place of teaching: Spain-Europe (83.3%) – Influence of research: yes (66.7%) – Training: University degree (26.9%) – Years of experience: more than 15 (44.9%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Place of teaching: Spain-Europe (68.9%) – Influence of research: yes (74.3%) – Training: MA and additional courses (40.5%) – Years of experience: more than 15 (39.2%)

near future important changes in how textbooks are designed and integrate research findings for at least three reasons (Martín Peris & Cubillos, 2014): textbook production is driven more by sales and marketing than by developments in the fields connected to language teaching (e.g., SLA, ISLA, applied linguistics), textbook design and production is not yet highly valued in the academic fields for faculty promotion, and thus researchers and teachers may not decide to produce them, and textbook adoption is often driven by graphic design, pricing, and other peripheral criteria rather than pedagogical options. In this respect, current calls for a better integration of SLA research and teaching materials and the development of criteria for textbook adoption is most welcome (Martín Peris & Cubillos, 2014; Pablos-Ortega, 2019; Tomlinson, 2016).

Second, even though lexical aspect is the variable that has been most studied in SLA research in connection with the acquisition of L2 tense-aspect (Bardovi-Harlig & Comajoan-Colomé, 2020; Comajoan, 2014), it was the concept that was selected the least by teachers when they were asked about how frequently they thought of some concepts related to teaching L2 Spanish tense and aspect (Fig. 4). It might be argued that teachers do not base their teaching on lexical aspect because it is a difficult concept for those teachers who may not be familiar with the semantics and syntax of verb predicates and how they play into the emergence of past forms. The reason for teachers' not being familiar with the role of lexical semantics is likely to be connected as well to teacher training and its focus on general matters of language teaching (e.g., approaches and methods to teach, language assessment, activities for teaching specific skills) rather than on the teaching of specific grammar features, such as tense-aspect, and how SLA research has investigated them (cf. Ellis, 2012; Ellis & Shintani, 2014).

The second variable that has received much attention in SLA research connected to the teaching of tense-aspect is discourse grounding (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000; Comajoan, 2014; Granda, 2020; Salaberry, 2008). The participants in the current study declared that they frequently thought of this concept when teaching tense-aspect (Fig. 4, Table 3). The difference between the impact of lexical aspect and that of discourse grounding may be related to the fact that grounding (the distinction between action and description) has been a part of the teacher culture (Hargreaves, 1994) of tense-aspect teaching in SLT, whereas lexical aspect is not. Teacher training courses and teaching materials often include references to grounding as an explanatory factor for the use of tense-aspect, whereas lexical aspect is only mentioned in some advanced-level textbooks and requires some specialized knowledge of semantics (but see Granda, 2019 for a description of teacher training in SLT that integrates both grounding and lexical aspect).

The results regarding the order of teaching showed that the location where Spanish is taught is closely related to the order in which the different forms are taught. Whereas the present perfect is the first past tense taught by teachers in Europe and Spain, mostly in its hodiernal use (e.g., *Hoy me he levantado a las siete*, "Today I have got up at seven"), in the USA teachers first teach the preterite in its perfective non-hodiernal use (e.g., *Ayer me levanté a las siete*, "Yesterday I got up at seven"). The reason for this may be related to the fact that textbooks in Europe and Spain introduce the past tense through the topic of daily routines in hodiernal past (e.g., in a daily journal) and relate it to the use of a specific tense: the present perfect. In contrast, in the USA the past is introduced through past-tense routines or narratives that require the preterite because they are not in hodiernal contexts. These results suggest that SLT textbooks adapt to different geographical varieties of Spanish and how tense-aspect is marked in the varieties. This might justify introducing hodiernal past (present perfect) forms for diary-style tasks for Peninsular Spanish and perfective past (preterite) for Latin American Spanish. However, differences in geographical varieties do not warrant postponing the introduction of perfective past for bounded events, which are encoded in the same way in all varieties of Spanish (i.e., preterite). In this respect, presenting the present perfect in its hodiernal use as the first past form as it is commonly done in Spain-Europe may not be the most effective way to do it, since the Perfect hodiernal use (e.g., "Today I have gotten up at six") may add extra difficulties at the beginner level because it requires a compound tense ("have" + past participle), it is less frequent in the input (Cruz, 2002; Soler, 2017, 2020), and it is more complex at the semantic level because it has connections with other meanings of the perfect (resultative, experiential, etc.). Further research should investigate why teacher culture in SLT in Spain-Europe favors the introduction of the present perfect as the first past tense and the justification for such an order; that is, whether it is based on teaching the form of the present perfect, it is based on introducing the meaning of past, or simply following the perennial presentation of tenses in textbooks.

The results of the cluster analysis provided evidence for three main profiles of the participating teachers (Table 3). Some major differences among the profiles were: a) how teachers incorporated grounding and discourse functions as part of teaching the past (more common in cluster 3 than in clusters 1 and 2), and b) how teachers adopted aspectual perspective-taking concepts in their teaching (more common in cluster 3 than in clusters 1 and 2). The frequency in which teachers selected pedagogical content knowledge concepts as justifications for the way they taught the past also showed some interesting trends. Whereas teachers in cluster 2 adopted most concepts to teach tense-aspect in a tentative manner (they tended to answer with "often" for most concepts), teachers in cluster 3 tended to respond with "always" for all concepts. Regarding the teaching location, teachers in clusters 2 and 3 taught in Spain-Europe, they taught in the present perfect-preterite-imperfect order, they mentioned their experience to justify the order for the teaching of tenses, and they mostly thought that research had influenced their teaching. This suggests that whereas the place of teaching may play a role in how teachers teach L2 Spanish tense-aspect, it is not a determining factor since teachers in cluster 2 and cluster 3 differed in their pedagogical content knowledge (more discursive in cluster 3 than in cluster 2). Regarding teachers in cluster 1, they tended to focus more on tense-aspect features (e.g., temporal expressions) than on grounding and discourse. They mostly taught in the USA and followed the preterite-imperfect-present perfect order. They also considered that research had had less influence on their teaching.

The results to the question asking directly about the influence of research on the teaching of past tenses showed that more than half of the participants felt that SLA research was an influence. Further research needs to investigate whether such influence is specific to the teaching of tense-aspect, as addressed in the question for the participants, or general. Results from a similar study and methodology conducted with L2 Catalan teachers and the teaching of tense-aspect suggested that teachers who responded affirmatively to the question regarding the influence of research on the teaching of tense-aspect tended to refer to general rather than specific influences (Comajoan-Colomé, 2021). In this sense, engagement with research does not presuppose that research findings have a determining factor in how teachers teach specific grammar points, but rather that research has more general effects (e.g., in how teachers manage group work, in their understanding of communicative approaches, and so on; Comajoan-Colomé, 2021; Muñoz-Basols et al., 2017; Sato & Loewen, 2018). It might be argued that the fact that a high number of participants reported that research had influenced their teaching is also related to the training level of participants in the study, which was high. However, the cluster analysis results (Table 3) showed that the level of training of participants was not an important predictor in determining their classification into a specific cluster.

Finally, this study has several limitations that further studies should address. First, even though 293 teachers responded to the questionnaire, the sample is only a fraction of the large number of Spanish L2 teachers worldwide. Further research should investigate how the specific teaching conditions in different settings affect the quantity and quality of interaction between teachers and researchers. Second, as discussed in the current study, geographical location and, therefore, the language variety being taught, is an important variable to be considered. Further research should investigate how different features of languages with polycentric language standards (e.g., Spanish varieties) are taught in different locations and examine how effective the methodologies are. In this respect, the discussions regarding dialectal hierarchies within the Spanish language, grammatical descriptions of specific features, and the teaching implications have advanced in the last years (see, for instance, the monograph of the *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching* titled “Spanish in the global era: ideology, language varieties and curriculum design,” Muñoz-Basols & Hernández Muñoz, 2019). In addition, further research could also investigate how a teacher’s identification with one specific variety of the language interacts with the teacher’s practices in teaching specific grammatical features. For instance, a teacher who speaks and identifies with a Spanish variety that does not use present perfect for hodiernal meanings may be less likely to prioritize this tense, despite what the textbook sequence may suggest.

5. Conclusion

The results of this study confirmed that there is not a single, uniform way of teaching Spanish tense-aspect but rather there are several ways of teaching that are connected to the teachers’ pedagogical content knowledge and to the variety of Spanish being taught. The results showed that textbooks continue to be a major influence on the teachers’ approach to teaching tense-aspect. Finally, more than half of the participating teachers stated that they engaged with research.

SLA and LT research discussing the relationship between research and practice often finish with a call for more collaboration between teachers and researchers. While this is desirable, it is easier said than done because teachers and researchers work under different conditions. Research is a time- and energy-consuming endeavor that many teachers cannot carry out because of lack of time, resources, and accessibility. Recent initiatives have called for better working conditions for teachers and newer ways of collaboration and research dissemination, which may contribute to creating a more equal partnership between researchers and teachers in the future (for instance, Open Accessible Summaries and the IRIS repository, Marsden, Trofimovich, & Ellis, 2019; see Pastor Cesteros & Lacorte, 2014 for a list of recommendations regarding Spanish language teacher education). In this respect, the current study has attempted to add new evidence that shows the complex connections between teacher cognition, declared teaching practices, and the relevance of research, which will hopefully contribute to a more fruitful collaboration and a deeper understanding of L2 language teaching and learning.

Author statement

Llorenç Comajoan-Colomé carried out the data collection, coding, and analysis for this study.

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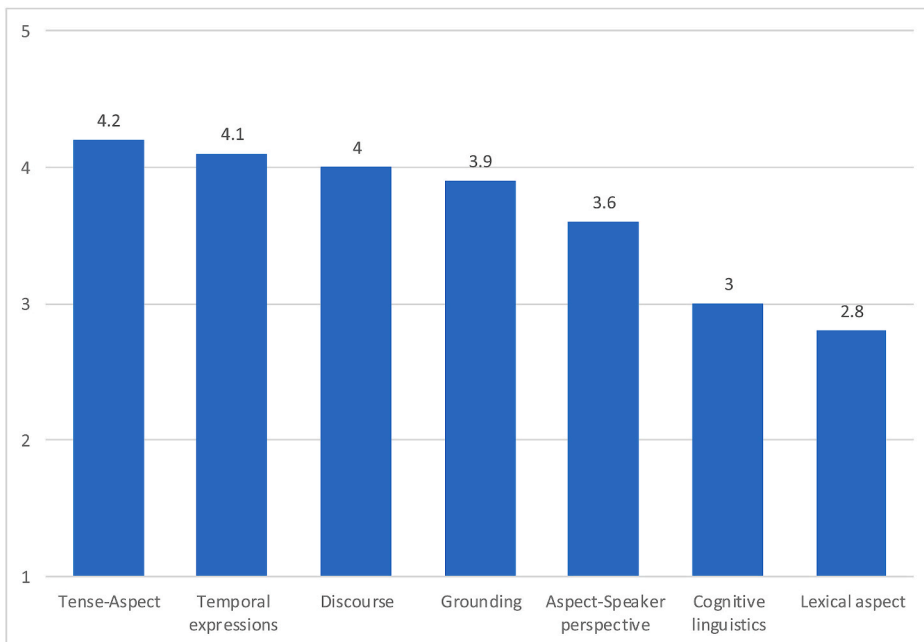


Corrigendum to “Tense-aspect SLA research and Spanish Language Teaching: Is there an influence of research on teaching?” [System 105 (2022) 102747]

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The author would like to inform the readers that the scale in the vertical axis of Figure 4 has been corrected. The corrected Figure 4 is provided below.



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