Adverbial Quantification and Perfective/Imperfective Interpretive Nuances in L2 Portuguese

Michael Iverson and Jason Rothman
University of Iowa

1. Introduction

Many studies have investigated knowledge of semantic entailments in an effort to provide evidence in support of L2 accessibility to functional categories and associated features (e.g. Dekydtspotter et al. 1997; Dekydtspotter and Sprouse 2001; Montrul and Slabakova 2002, 2003). These studies have attested to L2 knowledge of poverty-of-the-stimulus (or otherwise untutored) interpretive knowledge at various levels of acquisition. Most recently, in a state-of-the-science review of available studies on the L2 acquisition of semantics, including PET, fMRI and ERP studies of L2 processing/comprehension, Slabakova (2006b) concludes that there is no reliable evidence of any maturational barrier to ultimate success in the acquisition of phrasal semantic properties. This is purported to be true even when the accessing of semantic universals is conditioned by the acquisition of L2 morphosyntactic features (Dekydtspotter and Sprouse 2001; Goodin-Mayeda and Rothman 2007; Slabakova 2006a; Slabakova and Montrul 2003). Building on previous work that has looked at the acquisition of grammatical aspect by L2 learners of Romance languages whose L1 morphologically lacks such a distinction (Ayoun 2005; Goodin-Mayeda and Rothman 2007; Montrul and Slabakova 2002, 2003; Slabakova and Montrul 2003), we test for [± perfective] aspect competence in advanced English learners of adult L2 Portuguese via knowledge of [± accidental] interpretative nuances with preterit and imperfect adverbially quantified sentences.

The present data add to previous research, confirming that phrasal semantics can be acquired successfully, in fact native-like, in advanced stages of L2 proficiency. Although not the primary focus of this paper, insofar as the present semantic entailment falls out from the acquisition of new morphosyntactic features, our data confirm that new morphosyntactic features can be acquired after the critical period, providing further evidence against so-called Failed Features approaches, at least those that claim a general L2 post-critical-period failure to acquire new functional features (Beck 1998, Hawkins and Chan 1997, Tsimpli and Rousseau 1991).[1] Furthermore, the data support Slabakova's contention that there is no critical period for semantics specifically, and provide evidence that properties at the syntax-semantics interface, while more complex, can be acquired at the advanced level.

This paper is structured as follows. In the next section, perfective and imperfective aspect in both Portuguese and English are presented. Section 3 details the design and methodology of the present study. The remaining portions are results, discussion and conclusion sections.

2. Outer Aspect

In this section we describe outer aspect, also known as grammatical or [± perfective] aspect, as it pertains to Portuguese and English. While both preterit and imperfect morphology in Portuguese encode past tense features, they differ in their encoding of grammatical aspectual features.

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[1] More contemporary revised versions of partial access approaches maintain an asymmetric accessibility to L2 feature acquisition based upon their interpretability at the LF-interface. Accordingly, only uninterpretable features suffer a critical period whereas interpretable features continue to be available (Hawkins 2005, Hawkins and Hattori 2006, Tsimpli and Dimitrakopoulou 2007). This makes different predictions for the acquisition of grammatical aspect than its predecessors, a point which we will not discuss here in detail.

Preterit morphology in Portuguese encodes a [+ perfective] aspectual feature and canonically corresponds to an episodic reading. Events encoded as such are delimited within an assumed timeframe by the implicit completion of the action. They are viewed as being bounded in time, with implicit or explicit beginning and endpoints (Bonomi 1997; Depaetere 1995; Smith 1991; see Kempchinsky and Slabakova 2005 for an updated theoretical overview). This is seen in (1) below:

(1) A Maria comiu o sorvete ontem.
     The Maria eat-3PSG-PRET the ice cream yesterday
     'Maria ate the ice cream yesterday.'

Imperfect morphology in Portuguese encodes a [- perfective] aspectual feature, typically corresponding to a habitual, progressive or characterizing reading (Bonomi 1997). In contrast to the preterit, events encoded as [- perfective] are not delimited within an assumed timeframe. They are viewed as unbounded in time, and focus on the internal structure of the event without specifying the inchoation or termination of the event (Depaetere 1995). An example is given in (2) below.

(2) Durante a sua meninice, a Maria comia muito sorvete.
     During the her childhood, the Maria eat-3PSG-IMP much ice cream
     'During her childhood, Maria ate a lot of ice cream.'

As seen in examples (1) and (2) above, perfectivity is determined by the aspectual environment of the context. As such, any verbal predicate, notwithstanding its lexical aspect (its *Aktionsart* value), can encode either [+ perfective] or [- perfective] aspect depending on the discursive situation.

The simple morphological past of English is able to convey both habitual and episodic readings, as seen by examining the English translations of (1) and (2) above. English must resort to the gerund to yield a progressive reading. This is a possible source of confusion for English learners of Portuguese. That is, the preterit in Portuguese supports only one of the interpretations of the simple past of English (episodic), while the imperfect supports two interpretations (habitual and progressive) (cf. Montrul and Slabakova 2002, 2003).[2]

Under standard assumptions, grammatical aspect constitutes its own functional projection, that being an outer AspP projection, located between little *v*P and TP (e.g. Giorgi and Pianesi 1997; Schmitt 1996). While both English and Portuguese project higher AspP and verbs obligatorily move there (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997), the difference in available features of this functional category (i.e., English verbs lexically default as [+ perfective]) constitutes the parametric difference under investigation. Since Portuguese instantiates both [+ perfective] and [- perfective] features and checks these against preterit and imperfect morphology, English learners of Portuguese have to acquire the [- perfective] feature absent from their L1 and map aspectual features to their associated overt morpho-phonological forms to converge on a grammar that is target-like.

2.1 A Related Semantic Entailment

Lenci and Bertinetto (2000) and Menéndez-Benito (2001, 2002) have observed that the Preterit and Imperfect contrast is not neutralized in adverbially quantified sentences in Romance languages (as predicted by Bonomi 1997) since these forms are not interchangeable in context with, for example, expectative phrases (*sempre que*) as well as with generic adverbials (*normalmente, a menudo*) and durational phrases (*durante cuatro semenas*) such as in (3) and (4).

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[2] This confusion can surface since it is the imperfect in Portuguese that supports two types of readings (habitual and progressive) and this is precisely the form that is missing in English. Conversely, the Portuguese form most closely associated with the simple past of English, the preterit, is the form that supports only one type of reading, unlike its apparent English counterpart.

(3) Sempre que eu fui à universidade, estudei na biblioteca.
     Always that I go-1PSG-PRET to the university, *pro* study-1PSG-PRET in the library
     "Whenever I went to the university, I ended up studying in the library."

(4) Sempre que eu ia à universidade, estudava na biblioteca.
     Always that I go-1PSG-IMP to the university, *pro* study-1PSG-IMP in the library
     "Every time I went to the university, I studied at the library."

That is, in sentences with adverbial quantification like (3) and (4) the perfective is only felicitous, and in fact expected, in accord with a highly-restricted subset of contexts that clearly denote an accidental generalization. Conversely, the adverbially quantified imperfective sentences are the expected default, able to exist without a specific context and denote a non-accidental characterizing reading.

Related to this is the fact that only perfective sentences with adverbial quantifiers block the kind-referring reading of the subject DP (Menéndez-Benito 2002), which is otherwise available as a choice with definite DPs in Portuguese along with a group-denoting reading, as in (5) and (6).

(5) Sempre que os nômades tinham fome, caçavam lebres.
     Always that the men have-3PPL-IMP hunger, *pro* hunt-3PPL-IMP hares
     "Whenever the nomads were hungry, they would hunt hares."

(6) Sempre que os nômades tiveram fome, caçaram lebres.
     Always that the men have-3PPL-PRET hunger, *pro* hunt-3PPL-PRET hares
     "Whenever the nomads were hungry, they wound up hunting hares."

Whereas imperfective adverbially quantified sentences, as in (5), retain both types of subject DP reading, only a group-denoting reading is available for similar perfective sentences, as in (6). As a result, sentence (5) can indicate the actions of a contextually determined group of specific nomads or nomads in general whereas sentences like (6) can only refer to a particular group of nomads. Furthermore, only the imperfective can support the truth of counterfactuals; therefore, (6) cannot support either (7) or (8). However, the possible group-denoting interpretation of (5) supports the counterfactual in (7) whereas the available alternative kind-reading supports the counterfactual in (8).

(7) Se os nômades tivessem tido fome durante aquele tempo, teriam caçado lebres.
     If the nomads have-3PPL-SUB had hunger during that time, *pro* have-3PPL-COND hunted hares.
     "If the nomads had been hungry during that time, they would have hunted hares."

(8) Se você fosse nômade e tivesse tido fome, você teria caçado lebres.
     If you be-3PSG-SUB a nomad and have-3PSG-SUB had hunger, you have-3PSG-COND hunted hares.
     "If you were a nomad and you had been hungry, you would have hunted hares."

Menéndez-Benito suggests that the unavailability of the kind-denoting reading in adverbially quantified perfective sentences is due to the [±accidental] distinction that it obtains with adverbial quantification. In other words, the blocking of the kind-denoting reading follows from the accidental nature of these types of sentences since 'in all the instances hungry, x hunted hares' is predictable of a regular individual or group of individuals, but not of an entire kind. The suggestion is that this accidental/non-accidental distinction might be explained if, like NPs, VPs are seen as being able to denote either kind or specific sets of events. If so, the same VP could denote a kind or a set, and in Romance languages this distinction is grammatical, mediated by the alternation of [± perfective] morphology. If tenable, knowledge of this semantic entailment need not be learned specifically, as it is unclear how such subtleties could be learned anyway, but rather obtained from the acquisition of [± perfective] features.

3. The Study

In this section, we describe the design and methodology which employ two tasks to test for the semantic entailments discussed above. Both tasks are sentence conjunction judgment tasks. The first examines L2 knowledge of the [± accidental] interpretative nuances in preterit and imperfect sentences with adverbial quantification. The second tests for the availability of kind- or group-denoting readings of subject DPs in these same sentence types. In both tests, both target items and distracters were used and were randomized. Participants were provided with instructions and an example at the start of each test.

3.1 Participants

We report data from 17 English advanced learners of L2 Portuguese. At the time of data collection, these students were studying Portuguese in Salvador, Brazil. The participants were chosen for the study if they tested at an advanced level of Portuguese. The non-native Portuguese level was assessed via a compilation of grammar, vocabulary and writing tasks harmonized with an oral interview conducted by native Brazilian Portuguese language instructors[3]. As a point of comparison, we report data from a control group of native Brazilian Portuguese speakers (n=19).

3.2 Task 1: Knowledge of the Accidental/Non-accidental Distinction

The first test was a sentence-conjunction judgment test (Montrul and Slabakova 2003), which asked the participants to rate the appropriateness of a given sentence (shown below italicized and in bold) as it related to the context with which it was provided. The scale ranged from -2 to 2. They were instructed that -2 represented absolute knowledge that a sentence is semantically odd, -1 represented less absoluteness, but the fact that they were pretty sure, 0 represented that they did not know, 1 represented they were almost positive that the sentence was semantically felicitous and 2 was used to indicate absolute knowledge. There were three types of sentences, with eight of each type, as shown in (9) below.

(9) a. <u>Non-accidental generality with imperfect—felicitous</u>
O professor Oliveira era o melhor na universidade. Todos os estudantes queriam estar nos cursos dele. Por isso, era muito difícil poder se matricular nas aulas dele. Felizmente, durante meus anos universitários eu cursei três classes dele.
"Professor Oliveira was the best at the university. All the students wanted to be in his classes. Because of this, it was very difficult to enroll in them. Happily, during my years at the university I was able to take three of his classes."

Sempre que ia a classe do Prof. Oliveira, eu aprendia muito.
"Every time I took-1PSG-IMP a class from Professor Oliveira, I learned-1PSG-IMP a lot."

b. <u>Accidental generality with preterit—felicitous</u>
Eu gosto muito de ver filmes com os meus amigos. No mês passado eu não tinha que trabalhar. Queria fazer muitas coisas durante essa temporada livre. Mais do que nada queria ver muitos filmes com os meus amigos. Eu suponho ter má sorte, pois, eu não vi nenhum filme durante todo aquele tempo.
"I really like to go to the movies with my friends. During the past month I didn't have to work. I wanted to do a lot of things during this free time. More than anything I wanted to see movies with my friends. I suppose I have bad luck, since I didn't see even one movie during that time."

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[3] Testing was administered by the study abroad program, and for privacy reasons the researchers had no access to raw placement test data, only the levels into which the participants were placed and the tests themselves.

Meus amigos e eu planejamos muitas vezes ir ao cinema mais sempre que chegou o momento de ir ao cinema os amigos disseram não poder.
"My friends and I planned-1PSG-PRET many times to go to the movies but every time the moment arrived-3PSG-PRET, my friends ended up saying-3PPL-PRET they couldn't go."

c.   <u>Non-accidental generality with preterit—infelicitous</u>
Quando eu era menino eu morava em Salvador na Bahia. Lá, eu tinha muitos amigos e juntos íamos a praia com freqüência. Quando tinha 13 anos a minha família decidiu ir ao Canadá, onde o meu pai conseguiu um bom trabalho. Antes de ir a universidade, eu retornava todos os verões a Salvador para passar tempo com os amigos. Como sempre, nós passávamos muito tempo na praia, pois, todos nós gostávamos de nadar.
"When I was a child I lived in Salvador, in Bahia. There I had many friends and together we often went to the beach. When I was 13 my family decided to go to Canada, where my father found a good job. Before attending university, I went to Salvador every summer to spend time with my friends. Like always, we spent a lot of time at the beach, since we all liked to swim."

Durante a adolescência, sempre que fui a Salvador durante o verão, eu e os meus amigos fomos a praia.
"During my adolescence, every time I went-1PSG-PRET to Salvador during the summer, my friends and I ended up going-1PSG-PRET to the beach."

Contexts such as (9a) represent a habitual or non-accidental repeated action in the past, and as such the imperfect should be the only felicitous option. These sentences should be highly accepted by natives and L2 learners who perform native-like. Contexts like that in (9b) show an accidental generality in the past, and therefore the use of the preterit should be felicitous. Again, a high rate of acceptance by natives and advanced learners is expected. Contexts exemplified in (9c) illustrate a habitual or non-accidental generality in the past, a context in which the use of the preterit should be infelicitous. It is expected that natives and L2 learners reject these types of sentences. There were 8 sentences of each type.

3.3 Task 2: Knowledge of Kind-/Group-Denoting Readings of Subject DPs

Using the same scale from task 1, this sentence-conjunction judgment test examines L2 knowledge of restrictions on available subject DP readings in perfective/imperfective sentences with adverbial quantification. As we discussed, in these contexts adverbially quantified perfective sentences lose the otherwise available kind-denoting reading of the subject DP, retaining only the group-denoting reading (Menéndez-Benito 2001, 2002).

(10) a.   <u>Kind-denoting reading with the preterit—infelicitous</u>
Nunca acreditei que todas as mulheres brasileiras fossem loucas. Meu pai sempre me contava os casos sobre as namoradas que tinha quando ele era jovem. Mais eu nunca acreditava. Agora que tenho 30 anos e todos me contam exatamente os mesmos casos, eu sei que a mulher brasileira é louca mesmo.
"I never believed that all Brazilian women were crazy. My father always told me about the girlfriends he had when he was young. But I still never believed him. Now I'm 30 and everyone tells me the exact same stories, I know that the Brazilian woman is crazy."

Por exemplo, sempre que as brasileiras pensaram que o namorado as enganavam, os perseguiram.
"For example, every time Brazilian women thought-3PPL-IMP that their boyfriend was cheating-3PSG-IMP on them, they followed-3PPL-IMP him."

b. <u>Group-denoting reading with the preterit—felicitous</u>

Soldados são pessoas que geralmente merecem respeito. Entretanto, alguns não valem nada. Por exemplo, quando eu era menina, havia um grupo de cinco soldados que moravam na minha cidade que eram terríveis, ou seja, pessoas muito má. Todos nós evitávamos encontrá-los.

"Soldiers are people that generally deserve respect. However, some aren't worth anything. For example, when I was a girl, there was a group of five soldiers that lived in my city who were horrible, that is, very bad people. We all avoided them."

Sempre que os soldados toparam com a gente, nos roubaram.
"Whenever the soldiers ran into-3PPL-PRET us, they ended up robbing-3PPL-PRET us."

c. <u>Kind-denoting reading with the imperfect—felicitous</u>

Os homens brasileiros são fortes, entretanto, podem ser muito mimados por suas mães. A situação é muito melhor hoje em dia, pois, durante os tempos dos meus pais, o homem brasileiro só saia da casa para casar ou para morrer. As mães continuavam fazendo tudo para eles. Agora, bendito seja Deus, as coisas não são mais assim.

"Brazilian men are strong; however, they can be very spoiled by their mothers. The situation is better today, but during my father's time, the Brazilian man only left the house to marry or die. The mothers would continue doing everything for them. Now, thank God, things aren't like that anymore."

Por exemplo, sempre que os homens brasileiros não casados moravam com as suas mães, elas preparavam todas as comidas para eles.
"For example, whenever unmarried Brazilian men lived-3PPL-IMP with their mothers, the mothers cooked-3PPL-IMP all the meals for them."

d. <u>Group-denoting reading with the imperfect—felicitous</u>

Comparados com meninas, os meninos em geral são mais destrutivos. Mas os meninos da minha irmã eram as piores das crianças. Eles arruinavam tudo o que tocavam, era incrível. Não existia coisa que eles não tivessem destruído. Por isso, não queria que viessem a minha casa, mas era inevitável porque são meus sobrinhos. Por isso, quando iam vir, eu passava horas e horas escondendo as coisas frágeis.

"Compared with girls, boys are generally more destructive. But my sister's boys are the worst of children. They ruined everything they touched, it was incredible. There was nothing they hadn't destroyed. Due to this, I didn't want them to come to my house, but it was inevitable because they were my nephews. Therefore, whenever they would come, I would spend hours hiding the fragile things."

Ainda assim, sempre que os meninos encontravam as coisas escondidas, as quebravam por usá-las sem motivo.
"Even so, every time the kids found-3PPL-IMP the hidden things, they broke-3PPL-IMP them by using them carelessly."

There were four context types in this task: a kind-denoting reading with the preterit (10a), a group-denoting reading with the preterit (10b), a kind-denoting reading with the imperfect (10c) and a group-denoting reading with the imperfect (10d). The only infelicitous context should be a kind-denoting reading with the preterit. It is therefore expected that natives and native-like L2 learners should reject these sentences and rate all other contexts favorably. There were 5 sentences of each type.

4. Results

This section is divided into two parts, which correspond to the two empirical tests. Each of these sections is subdivided into two components: (i) a descriptive analysis of the results and (ii) a quantitative statistical analysis of the group data, which compares the mean score performance the L2 learners against the native speaker control. We employ two-sample t-tests as a measure of inferential statistics. As is standard, the alpha was set at (0.05) for a 95% confidence level. The statistics were conducted using the mean number correct for each group. An answer was deemed correct if it was in accord with the theoretical analysis presented above, which was confirmed by the native control.

4.1 Task 1
4.1.1 Descriptive Analysis

This task looked to test for knowledge of the [± accidental] distinction in adverbially quantified sentences with the preterit and imperfect. As discussed above, adverbially quantified sentences with the imperfect correspond to non-accidental generalizations while adverbially quantified sentences with the preterit correspond to accidental generalizations. Figure 1 below shows that average rating of each group for each context/sentence pair.

Figure 1.0: Results from Task 1

	-Acc w/Imp	+Acc w/Pret	-Acc w/Pret
NS	1.82	1.82	-1.79
Adv L2	1.74	1.79	-1.5
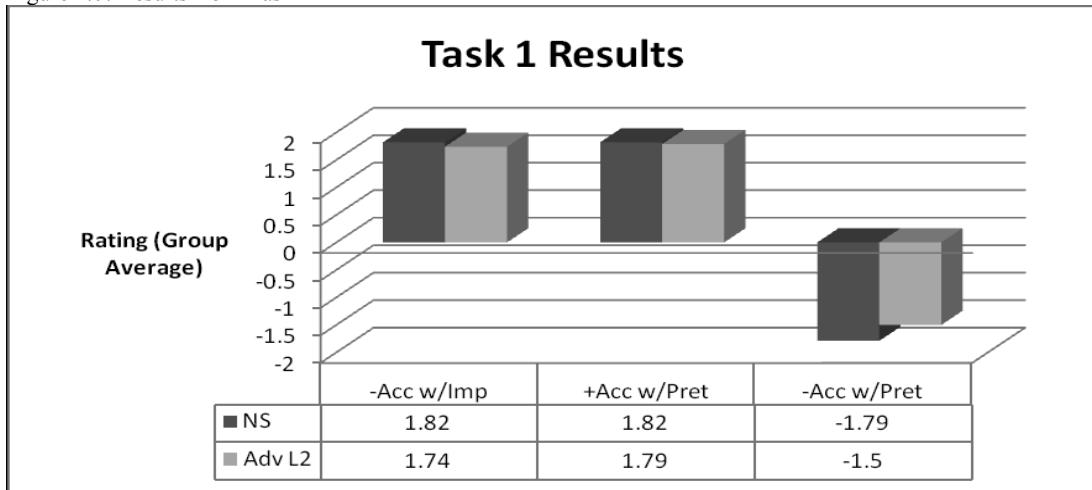
-Acc Gen. = [-accidental] generalizations; Episodic = episodic events; +Acc w/Adv = [+accidental] generalizations with adverbial quantifiers of universal force; -Acc w/Adv = [-accidental] generalizations with adverbial quantifiers of universal force

From figure 1, it can be seen that both groups reliably accept adverbially quantified imperfect sentences after [- accidental] contexts as well as adverbially quantified preterit sentences after [+ accidental] contexts, rating both somewhere between 1 (almost positive knowledge that the sentence was semantically felicitous) and 2 (absolute knowledge), much closer to 2. Additionally, both groups reliably rejected adverbially quantified preterit sentences after [- accidental] contexts, rating them between -1 (almost positive knowledge that the sentence was semantically infelicitous) and -2 (absolute knowledge).

4.1.2 Statistical Analysis

Two-sample t-tests were used to quantify the group data. Statistical analysis revealed no significant differences in native vs. non-native group performance in the first two contexts, adverbially quantified imperfect sentences with [- accidental] contexts and adverbially quantified preterit

sentences with [+ accidental] contexts. However, there was a statistically significant difference seen in rating adverbially quantified preterit sentences with [+ accidental] contexts. All of this is seen in table 1 below.
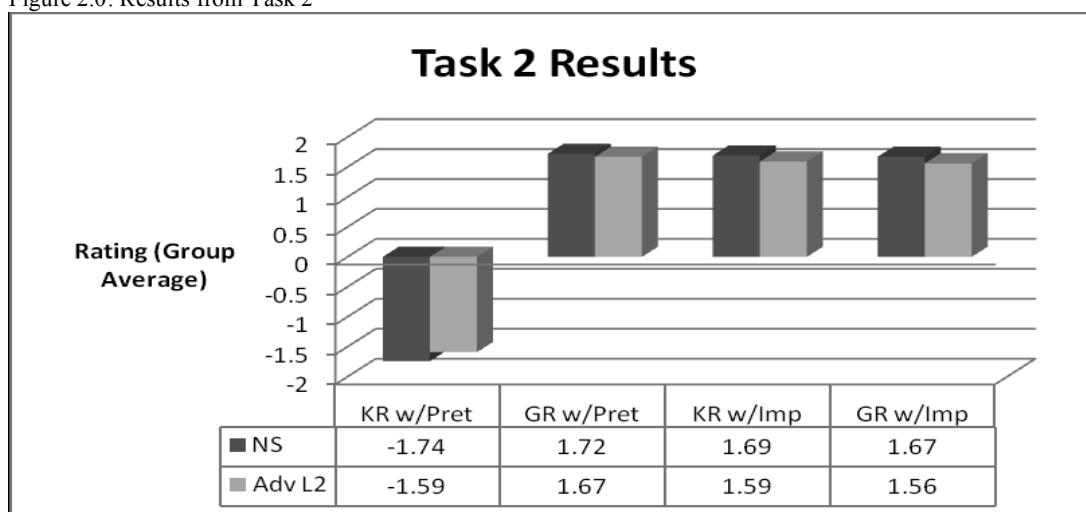
Table 1. Statistical Results from Task 1

	-Acc w/Imp			+Acc w/Pret			-Acc w/Pret		
	t (f)	*p*	*df*	*t (f)*	*p*	*df*	*t (f)*	*p*	*df*
NS v. L2	1.17	.257	20	0.61	.548	34	3.59	.001	28

4.2 Task 2
4.2.1 Descriptive Analysis

As can be seen in figure 2 below, L2 learners perform almost exactly like native speakers in task 2, which tests for the availability of kind- or group-denoting interpretations of subject DPs with the preterit and imperfect.

Figure 2.0: Results from Task 2

Task 2 Results

Rating (Group Average)	KR w/Pret	GR w/Pret	KR w/Imp	GR w/Imp
NS	-1.74	1.72	1.69	1.67
Adv L2	-1.59	1.67	1.59	1.56

KR w/Pret = kind-reading interpretation with the preterit; GR w/Pret = group-reading interpretation with the preterit; KR w/Imp = kind-reading interpretation with the imperfect; GR w/Imp = group-reading interpretation with the preterit

Figure 2 shows the average group rating of a given sentence in the context indicated. The L2 group performed in a native-like manner, interpreting the sentences in accord with the restrictions observed by Menéndez-Benito (2001, 2002) and discussed above. The statistical analysis reveals where the significant differences lie, if there are any.

4.2.2 Statistical Analysis

Again, two-sample t-tests were used to quantify the group data. Statistical analyses revealed no significant differences in group performance: kind-denoting reading with the preterit, group-denoting reading with the preterit, kind-denoting reading with the imperfect and group-denoting reading with the imperfect. This is shown in table 2 below. This confirms that the L2 learners did not deviate from native-like behavior in rating sentences using the inflected infinitive in the contexts presented.

Table 2. Statistical Results from Task 2

	KR w/Pret			GR w/Pret			KR w/Imp			GR w/Pret		
	t (f)	p	df	t (f)	p	df	t (f)	p	df	t (f)	p	df
NS v. L2	1.85	.074	32	0.67	.508	30	1.43	.164	30	1.32	.196	34

5. Discussion

The statistical results showed that the L2 learner group demonstrated native-like performance in 10 of the 11 areas, only deviating from native-like behavior on test 1 on items testing for acceptance of adverbially quantified sentences in the preterit used in a [- accidental] context. Such overwhelming native-like intuitions suggest underlying native-like competence. However, one must still explain the deviation from native-like behavior for the context noted above. Despite the statistically significant difference, a comparison of the L2 and native speaker groups' average rating of adverbially quantified sentences in a [- accidental] context (L2 = -1.5, NS = -1.79) shows both groups' tendency to reject these sentences. One sees that L2 learners have knowledge that these sentences are incompatible with these contexts, rating them between -1 (almost positive knowledge that the sentence was semantically infelicitous) and -2 (absolute knowledge). Additionally, the L2 group does make a statistically significant differentiation in judging adverbially quantified imperfect and preterit sentences after [- accidental] contexts (paired t-test: t = 28.22, p < 0.001).

In spite of the minor differences, we claim that the L2 group meaningfully differentiates between adverbially quantified preterit and imperfect sentences in [± accidental] contexts. Furthermore, they show knowledge that adverbially quantified preterit sentences can only yield a group-denoting reading of subject DPs, while comparable sentences in the imperfect can yield both group-denoting and kind-denoting interpretations of subject DPs. Crucially, none of this is explicitly taught in the classroom, and is therefore poverty-of-the-stimulus knowledge. If we take Menéndez-Benito's (2002) claim that this [± accidental] distinction is grammaticalized in Romance languages, mediated by the alternation of preterit and imperfect morphology, and therefore comes free with the acquisition of the target syntax (i.e., the acquisition of Portuguese outer AspP and related features), then we have semantic evidence of the acquisition of morphosyntactic features as well as evidence that phrasal semantics is acquirable in adult acquisition. Moreover, since overall, this advanced group demonstrated native-like performance for this distinction which sits at the syntax-semantics interface, the data provide further evidence that this particular interface is not a locus of inevitable L2 non-convergence (see Tsimpli and Sorace 2006 for differences between this interface the syntax-pragmatics interface).

6. Conclusion

Overall, these data strongly support the No Impairment Hypothesis (Duffield and White 1999). In line with other studies that demonstrate acquisition of L2 morphosyntactic features via their relation to semantic properties (e.g. Dekydtspotter and Sprouse 2001; Dekydtspotter et al. 1997; Slabaova and Montrul 2003), we show that English L2 learners have been able to acquire the [- perfective] feature not present in English via their knowledge of associated semantic entailments. Since this L2 knowledge could not possibly be accounted for as superficial surface phenomenon, but must be generated by an underlying grammar that instantiates both [± perfective] features, the data provide evidence *in contra* No Parameter Resetting Hypotheses (Hawkins and Chan 1997; Hawkins and Liszak 2003; but not necessarily Hawkins 2005; Tsimpli and Dimitrakopoulou 2007). Additionally, insofar as the results indicate the acquisition of associated phrasal semantic properties, the 'No Critical Period for Semantics' is supported (Slabakova 2006b). Coupling these conclusions allows us to also claim that syntax-semantics interface-conditioned properties are not destined to inevitable fossilization.

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