

# Acquiring Variation in Future-Time Expression Abroad in Valencia, Spain and Mérida, Mexico

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## 1. Introduction

Research on second language (L2) acquisition of Spanish has, in recent years, experienced a move toward the incorporation and examination of the role of native speaker variation in the acquisition of the L2 and of the development of nativelike variation in the L2 system. Studies in this vein have shifted the focus of analyses away from learner accuracy or errors to one of comparing native and L2 patterns of use of particular structures in terms of frequency of use and the linguistic and social factors that condition that use (e.g., Geeslin, 2000, 2003; Geeslin, García-Amaya, Hasler-Barker, Henriksen, & Killam, 2008, 2012; Geeslin & Fafulas, 2012; Geeslin & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2006; Gudmestad, 2012; Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011; Salgado-Robles, 2011). These studies have emerged on the basis of the idea that an important component of communicative competence in a L2 is the ability to vary one's speech in a nativelike way according to the discourse context and to interlocutor characteristics (Canale & Swain, 1980).

The goal of the present study is to continue this line of research and to advance the body of research on the L2 acquisition of sociolinguistic variation by examining the acquisition of variation in future-time expression. Specifically, we explore the variable use of the morphological future, the periphrastic future, and the present indicative to express future time in the Spanish of two learner groups studying abroad in two locations in the Spanish-speaking world that are expected to have distinct patterns of use of these forms: Valencia, Spain and Mérida, Mexico, as the former is purported to demonstrate greater preference for the morphological future than the latter (e.g., Blas Arroyo, 2008).

## 2. Background

### 2.1. Expression of futurity in Spanish

Spanish possesses several ways of expressing future time. Among the most common are the morphological (i.e., synthetic) future (MF), the periphrastic (i.e., analytic) future (PF), and the present indicative (PI) (e.g., Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011; Silva-Corvalán & Terrell, 1989), as seen in examples (a)-(c) below.

- (a) *Saldré para el aeropuerto mañana.* "I will leave (MF) for the airport tomorrow."
- (b) *Voy a salir para el aeropuerto mañana.* "I am going to leave (PF) for the airport tomorrow."
- (c) *Salgo para el aeropuerto mañana.* "I leave (PI) for the airport tomorrow."

In spoken Spanish, generally speaking, the use of the MF is declining in favor of greater rates of use of the PF and PI. These changes have been documented in diachronic studies of variation in future forms,

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both in Spanish and in other Romance languages (e.g., Aaron, 2006, 2007; Fleischman, 1982; Schwegler, 1990), in variationist studies of Canadian French (e.g., Poplack & Dion, 2009; Poplack & Turpin, 1999) and Brazilian Portuguese (e.g., Poplack & Malvar, 2007) as well as in numerous sociolinguistic studies of several regional varieties of Spanish (e.g., Escobar, 1997, for Spanish in contact with Quechua; Gutiérrez, 1995, for Spanish of central Mexico and the Southwest U.S.; Orozco, 2005, for Northern Colombian Spanish; Orozco, 2006, for Colombian Spanish in the U.S.; Sedano, 1994, for Spanish in Venezuela; Silva-Corvalán, 1994, for Spanish in Los Angeles; and Silva-Corvalán & Terrell, 1989, for Spanish in Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, and Chile).

Nonetheless, in contrast to claims by Orozco (2007) that the PF is the preferred form for future expression in all varieties of Spanish, several studies indicate that Spanish in certain regions of the world maintains a relatively high percentage of use of the MF (e.g., Almeida & Díaz, 1998, and Díaz-Peralta & Almeida, 2000, for Spanish in Las Palmas de Gran Canarias; Blas Arroyo, 2008, for Spanish in the Valencian Community of Spain). Of relevance to the current study, Blas Arroyo (2008) examined the frequency of use of MF versus PF forms in future-time contexts in a corpus of spoken Spanish from the province of Castellón, Spain. Castellón together with the provinces of Alicante and Valencia form the larger autonomous community of Valencia; notably, the Spanish of this region has endured long-term contact with Valencian, a variety of Catalan that exhibits structural differences from Spanish in the expression of future time. Catalan demonstrates an overwhelming preference for the MF to refer to future-time events rather than a PF form (Gavarró & Laca, 2002), largely to avoid confusion with another construction: the canonical construction of the preterit, or simple past, for which the verb of movement *anar* (analogous to *ir* in Spanish) is used with an infinitive. For example,

1. *Ahir a la vesperada vaig arribar molt tard a la reunió* (Catalan)

Yesterday afternoon *I was* very late for the meeting.

2. *Ayer por la tarde llegué tarde a la reunión* (Spanish)

Yesterday afternoon *I was* very late for the meeting. (Blas Arroyo, 2008, p. 113)

Blas Arroyo found that for future-time contexts represented by either MF or PF in Castellón spoken Spanish, MF was used in 55.5% of cases, whereas PF was used in the other 44.5% of cases (as compared, for example, to Orozco's, 2005, rates of 18.5% MF to 45.9% PF for Northern Colombian Spanish). Blas Arroyo conjectures that the centuries-long contact with Valencian may be responsible for the maintenance of the MF as a viable option for future-time expression. Due to its noncanonical patterning in the use of future forms, this region of Spain presents an interesting setting for the examination of acquisition of regionally-conditioned sociolinguistic norms by learners who study abroad, as compared to the Spanish of Mérida, Mexico, which, although not represented in the literature on future expression, is hypothesized to pattern with other parts of Mexico in following the more generalized pattern of favoring PF over MF, such as Gutiérrez' (1995) reporting of over 70% PF use in Morelia (e.g., Gutiérrez, 1995; Moreno de Alba, 1970).

Several of the previously cited studies have also explored the linguistic factors that condition the use of one future form over another. The factors explored include temporal distance (i.e., the distance between speech time and event time), modal value (i.e., affirmative, negative, interrogative, exclamatory sentences), subject person/number as well as human versus nonhuman subject status, clause type, and the presence of a temporal adverbial. Relevant for the current study are the consistent findings, with regard to temporal distance, that PF is overwhelmingly preferred in immediate contexts, whereas MF is used more often in intermediate and, especially, distant contexts (Blas Arroyo, 2008; Orozco, 2005; Sedano, 1994, 2006) and that the presence of a future temporal adverbial favors the use of MF over PF (Blas Arroyo, 2008; Orozco, 2005). Gudmestad and Geeslin (2011), which will be discussed in more detail in the next section, also found that clause type was significant in future expression in native Spanish, with the PF favored in subordinate clauses, which also confirms a similar finding in Blas Arroyo (2008).

## 2.2. Research on L2 future expression

Within the larger research agenda of the investigation of L2 temporal reference, examination of the development of future-time expression is decidedly less represented than research on past-time reference (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). Nonetheless, work in the past decade has begun to explore the emergence, development, and selection of future forms in several languages. Bardovi-Harlig (2002, 2004, 2005) has explored the emergence and development of future-time expression in L2 English by learners of various L1 backgrounds, focusing on such topics as emergence of verbal forms, the use of lexical futures, and the role of formulaic expressions in the development of future expression. Moses (2002) investigated similar questions of emergence in the L2 French of native English speakers, as he explored the sequence of acquisition of present-for-future, PF, and MF forms as well as the use of temporal adverbials. Also looking at French, Nadasdi, Mougeon, and Rehner (2003) examined the use of verbal morphology in the interlanguage of immersion students learning French in Canada.

Until quite recently, research on future expression in L2 Spanish had been limited to investigations of the incidental acquisition of the morphological future through reading (Lee, 2002; Rossomondo, 2007) or to different interpretations of future morphology (i.e., [epistemic] probability or future temporality; Bruhn de Garavito & Valenzuela, 2007). For example, Bruhn de Garavito and Valenzuela (2007) found that learners were able to distinguish between possible and impossible interpretations of morphological future forms in spite of complex input for future expression. Nonetheless, more recently, Gudmestad and Geeslin (2011) offered an examination of the acquisition of future in Spanish from a different perspective. These authors elicited spoken interview data from 16 native speakers (NSs) of Spanish from numerous Spanish-speaking countries and 16 advanced nonnative speakers (NNSs), all of whom had spent at least three months in a Spanish-speaking country ( $M = 18.1$  months abroad), and performed a function-form analysis by identifying all contexts of future time and observing the forms used to express such temporal reference. The authors identified seven linguistic factors shown to be significant in the use of future verbal morphology in previous research on NS variation in future expression, against which they analyzed both native and advanced nonnative production of futurity. These seven factors included (a) presence/absence of a temporal adverbial, (b) temporal distance, (c) clause type, (d) (un)certainly of the occurrence of the event, (e) contingency (on a *si* “if” clause), (f) negation, and (g) grammatical person/number. In terms of form selection, they found that, for both the NS and the NNS groups, PF, MF, and PI together constituted the three most common forms used to refer to future time. The PF was also the most common form used by both groups: 75.9% of tokens in NNS speech and 59.0% of tokens in NS speech. The NNSs used PI second most: 12.5% of the time, followed by 8.8% MF. The NSs, on the other hand, used MF 16.5% of the time, followed by the PI in 9.0% of cases. The analysis also revealed that the factors presence of an adverbial, temporal distance, and clause type were significant in conditioning the use of future forms for both the NS and NNS groups (and were the most significant factors for the NS group), whereas the factors (un)certainly of event and grammatical person/number were significant for the NS group only. For NNSs, the PF was favored in contexts from which a temporal adverbial was absent, in immediate and same day contexts, and in subordinate clauses. For NSs, the PF was also favored in these contexts as well as in contexts of certainty and with first person singular forms. Interesting, too, was the patterning with the use of the PI, which was strongly disfavored by both NS and NNS groups in subordinate clauses and was used almost categorically by both groups only in the presence of a temporal adverbial. The present study builds from these previous studies, utilizing in its design this knowledge of the most frequently occurring future forms and the most significant factors that condition their use, to explore development of future-time expression toward regional norms by Spanish L2 learners studying abroad in immersion settings in two distinct locations.

## 2.3. Research on L2 variation

The approach adopted in the present study to measure the acquisition of a variable structure in L2 Spanish has gained popularity in recent years. This approach merges sociolinguistic and second language acquisition methods to examine the similarities and differences between variation exhibited

in first language (L1) and L2 systems. Rather than focusing on vertical (Adamson & Regan, 1991) or Type I (Rehner, 2002) variation, which is variation found only in nonnative varieties and is characterized as competition between a targetlike and a nontargetlike form, the present study follows a more recent body of research that examines horizontal (Adamson & Regan, 1991) or Type II (Rehner, 2002) variation, or variation between two forms that exist and vary in native speech. Studies of this type have included investigations of copula choice (Geeslin, 2000, 2003; Geeslin & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2006), mood selection (Gudmestad, 2012), progressive aspect (Geeslin & Fafulas, 2012), and future expression (Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011). Additionally, a few studies on the acquisition of variable structures have examined learners' abilities to acquire local/regional norms of variable structure use while studying Spanish in a study abroad context. These studies have examined topics such as clitic pronoun use (Geeslin et al., 2008), perfective past time reference (Geeslin et al., 2012), and the present perfect versus preterit distinction (Geeslin, Fafulas, & Kanwit, in press).

We know of only two studies to date that have compared the acquisition of a variable structure in Spanish in two study abroad locations. These include Salgado-Robles's (2011) examination of object pronoun use by learners studying in Valladolid and Seville, Spain as well as the previously cited investigation of the present perfect versus preterit distinction (Geeslin et al., in press) that included learners studying abroad in Valencia, Spain and San Luis Potosí, Mexico. The current study follows these studies by examining the acquisition of variation in future-time expression by learners in two study abroad locations.

### 3. Present study

The present study explores the frequency of selection and the linguistic factors conditioning the selection of the MF, PF, and PI forms in the expression of future time in Spanish by two groups of learners studying abroad in Valencia, Spain and Mérida, Mexico, and two groups of native Spanish speakers, one from each of the study abroad locations. The current study is guided by the following research questions:

1. With what frequency do L2 learners of Spanish select the PF, the MF, and the PI to refer to future-time contexts before and after participation in 7-week immersion programs in Valencia, Spain and Mérida, Mexico?
2. What linguistic variables predict the selection of the PF for learners at each test time?
3. How do the learners in Mérida and Valencia differ in terms of frequencies of selection and linguistic predictors?
4. How do the learners in each study abroad site compare with NSs of their respective regions with respect to frequencies of selection and linguistic predictors?

## 4. Method

### 4.1. Participants

The participants for the present study are comprised of four groups: two learner groups and two NS groups. The first group consisted of 29 high school learners of Spanish participating in a 7-week immersion program in Valencia, the capital city of the autonomous community of Valencia, Spain during the summer of 2012. This group contained 20 females and 9 males, all of whom had recently finished either their second or third year of high school. A similar group of 17 high school students (11 females and 6 males) selected for an identical 7-week immersion program in Mérida, Mexico comprised the second group of learners. The two learner groups had very similar profiles as, in order to be accepted into these two highly competitive statewide programs, they had to have completed at least two years of high school Spanish, to have passed a written entrance exam in Spanish, and to have demonstrated outstanding high school achievement in Spanish, such that only 47% of the those that took the entrance exam were accepted and enrolled in the programs that year. Thus, although proficiency level of Spanish varied within each group, all of the learners possessed a level of Spanish

within what would be considered an intermediate to high-intermediate range.<sup>1</sup> The final two groups of participants are comprised of NSs from each of the study abroad locations. The third group of participants was comprised of 10 NSs from Valencia, Spain, ranging in age from 24 to 59 ( $M = 32.6$  years). All of these participants were raised in the province of Valencia, Spain and all reported regular exposure to the Valencian language; half considered themselves Valencian dominant, whereas the other half considered themselves Spanish dominant (as determined by a background questionnaire, described in the next section). Similar to our learner groups, this group included more females than males, as two of the Valencian participants were male and eight were female. The final group of participants consisted of 13 NS from Mérida, Mexico who were raised in the state of Yucatán. These participants ranged in age from 19 to 51 ( $M = 24.2$  years). The group was comprised of nine females and four males; three were NSs of Spanish and Maya, whereas the remaining 10 were NSs of Spanish only. Further information about the role of additional languages can be seen in the next section.

#### 4.2. Tasks

All participants completed a 20-item written contextualized questionnaire that was modeled after Gudmestad and Geeslin (2012) and was designed to test the selection of MF, PF, or PI in future-time contexts.<sup>2</sup> The instructions directed the participants to read a story containing a series of interrelated events, and, from a choice of three sentences that were identical except for the form of the verb (i.e., PF, MF, and PI), to mark the sentence that they preferred. An example from the written contextualized questionnaire follows.

*Tu amigo Marcos te ve en el supermercado. Está haciendo preparativos para tener un evento en su casa. Él te dice:*

- a. *Voy a dar una fiesta mañana.*
- b. *Daré una fiesta mañana*
- c. *Doy una fiesta mañana.*

Differing slightly from the instrument employed in Gudmestad and Geeslin (2012), the entire instrument used in the current study, including the instructions, was presented to participants in Spanish as we did not want participants to alternate between the languages during the task and also due to the inclusion of non-English-speaking Spanish NSs in the present study as well as the no-English policy of the study abroad program in which the learners were participating. The test items were constructed to systematically manipulate the linguistic variables of (a) the presence of a temporal adverbial (i.e., present or absent), (b) temporal distance (i.e., immediate, today, within a week, less than a month, or more than a year), and (c) clause type (i.e., main or subordinate). These three linguistic factors were selected because they were the only significant predictors of learner future expression in Gudmestad and Geeslin (2011) and the three most significant predictors of the NS future form expression in the same study. These variables are described in more detail in the next section. Within the contexts and test items, several factors were controlled: Each test item occurred in the first personal singular form and without negation, all temporal adverbials included were specific, and no context included verbs in the MF or PF.

Within our pretest, posttest design, both learner groups completed this task the day after arriving at their study abroad location and again 2-3 days before departing from their study abroad site to return

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<sup>1</sup> Given that the learner participants came from a variety of high schools and language learning backgrounds, it was impossible to control for previous exposure to specific dialects of Spanish.

<sup>2</sup> Although previous instruction in future forms was not controlled for, it is likely (given their intermediate to intermediate-high level) that all learner participants had previously received instruction on various ways to express future time. Likewise, the researchers did not interfere with the regular lesson plans of the study abroad program. Specific instruction on future expression was not included as part of the syllabus in the grammar or conversation courses that the students took while abroad. Regardless, as opposed to accuracy in form production, this study focuses on the relative frequency of form selection and the linguistic constraints that influence it—sociolinguistic factors that are rarely, if ever, taught in intermediate-level language courses.

home. Roughly 6 weeks elapsed between these two administrations of the test. The NS groups completed the task once.

Additionally, to control for, among other things, Valencian vs. Spanish dominance for NSs from Valencia, and influence from Maya, for NSs from Mérida, both NS groups completed a background questionnaire that inquired about their age, gender, native language, place of birth, length of time in current city, native languages of parents, languages spoken in childhood home, and language considered dominant. Due to that fact that, in our NS regression analyses, the Valencia NS model did not select language dominance as a significant factor, and, similarly the Mérida NS model did not select knowledge of Maya, we will not explore this factor further in the current paper.

### 4.3. Analysis

The dependent variable of the present study is the selection of the verb form in a future context from three possibilities: PF, MF, or PI. The study investigates the selection of these forms in terms of three independent variables: (a) the presence/absence of a temporal adverbial, (b) the temporal distance of the event being referenced, and (c) the clause type. The first independent variable is binary: Either the test item contained a temporal adverbial (e.g., *ahora mismo*, *mañana*) or such an indicator was absent. The second variable, temporal distance, had five possible variants: immediately, today (but not immediately), less than a week away (but after today), more than a week away (but less than a month away), and more than a year away. The third variable—clause type—was operationalized into two possibilities: main clause or subordinate clause contexts.

Two separate analyses were conducted on the data. First, a frequency analysis was performed to determine the overall frequency of selection of each of the forms in question. Second, a binomial regression was conducted to determine the significant predictors of one variant over another.

The learners' results for Time 1 and Time 2 were compared so as to observe any change in the patterns of selection of these verbal forms or in the statistical weight of the linguistic factors in the selection of forms. Additionally, each learner group was compared to its corresponding local NS group to examine whether changes observed in the learner patterns followed and/or approached NS patterns of selection.

## 5. Results

First, we provide the overall distribution of selection of PF, MF, and PI forms by both NSs and learners (Times 1 and 2) from both regions. Next, we show results for each group obtained from regression analyses conducted with the statistical program GoldVarb X (Sankoff, Tagliamonte, & Smith, 2005), which evaluates how the independent (i.e., linguistic/extralinguistic) variables interact with the dependent variable. The regression analysis used in this program measures the probabilistic weight of each independent variable in relation to the application value (in this case: the PF). A weight above .50 indicates that the particular factor in question favors the selected application value, whereas a weight below .50 indicates a disfavoring effect.

### 5.1. Frequency and predictors of selection of future expression in Valencia and Mérida

We begin our analysis by showing the overall distribution of the selection of PF, MF, and PI forms in the written contextualized questionnaire for each participant group in our study: NSs from Mérida, NSs from Valencia, and learners studying in these regions over a 7-week period. For the learner group, we present results from the contextualized questionnaire at the beginning and end of their stay abroad (i.e., Times 1 and 2). Tables 1 and 2 include the token count and the percentage of the total tokens for the three response options: a verb form in the PF, the MF, or the PI. The results for learners and NSs from Mérida are summarized in Table 1 and the results for Valencia are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 1.** Distribution of future forms for learners and NSs in Mérida, Mexico

Mérida	Learners Time 1		Learners Time 2		NS	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Periph. Fut.	134	39.4	209	61.5	150	57.7
Morph. Fut.	164	48.2	100	29.4	98	37.7
Pres. Indic.	42	12.4	31	9.1	12	4.6
Total	340	100	340	100	260	100

**Table 2.** Distribution of future forms for learners and NSs in Valencia, Spain

Valencia	Learners Time 1		Learners Time 2		NS	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Periph. Fut.	248	42.8	312	53.8	90	45.5
Morph. Fut.	290	50.0	226	39.0	94	47.5
Pres. Indic.	42	7.2	42	7.2	14	7.1
Total	580	100	580	100	198	100

Tables 1 and 2 indicate differences between the NSs of Mérida and Valencia in the distribution of the selection of future forms, in addition to change from Time 1 to Time 2 by the learners studying in these speech communities. The NSs from Mérida selected the PF at a rate of 57.7%, making it by far the most frequent form for this group. The NSs from Valencia, in contrast, selected the PF only 45.5% of the time, and, instead, showed a slight preference for the MF, which they selected in 47.5% of cases. A chi-square tabulation reveals, in fact, that the Mérida NS group selected the PF significantly more than the Valencia group,  $\chi^2(1, N = 458) = 6.75, p = .009$ . This confirms previous studies that have reported MF preference within other provinces of the Valencian Community (e.g., Blas Arroyo, 2008).

With respect to the distribution of learner future selection, learners residing in both regions increased their overall selection of the PF from Time 1 to Time 2, which means that both groups moved in the direction of the NS target of their regions, as both learner groups selected the PF less than the local NSs at Time 1. It is worth noting that, although for both groups the increases are toward the NS target, for the learners in Mérida the increase in PF selection from Time 1 to 2 aligns them rather closely with NS selection rates from Mérida (moving from 39% PF form selection to about 62%, as compared to the NSs' 58%), whereas the Valencia learners' increase in PF selection (to approximately 54% PF selection at Time 2) moves them from an initial rate of PF selection that is just slightly below the target to a rate that surpasses the Valencian NS 46% PF selection. Chi-square tabulations reveal that both groups select the PF significantly more at Time 2 than they did at Time 1,  $\chi^2(1, N = 680) = 33.1, p < .001$  for the Mérida learners and  $\chi^2(1, N = 1160) = 14.1, p < .001$  for the Valencia learners. Furthermore, in comparing across groups, we see that learner selection of the MF in Valencia was not significantly different from that of the Mérida learners at Time 1,  $\chi^2(1, N = 920) = .267, p = .605$ , but that differences did emerge at Time 2, with the Valencia learners selecting significantly more MF than the Mérida learners at that time,  $\chi^2(1, N = 920) = 8.55, p = .003$ . It is also worth noting that the Mérida learners moved toward the local NS target by decreasing their selection of the PI from Time 1 to Time 2, whereas the Valencia learners began with a targetlike 7% selection of the PI and maintained that percentage at Time 2. Thus, in general, learners in both regions demonstrate general movement toward the NS norm, although they, at times, overshoot local targets.

Whereas the distribution of form selection sheds light on learner future expression, a consideration of the effect of linguistic variables on learner selection presents a fuller picture of linguistic development abroad. Table 3 summarizes the results of six GoldVarb regression analyses. Each regression examines the degree to which the linguistic factors in the current study predict the selection of the PF. The number shown in each cell of the table is the factor weight taken from either the best binomial stepping up and down regression (for factors from significant factor groups) or from the first stepping up run (for factors from factor groups that were not selected as significant; see Tagliamonte, 2006, for an overview of GoldVarb regression analyses). Our regressions only considered selection of the PF as compared to the MF (and excluded the PI) for three principal reasons. First, the PI was selected far less frequently than either the PF or the MF by all groups at all data collection times.

Second, there were multiple “knockouts” in the data based on NSs’ lack of selection of the PI in certain linguistic contexts, meaning that running regressions that included the PI would not be possible. Finally, we reasoned that it was more appropriate to exclude the PI rather than to combine it with either of the other forms because it did not pattern exactly like either form with respect to how it was affected by the linguistic variables (patterning more with the PF in some regards [e.g., temporal distance] and the MF in others [e.g., clause type for some groups]), and we did not want to obscure the data for either of the other future forms in that way. Thus, although we do not include the PI in our regression analyses, we will provide a separate distributional analysis of its selection according to each linguistic variable.

**Table 3.** GoldVarb X results for prediction of PF for NSs and learners in Valencia and Mérida.

Groups and Factors	NSs	Mérida	Learners	NSs	Valencia	Learners	
	Mérida	Time 1	Time 2	Valencia	Time 1	Time 2	
<b>Temporal Distance</b>	<i>Immediate</i>	[.61]	[.67]	.69	.83	.66	.70
	<i>Today</i>	[.43]	[.47]	.55	.47	.52	.44
	<i>Within Week</i>	[.49]	[.57]	.58	.59	.41	.54
	<i>Within Month</i>	[.56]	[.44]	.31	.37	.47	.42
	<i>Year Away</i>	[.42]	[.41]	.42	.28	.48	.44
	Range	--	--	38	55	25	28
<b>Clause Type</b>	<i>Main</i>	.57	.43	[.46]	.59	.55	.62
	<i>Subordinate</i>	.44	.57	[.53]	.42	.45	.39
	Range	13	14	--	17	10	23
<b>Adverbial</b>	<i>Absent</i>	[.54]	.55	[.55]	[.49]	[.51]	[.53]
	<i>Present</i>	[.46]	.44	[.44]	[.51]	[.49]	[.47]
	Range	--	11	--	--	--	--

Note. [ ] bracketed numbers indicate that the factor was not selected as significant in the regression.

The range, the difference between the highest and lowest values within a factor group, indicates that temporal distance is the most important linguistic variable for NSs in Valencia in determining selection of the PF. Within this factor group, Valencia NSs strongly favor the PF in the immediate temporal context (with a factor weight of .83), whereas they strongly disfavor the PF in the two further temporal distances, with a factor weight of .37 for the within the month context and .28 for the year away context. Although temporal distance is not selected by the Mérida NS model (perhaps due to the fact that the three intermediate temporal distances had relatively similar factor weights), NSs from Mérida clearly treat the closest and furthest temporal distance quite differently from each other, as they favor the PF for the former and disfavor it for the latter. Thus, they demonstrate similarity to the Valencia NSs in these temporal contexts, although they are less extreme than the Valencia group, as they less strongly favor the PF in immediate contexts and less strongly disfavor it in year away contexts. For NSs in Mérida, clause type is selected as the only significant factor group, and it is also selected as significant for NSs in Valencia. In fact, clause type is treated similarly in both regions, with main clauses favoring the PF to a similar extent (i.e., .57 in Mérida and .59 in Valencia). The factor group adverbial is not selected as significant by either NS group’s predictive model, although this variable plays an important role in conditioning the selection of the PI, as will be discussed in the next section. Overall, these results are generally consistent with reports of the favoring of the PF in closer temporal distances (e.g., Blas Arroyo, 2008; Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011; Orozco, 2005; Sedano, 1994) and in main clause contexts (e.g., the disfavoring of the PF in non-main clauses in Almeida & Díaz, 1998; Díaz-Peralta & Almeida, 2000).

With respect to the Mérida learner group, we observe that, at Time 1, clause type and adverbial are significant factors in determining the selection of PF forms. It will be recalled that, for the NSs of this region, only clause type was a significant predictor. Although, at Time 1, both the learners and NSs have clause type as significant predictors, the directions of effect of the factors within this variable are opposite, such that main clauses favor the PF for the NSs (and subordinate clauses disfavor it),

whereas the inverse is true for the learners. By Time 2, the learner model no longer includes clause type, which is a nativelike change; although the constraint hierarchies are still reversed, this variable is no longer significant. Additionally, at Time 2, the variable adverbial is no longer in the predictive model of the learner group, which is similar to the NS model.

The Valencia learner group also demonstrates sensitivity to local NS norms. Although at both Time 1 and Time 2 temporal distance and clause type are selected as significant in determining the Valencia learners' selection of the PF, by Time 2, this group demonstrates increased sensitivity to these variables as evidenced by movement toward NS factor weight targets. This movement includes a stronger favoring of the PF in the immediate temporal distance and a stronger disfavoring of the form in the year away context, and a stronger favoring of the PF in main clauses at Time 2. Further evidence of the increased predictive value of temporal distance at Time 2 can be seen in the fact that the significance of this factor group strengthens from a significance level of  $p = .014$  at Time 1 to  $p = .001$  at Time 2, which is quite similar to the level of significance of temporal distance for the Valencia NSs ( $p < .001$ ).

To summarize, our data support the findings for NSs in previous research (e.g., Blas Arroyo, 2008; Orozco, 2005; Sedano, 1994) of stronger favoring of the MF in the Valencian Community (the city of Valencia, in our case) than in other regions (Mérida, in our case), particularly in reference to larger temporal distances (e.g., the year away context). Our results also demonstrate that learners of Spanish are sensitive to the constraints on the selection of these forms and are capable of modifying their selection in the direction of norms particular to these speech communities.

### *5.2. Selection of the present indicative by factor group in Valencia and Mérida*

Although the distribution of our data prevented the inclusion of the present indicative in our regression analyses, we now explore separately the selection of the PI according to each factor group (Table 4). Table 4 includes the distribution of the PI within each factor of the factor groups. Within each column, results are displayed as the number of PI selections that co-occurred with each factor over the total number of PI selections for that participant group. For example, the NSs in Mérida selected the PI a total of 12 times and, within those 12 selections, eight were in contexts of immediate temporal distances, two were in the today context, one was in the within one month distance, and one was in the year away context.

Beginning with the variable temporal distance, we see that approximately 65% of both Mérida and Valencia NS groups' selections of the PI were in contexts of an immediate time frame. In fact, immediate contexts were overwhelmingly the most frequent temporal distance in which the PI was selected, which is expected due to the proximal future value of the form and is consistent with Orozco's (2005) finding that the near future favored the PI, whereas the distant future disfavored it. Native speaker restrictions on the selection of the PI in longer temporal distances are apparent in the fact that Valencia NSs never selected the PI in the year away context and Mérida NSs did so on only one occasion. Regarding the learners, both learner groups were rather nativelike at Time 1 with respect to this variable, although both were still able to move even closer to NS targets for various categories at Time 2. In the instances in which learner groups selected the PI, approximately 65-70% of such selections were in the immediate temporal distance at Time 1; this was similar to both NS groups, and the learners maintained this rate of PI selection in immediate contexts at Time 2. Additionally, learners reflected regional differences exhibited by the NSs in the today temporal context. Fully 17% of the Mérida NS PI selection occurred in today temporal contexts, whereas the Valencia NSs never selected the PI in this context. Accordingly, Mérida learners moved toward the local NS target by increasing PI selection in the today context from 2% at Time 1 to 6% at Time 2, and Valencia learners moved toward their local NS norm by decreasing PI selection in that context from 10% at Time 1 to 5% at Time 2. The year away context, in which the PI was never selected by the Valencia NSs and just once by the Mérida NSs, also indicates learner sensitivity to temporal distance, as the Mérida learners decreased selection of the PI in this context from 12% at Time 1 to just 3% at Time 2, and the Valencia learners maintained a low 5% selection rate at both data collection times.

**Table 4.** Selection of the present indicative by NSs and learners in Valencia and Mérida.

Groups and Factors		NSs	Mérida	Learners	NSs	Valencia	Learners
		Mérida	Time 1	Time 2	Valencia	Time 1	Time 2
<b>Temporal Distance</b>	<i>Immediate</i>	8/12 66.7%	28/42 66.7%	21/31 67.7%	9/14 64.3%	30/42 71.4%	30/42 71.4%
	<i>Today</i>	2/12 16.7%	1/42 2.4%	2/31 6.5%	0/14 0%	4/42 9.5%	2/42 4.8%
	<i>Within Week</i>	0/12 0%	4/42 9.5%	3/31 9.7%	3/14 21.4%	4/42 9.5%	1/42 2.4%
	<i>Within Month</i>	1/12 8.3%	4/42 9.5%	4/31 12.9%	2/14 14.3%	2/42 4.8%	7/42 16.7%
	<i>Year Away</i>	1/12 8%	5/42 11.9%	1/31 3.2%	0/14 0%	2/42 4.8%	2/42 4.8%
	<b>Total</b>	12/12 100%	42/42 100%	31/31 100%	14/14 100%	42/42 100%	42/42 100%
<b>Clause Type</b>	<i>Main</i>	9/12 75.0%	22/42 52.4%	24/31 77.4%	14/14 100%	30/42 71.4%	34/42 81.0%
	<i>Subordinate</i>	3/12 25.0%	20/42 47.6%	7/31 22.6%	0/14 0%	12/42 28.6%	8/42 19.0%
	<b>Total</b>	12/12 100.0%	42/42 100%	31/31 100%	14/14 100%	42/42 100%	42/42 100%
<b>Adverbial</b>	<i>Present</i>	12/12 100.0%	32/42 76.2%	27/31 87.1%	14/14 100%	34/42 81.0%	38/42 90.5%
	<i>Absent</i>	0/12 0%	10/42 23.8%	4/31 12.9%	0/14 0%	8/42 19.0%	4/42 9.5%
	<b>Total</b>	12/12 100.0%	42/42 100%	31/31 100%	14/14 100%	42/42 100%	42/42 100%

Turning our attention to the factor group clause type, we note that NSs from Valencia only selected the PI in main clauses (and thus never in subordinate clauses), whereas the Mérida NSs were less categorical, but still made 75% of their PI selections in main clause, as opposed to subordinate clause, contexts. Our Mérida NS findings are similar to those of Gudmestad and Geeslin (2011), in whose study 76% of NS production of the PI occurred in main clauses. Learners in both study abroad sites demonstrated movement toward local NS norms with respect to this variable. At Time 1, when Mérida learners selected the PI they did so in main clauses only 52% of the time, meaning that they were more or less equally likely to select the form in main or subordinate clauses. However, at Time 2, 77% of Mérida learner PI selection occurred in main clause contexts, which is nearly identical to the 75% local NS rate. Although the Valencia learners were already constrained by this variable in a more nativelike way at Time 1, they also moved toward their local NS target at Time 2 by increasing from 71% PI selection in main clauses at Time 1 to 81% selection at Time 2.

With respect to the third and final linguistic variable, presence of an adverbial, the NS groups behaved similarly, as both groups selected the PI only when temporal adverbials were included in the test sentences. This was not a surprising finding given that the use of temporal adverbials bolsters the concept of futurity for the PI that, otherwise, would generally convey its typical value of present temporality. Overall, our NS findings are comparable to, although more categorical than, Gudmestad and Geeslin's (2011) finding that approximately 85% of NS uses of the PI co-occurred with adverbials. Our results are also consistent with Orozco's (2005) finding that the presence of a temporal adverbial favored the PI, while the absence disfavored the form. Analogous to the findings for clause type, we note learner development from Time 1 to Time 2 as evidenced by movement toward local NS targets, as, at Time 1, 76% of the Mérida learner PI selection occurred in contexts that included adverbials, which increased to 87% selection at Time 2. Similarly, at Time 1, 81% of Valencia learner PI selection occurred in contexts that contained adverbials, and an increase to 90% selection took place at Time 2.

## 6. Discussion

The objective of the current study was to investigate the contrast between Spanish PF, MF, and PI forms in future-time contexts and how differences in the selection of these forms are manifested by NSs and learners located in regions that exhibit differing patterns of future form expression. Our research questions considered how learners in Mérida, Mexico and Valencia, Spain selected future forms in a contextualized preference questionnaire, how NS responses in the same regions compared to these selections, and how learners developed over the course of a 7-week stay abroad. Our comparison of the distribution of forms selected demonstrated that NSs in Valencia select the MF more frequently overall than the NSs in Mérida and more frequently in contexts that take place at the furthest temporal distance (at least one year away). This confirms previous studies that have reported a favoring of the MF in other provinces of the Valencian Community (e.g., Castellón in Blas Arroyo, 2008), whereas our NS data from Mérida are largely similar to accounts of future expression in Mexican Spanish (e.g., Gutiérrez, 1995; Moreno de Alba, 1970). Additionally, although Blas Arroyo (2008) and Gutiérrez (1995) used interview data to examine future expression in their respective studies, the data from the current study generally corroborate these earlier findings with the implementation of a different elicitation instrument. As such, our study extends the generalization of preference for the MF in the Valencian Community in a comparison of distinct provinces and regions of Spain and Mexico from those analyzed in previous studies.

With respect to the learners who studied abroad in these same regions, both groups selected less PF than the NSs at the time of the first data collection, and both groups move toward the local NS targets by increasing selection of the PF by the time of the second data collection. It should be noted that both learner groups do, however, overshoot the local NS targets, which is especially true for the Valencia learner group. As has been demonstrated in other studies (e.g., Geeslin & Guijarro-Fuentes, 2006, for the copula contrast; Geeslin & Gudmestad, 2011, for subject expression), it is not uncommon for learners to overshoot NS norms as they apply a variable rule differently in the L2 than do NSs. A comparison of the two learner groups also revealed that the Valencia learners selected significantly more MF than the Mérida learners at Time 2, a difference that did not exist at Time 1 and that reflects the significant differences in MF selection of the corresponding NS groups locally. Given the important role of input in acquisition (see Gass, 2003, for an overview), the differences in the learner groups observed at Time 2 likely reflect differential input received in the two study abroad locations, which may explain why our learners were similar at Time 1 but significantly different at Time 2. The predictors of the rate of selection of forms also demonstrate development on the part of both learner groups. The learners in Valencia exhibit an overall strengthening of the significance of the variable temporal distance (from  $p = .014$  at Time 1 to  $p = .001$  at Time 2) and, more specifically, increase the favoring effect of the PF in immediate temporal contexts, both of which are developments that more closely approximate local NS norms. For the Valencia learners, clause type is also a significant predictor of PF selection, and the learners move toward the local NS target by increasing the favoring of the PF in main clause contexts at Time 2. Our learners studying abroad in Mérida also move toward local NS norms by removing the factor group adverbial, a variable which is not present in the local NS model, from their predictive model at Time 2. Furthermore, although these learners included the linguistic variable clause type in their model at Time 1 with directions of effect that were the opposite of the local NS group (i.e., main clauses significantly favored the PF for the learners and significantly disfavored the form for the NSs), the learners demonstrate development as their model no longer selects this variable as significant at Time 2. Thus, frequency of selection shows movement toward the local norm for both of our learner groups (although both somewhat overshoot local NS targets), and the predictors of this selection generally indicate acquisition in the direction of the regional norm for both groups, especially in the case of the Valencia learners. In their selection of the PI, both learner groups also demonstrate additional movement toward local NS norms with respect to all three linguistic variables by reducing selection of the PI in the most distant temporal context, by increasing selection in the main clause context, and by increasing selection in the presence of adverbials. Overall, the changes in frequency of rates of selection of PF, MF, and PI forms, along with the predictors (and/or their level of significance) of these rates of selection demonstrate that learners are indeed able

to move toward regional norms.

With regard to NS future form selection, our inclusion of participants from multiple regions differentiates our study from, to the best of our knowledge, the rest of the variationist literature on future expression in Spanish. Although Blas Arroyo (2008) considered how participants within the Valencian Community express futurity, his data were solely based on the province of Castellón, such that any comparisons made to other parts of the Spanish-speaking world in the study were to previous findings that had been reported in other studies. Our study, on the other hand, via its inclusion of participants from multiple regions who responded to identical items, enables us to make direct comparisons between a region with empirically low preference for the MF and one with empirically higher MF preference. Thus, we were able to directly extend predictions that had been made in previous research and to demonstrate that NSs in Valencia indeed select the MF significantly more than NSs in Mérida ( $p < .01$ ), and, that following 7 weeks of immersion, learners who have studied abroad in the former region select significantly more MF ( $p < .01$ ) than those who have resided in the latter—a difference that is all the more notable given the fact that the learner groups were not significantly different ( $p = .605$ ) at the beginning of their programs (at which time the Valencia learners, in fact, selected slightly more PF than their Mérida counterparts).

Similarly, to our knowledge, our analysis of the acquisition of a variable structure in two different study abroad locations places our study in the company of just two other recent studies (Geeslin et al., in press; Salgado-Robles, 2011) that compare the simultaneous development of two groups of learners toward the regional norms of their respective study abroad sites. Salgado-Robles (2011) found that learners in Valladolid, Spain moved toward the regional object pronoun use norm by increasing their use of *le*, whereas learners in Seville, Spain also developed in the direction of local norms by decreasing their use of *le* over the course of immersion. Geeslin et al. (in press) noted that learners in San Luis Potosí, Mexico moved toward regional past-time expression norms by increasing the selection of the preterit, whereas learners in Valencia, Spain moved toward the local target by decreasing their selection of the preterit form, in favor of the present perfect form. They also noted that learners in both regions more closely approximated local NS norms with respect to the linguistic variables that conditioned such form selection. Our study joins this small body of work in demonstrating the acquisition of differing regional norms for a variable structure and adds future expression to the short list of structures (i.e., clitic pronoun use and the present perfect/preterit distinction) that have been investigated.

It should also be noted that the inclusion of the PI in our analysis sets our study apart from those that have generally treated future expression as a structure with binary variants, as has been common in L1 Spanish variationist research (e.g., Aaron, 2006, 2010; Blas Arroyo, 2008; Sedano, 1994, 2006, among many others). Motivated by functionalist, concept-oriented analyses (von Stutterheim & Klein, 1987; see Bardovi-Harlig, 2007, for an overview) and the PI's robust use by both NSs and learners to express futurity in previous studies (e.g., Gudmestad & Geeslin, 2011; Orozco, 2005), the inclusion of this additional form in our preference task allowed us to offer a fuller account of NS and learner future expression. Additionally, our inclusion of an analysis of PI selection according to each linguistic variable enables us to further chart learner development with respect to the complex system of future expression, such as the development of restrictions of the selection of the PI with respect to temporal distance, clause type, and the presence of adverbials. Finally, consideration of the PI enables us to make regionally-relevant sociolinguistic comparisons between our two NS groups—comparisons which are largely missing from the L1 sociolinguistic research.

Lastly, the methodology of the current study represents a key shift from that traditionally utilized in study abroad research. Unlike previous studies that implemented error analyses or the use of the Oral Proficiency Interview (e.g., Freed, 1990; Ryan & Lafford, 1992), our measures, following those of Geeslin et al. (in press), have the ability to detect changes in the selection of a structure that exhibits sociolinguistic variation (in this case, the expression of futurity). Crucially, because the capacity to vary one's utterances according to the linguistic and sociolinguistic context is a vital part of communicative competence (Canale & Swain, 1980), we argue that monitoring such changes enables us to capture a key component of development abroad. In our examination of the frequency of selection of a given form and the linguistic predictors of its selection, we can pinpoint longitudinal learner change and make direct comparisons to local NS targets for the same tasks without being

required to report errors or measure accuracy. Although our results do not necessarily approximate free production for our learner or NS groups, the amount of control in our instrument provides a source for subsequent comparison to additional learner and NS speech communities who might complete the same task.

## 7. Limitations and future directions

The present study expands the literature on the influence of study abroad on the L2 acquisition of geographically variable grammatical structures. Accordingly, the study contributes to both the literature on study abroad and to research on the acquisition of variation. By virtue of our inclusion of local NS target groups from both regions of study, we were able to indicate that learners likely received vastly different input across programs, at least with respect to future expression. As we have seen, prescriptive measures or traditional grammatical examinations would likely have been unable to gauge the acquisition of this geographically conditioned variation. Instead, by considering multiple immersion locations that exhibit distinct NS patterns and by measuring speaker rate of selection and the factors conditioning that selection (as opposed to accuracy), we were able to track changes in learner grammars that indicated development toward a local target. In short, our findings, like those of Geeslin et al. (in press), provide further evidence that learners are sensitive to regional norms and are able to adjust both the frequency of selection of a particular form and the linguistic predictors of that selection, even following a short stay abroad.

Notwithstanding the aforementioned contributions, there is still a great deal to uncover about acquisition in study abroad environment. Further research should preferably triangulate tasks, most notably by including a production component to elicit future forms. Additionally, learners could be tracked for a greater duration of time with respect both to longer stays abroad and to the monitoring of development upon re-entry to the home site. Subsequent studies would ideally include an at-home control group, which would help to tease apart the difference between geographically based development and general development that might occur regardless of experience abroad. We might hypothesize that in at-home contexts, in which learners typically receive input from instructors and peers from multiple regions, the acquisition of variability that is common across speech communities would likely occur prior to that of a particular region, as evidenced by the work of Regan, Howard, and Lemée (2009), in which certain regional norms were acquired only by learners who had studied abroad. Lastly, characteristics of the individual learners (as noted in Kuriscak, 2006; Pellegrino Aveni, 2005) and of the study abroad environment itself (e.g., the living situation abroad and the quality of interaction, as in Allen, 2010; Brecht, Davidson, & Ginsberg, 1995; DeKeyser, 2010; Freed, 1990; Guntermann, 1995; Lam, 2000; Segalowitz & Freed, 2004) should also be examined when considering the development of future expression abroad. In total, our study joins a small body of research (i.e., Salgado-Robles, 2011; Geeslin et al., in press) that is working to decipher the L2 acquisition of regionally variable norms.

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