

There are other stem-changing verbs, in which consonants are affected. One large group (more than two hundred, including derived and rare forms) have been traditionally called inceptive verbs, or verbs with inceptive endings, from the meaning of the Latin ancestral form. They can be more accurately described as verbs with a velar stem extension, since the stem modification consists of the addition of a velar consonant.

The traditional description of these verbs is an example of how misleading a confusion of pronunciation with spelling can be. The verb conocer will serve as an illustration. The singular forms present tense are spelled:

conoce
conoces
conoce

The typical description of the modification is that a z is placed before the final c of the stem. Actually the z merely represents the sound of the final c; what is added is the c after the z. The same data in phonemic transcription reveal the actual structure of the forms:

konósk o
konós es
konós e

The stem modification consists of the addition of a /k/ to /konós-/.

To compound the confusion, verbs like conocer are usually classed together with verbs like vencer as "orthographic changing" verbs, defined as those which have mere changes of spelling for the sake of preserving the sound of the stem as pronounced.² The rules are listed as follows: "Verbs ending in -CER or -CIR preceded by a consonant, change the C to Z before O or A. . . . Verbs ending in -CER or -CIR preceded by a vowel, interpolate Z before the C, when followed by O or A." Note the patterns of vencer:

béns o venzo
béns es vences
béns e vence

In other words, vencer is a completely regular verb (with certain orthographic accommodations imposed by the arbitrary rules and limitations of the Spanish spelling tradition), but conocer is a legitimate irregular verb.

Not only have the vagaries of spelling confused the description of verbs with velar stem extensions, but familiar grammars have failed to note the essential similarity of structure of verbs like conocer with verbs like salir. Both have a variant stem with a velar extension, and this variant stem appears in exactly the same places in the total paradigm. Note that conocer has a stem that ends in a voiceless consonant; the velar stem extension is also voiceless—a /k/. But the stem of salir ends in a voiced consonant, and

2. The definitions and examples for this discussion are taken from Ramsey-Spaulding, *A Textbook of Modern Spanish* (1956), pp. 252-54. It is noteworthy that this discrepancy is allowed by so thorough and painstaking a scholar as Ramsey. With few exceptions, later textbooks have followed this defective analysis.

the velar stem extension is also voiced—a /g/. This assimilation of the extension occurs in all verbs of this pattern except asir, which adds a /g/.

The stems with velar extensions occur in the first person singular of the present indicative and in all the forms of the present subjunctive. The extension, then, occurs before /o/ or /a/ in the verb pattern.

Velar Stem Extensions
/k/ stem conocer /g/ stem salir

Present indicative					
1	sg	konósk	o	sálg	o
2	sg	konós	es	sál	es
3		konoš	e	sál	e
1	pl	konoš	émos	sal	ímos
2	pl	konoš	éys	sal	ís
3		konós	en	sál	en

Present subjunctive					
1	sg	konósk	a	sálg	a
2	sg	konósk	as	sálg	as
3		konósk	a	sálg	a
1	pl	konoš	ámos	salg	ámos
2	pl	konoš	áys	salg	áys
3		konós	an	sálg	an

In other types of irregularity, the stem vowel and stem extension changes are combined, so that in a verb like venir the present indicative forms include both infinitive and modified stems: /benimos, byéne, béngo/ and so on.

In addition to verbs with velar stem extensions, there are some verbs which have a palatal stem extension, in which the stem is modified by adding /y/. Examples of this type are not numerous, though there are thirty or forty in the language. Since these verbs may have a stem ending in /u/ followed by /ir/ in the infinitive form, there is also a vowel-consonant alternation with some verbs. The verb huir, for example, is /uir/ or /wir/, depending on style and speed of pronunciation.

Palatal Stem Extensions
/y/ stem huir /y/ stem arguir

Present indicative					
1	sg	úy	o	argúy	o
2	sg	úy	es	argúy	es
3		úy	e	argúy	e
1	pl	u	ímos ~ w ímos	argw	ímos
2	pl	u	ís ~ w ís	argw	ís
3		úy	en	argúy	en

Present subjunctive					
1	sg	úy	a	argúy	a
2	sg	úy	as	argúy	as
3		úy	a	argúy	a
1	pl	uy	ámos	arguy	ámos
2	pl	uy	áys	arguy	áys
3		úy	an	argúy	an
Imperative					
2	sg	úy	e	argúy	e
2	pl	u	íd ~ w íd	argw	íd

There are other verbs with mixed palatal and palatal-velar stem extensions, in which the stem is modified by adding /y/ and /yg/. Two examples are given below: one the two-stem verb caer, and the other the three-stem verb oir. Both have a /yg/ extension, and oir also has a stem with a /y/ extension:

Palatal-Velar and Palatal Stem Extensions
/yg/ stem caer /yg/ and /y/ stems oir

Present indicative					
1	sg	káyg	o	óyg	o
2	sg	ká	es ~ ká ys	óy	es
3		ká	e ~ ká y	óy	e
1	pl	ka	émos	o	ímos
2	pl	ka	éys	o	ís
3		ka	en ~ ká yn	óy	en

Present subjunctive					
1	sg	káyg	a	óyg	a
2	sg	káyg	as	óyg	as
3		káyg	a	óyg	a
1	pl	kayg	ámos	oyg	ámos
2	pl	kayg	áys	oyg	áys
3		káyg	an	óyg	an

Finally, there is a stem modification of vocalization. The /y/ or /w/ of the infinitive stem is replaced by an /i/ or /u/ in an alternate stem. This group includes verbs like variar and continuar, which would be regular if the final i and u of the stem could be considered as vowels (i.e., /i/ and /u/ instead of /y/ and /w/). There are, however, other verbs, like cambiar and averiguar, in which the stem final /y/ and /w/ is preserved throughout the conjugation. There are about fifty or sixty verbs in Spanish in this pattern of stem vocalization.

Vocalized Stems
/y/ ~ /i/ stems variar /w/ ~ /u/ stems continuar

Present indicative					
1	sg	barí	o	kontinú	o
2	sg	barí	as	kontinú	as
3		barí	a	kontinú	a
1	pl	bary	ámos	kontinw	ámos
2	pl	bary	áys	kontinw	áys
3		barí	an	kontinú	an

Present subjunctive					
1	sg	barí	e	kontinú	e
2	sg	barí	es	kontinú	es
3		barí	e	kontinú	e
1	pl	bary	émos	kontinw	émos
2	pl	bary	éys	kontinw	éys
3		barí	en	kontinú	en

Imperative					
2	sg	barí	a	kontinú	a
2	pl	bary	ád	kontinw	ád

In some dialects of Spanish, verbs ending in -ear (and there are a great many of them, since this is the most active, present-day verb-forming suffix) are realized as /-yár/ when the accent is on the ending, as in emplear /emplyár/. If this pattern establishes itself, there will be another class, similar to variar, but with an alternation of /y/ ~ /e/.

IRREGULAR VERBS: STEM-AFFIX IRREGULARITIES

In addition to the irregular verbs discussed above, there are others which deviate more radically from the basic patterns of inflection established by the regular verbs. A much smaller number of verbs is involved—only about thirty (plus derived forms, like mantener from tener). Almost all these have variant stems, but in addition they have irregularities in the suffix patterns: variations in the theme vowel and aspect-tense and person-number markers. There is relatively little grouping among these thirty verbs; if we consider their full paradigms, almost all have unique paradigms.

Thirty is a very small number when compared with the many thousands of verbs in the Spanish language, but this relatively small group includes the most common and frequently used verbs in the language, such as ser, estar, haber, hacer, ir, poner, tener, venir, decir. High frequency of occurrence makes these verbs pedagogical problems of much greater importance than their number would justify.

It is not useful to set forth the full paradigms of these stem-affix irregular verbs for this study. The verbs salir and venir, for example, have identical irregularities in the future, conditional, present subjunctive, and imperative; only partial similarity in the present indicative; and are completely different in the preterit, past subjunctive, and

imperfective participle. Full information on the paradigms of the stem-affix irregularities could most economically be given merely by listing them. Such lists can be found in almost any teaching or reference grammar. Instead, we will discuss, type by type, the kinds of modifications that occur; we will not discuss, class by class, the verbs that contain such modifications.

ADDITIONAL STEM CHANGES

We have discussed several kinds of stem changes, including stem-vowel changes (insertion of semivowel, substitution of vowel, or both), stem extensions (the addition of velar or palatal consonants, or both, to the end of the stem), and vocalizations (alternation of stem final semivowel and vowel). Listed below are additional types of stem modifications and combinations of more than one type:

Shortened stems:

Infinitive	Infinitive stem		
escribir	/eskrib-/	/eskri to/	(perfective participle)
romper	/rromp-/	/rró to/	(perfective participle)
haber	/ab-/	/á (n)/	(present indicative)
hacer	/aš-/	/a ré/	(future and conditional)
decir	/diš-/	/di ré/	(future and conditional)

Consonant substitution:

producir	/roduš-/	/prodúh e/	(preterit)
conducir	/koduš-/	/kondúh e/	(preterit)
hacer	/aš-/	/ág o/	(1st sg present indicative, present subjunctive)
haber	/ab-/	/áy a/	(1st sg present indicative, present subjunctive)

Additional stem extensions:

traer	/tra-/	/tráh e/	(preterit)
estar	/est-/	/estúb e/	(preterit)
andar	/and-/	/andúb e/	(preterit)
ver	/b-/	/bé o/	(1st sg present indicative imperfect)
		/bis to/	(perfective participle)

Additional stem-vowel changes:

poder	/pod-/	/púd e/	(preterit)
hacer	/aš-/	/iš e/	(preterit)
haber	/ab-/	/úb e/	(preterit)
venir	/ben-/	/bfn e/	(preterit)
decir	/deš-/	/diš e/	(2nd and 3rd present indicative)
freir	/fre-/	/fri to/	(perfective participle)

Note that changes always reflect a movement from a low or mid vowel in the infinitive form to a high vowel.

Stem vowel change with /wé/ substituted for /o/:

morir	/mor-/	/mwér to/	(perfective participle)
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Stems with consonant and vowel change:

caber	/kab-/	/kép o/	(present subjunctive and 1st sg present indicative)
		/kúp e/	(preterit)
saber	/sab-/	/súp e/	(preterit)
tener	/ten-/	/túb e/	(preterit)
poner	/pon-/	/pús e/	(preterit)
querer	/ker-/	/kfs e/	(preterit)
decir	/deš-/	/dih e/	(preterit)
		/díg o/	(1st sg present indicative)
		/dích o/	(perfective participle)
hacer	/aš-/	/éch o/	(perfective participle)

Stems with shortening and vowel change:

saber	/sab-/	/sé 0/	(1st sg present indicative)
volver	/bolb-/	/bwél to/	(perfective participle)
resolver	/rresolb-/	/rreswél to/	(perfective participle)

Stem lengthening by insertion of /ye/:

abrir	/abr-/	/abyér to/	(perfective participle)
cubrir	/kubr-/	/kubyér to/	(perfective participle)

Consonant and vowel change with /wé/ substituted for /o/:

poner	/pon-/	/pwés to/	(perfective participle)
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Supplet (totally replaced) stems:

ser	/s-/	/ér es/	(2nd sg present indicative, imperfect)
		/és 0/	(3rd sg present indicative)
		/sé a/	(present subjunctive)
		/fw I/	(preterit)
ir	/0/	/b óy/	(present indicative, imperative)
		/báy a/	(present subjunctive)
		/fw I/	(preterit)

In a classroom, these irregular forms should certainly be grouped in accord with tense-aspect categories, which is the usual presentation. Within that presentation, however, it is helpful for the student to associate together those forms that have similar changes, which is the purpose of the above grouping.

THEME VARIATIONS

The second constituent of a verb form is the theme vowel. This is an element which is nearly always present in the regular paradigm (except first singular preterit for all conjugations, third singular preterit for ar verbs, second plural present indicative for ir verbs) and which is relatively stable.

There are several kinds of modifications of the theme vowel that illustrate variance from the normal paradigm of regular verbs. One of these is zero occurrence: the absence of a normally expected theme vowel. A zero theme vowel may occur in irregular future and conditional, singular imperative, perfective participle, and a few miscellaneous forms:

Infinitive stem and theme vowel

haber	/ab-e-/	/ab	0	ré/	(future and conditional)
saber	/sab-e-/	/sab	0	ré/	(future and conditional)
caber	/kab-e-/	/kab	0	ré/	(future and conditional)
poder	/pod-e-/	/pod	0	ré/	(future and conditional)
querer	/ker-e-/	/ker	0	ré/	(future and conditional)
hacer	/aš-e-/	/a	0	ré/	(future and conditional)
decir	/deš-i-/	/di	0	ré/	(future and conditional)

hacer	/aš-e-/	/ás	0/	(sg imperative)
salir	/sal-i-/	/sál	0/	(sg imperative)
valer	/bal-e-/	/bál	0/	(sg imperative)
poner	/pon-e-/	/pón	0/	(sg imperative)
tener	/ten-e-/	/tén	0/	(sg imperative)
venir	/ben-e-/	/bén	0/	(sg imperative)

abrir	/abr-i-/	/abyér	0 to/	(perfect participle)
cubrir	/kubr-i-/	/kubyér	0 to/	(perfect participle)
freir	/fre-i-/	/fri	0 to/	(perfect participle)
morir	/mor-i-/	/mwér	0 to/	(perfect participle)
poner	/pon-e-/	/pwés	0 to/	(perfect participle)
ver	/b-e-/	/bis	0 to/	(perfect participle)
volver	/volb-e-/	/bwél	0 to/	(perfect participle)
resolver	/rresolb-e-/	/rreswél	0 to/	(perfect participle)
escribir	/eskrib-i-/	/eskri	0 to/	(perfect participle)
romper	/rrom-e/	/rró	0 to/	(perfect participle)
hacer	/aš-e-/	/éch	0 o/	(perfect participle)
decir	/deš-e-/	/dích	0 o/	(perfect participle)

saber	/sab-e-/	/sé	0/	(1st sg present indicative)
haber	/ab-e-/	/é	0/	(1st sg present indicative)
		/á	0 (s)/	(2nd and 3rd sg present indicative)
		/á	0 n/	(3rd pl present indicative)
ser	/s-e-/	/ér	0 a/	(imperfect)

The verbs which have zero theme singular imperative forms are those which include an extra form beyond the normal maximum of forty-eight forms in the total paradigm, since these imperatives (unlike the pattern for regular verbs) are distinguished from the third singular present indicative forms: haz ~ hace, pon ~ pone, ten ~ tiene, and so on.

It is worth noting that this handful of irregular imperative forms includes the only instances in Spanish where the stem of the verb may serve as a word—that is, as a complete inflected form, with all the suffix constituents present only as zeros. English verbs are at the other extreme, where the stem form of all verbs occurs as the most important inflected form in the verb pattern.

A second theme vowel modification is the replacement of the vowel by the consonant /d/ in certain future and conditional forms. This intrusive /d/ undoubtedly entered the form as a transition between /n/ or /l/ and /r/ when the theme vowel disappeared, but the structural result is a /d/ occupying the theme vowel slot:

3. Both val and the regular vale are used. This is not a significant pedagogical problem because it is a very infrequent form.

Infinitive stem and theme vowel

poner	/pon-e-/	/pon	d	ré/	(future and conditional)
tener	/ten-e-/	/ten	d	ré/	(future and conditional)
valer	/bal-e-/	/bal	d	ré/	(future and conditional)
salir	/sal-i-/	/sal	d	ré/	(future and conditional)
venir	/ben-i-/	/ben	d	ré/	(future and conditional)

There are a number of irregular preterit forms which have alternate theme systems for er-ir verbs. The regular and two alternate systems are shown below:

	Regular	1st alternate	2nd alternate
1 } sg	/0/	/0/	/0/
	/i/	/i/	/i/
	/y/	/0/	/0/
1 } pl	/i/	/i/	/i/
	/i/	/i/	/i/
	/yé/	/yé/ ~ /é/	/é/

Examples with sample verbs are:

1 } sg	kom 0 i	pús 0 e	fw 0 i
	i ste	i ste	i ste
	y ó	0 o	0 é
1 } pl	i mos	i mos	i mos
	i steys	i steys	i steys
	yé ron	yé ron ~	é ron

Note that the modification involves the stress pattern as well as the actual phonemes in the structure. Most irregular preterit forms follow the first alternate system, although irregular verbs with a stem ending in /-h/ drop the /y/ of the theme in the third plural form in most dialects (not in Chile, however). Examples: dijeron, trajeron, produjeron, but for regular verbs, rugieron, crujieron. Only the verbs ser and ir follow the second alternate system.

Another theme irregularity is the crossing of theme systems in occasional instances. There are two common verbs where this happens. The verb dar follows the er-ir theme pattern in the preterite, and ir follows the ar pattern in the present:

Infinitive	Infinitive stem and theme vowel		
dar	/d-a-/	/d iste/	(preterit)
ir	/0-i-/	/b á/	(present indicative)

Two other verbs switch theme vowels in the preterit after an extended stem:

Infinitive	Infinitive stem plus extension		
estar	/est-ub/	/estub iste/	(preterit)
andar	/and-ub/	/andub iste/	(preterit)

Another theme modification is shown by four common verbs, which extend the /o/ theme of first singular present indicative forms to /oy/, and by an irregular form of the third singular present indicative of haber, which takes a /y/ theme:

Infinitive	Infinitive stem and theme vowel			
dar	/d-a-/	/d	óy/	(1st sg present indicative)
estar	/est-a-/	/est	óy/	(1st sg present indicative)
ser	/s-e-/	/s	óy/	(1st sg present indicative)
ir	/θ-i-/	/b	óy/	(1st sg present indicative)
haber	/ab-e-/	/á	y/	(3rd sg present indicative alternate form)

All these forms are monosyllables except estoy, which is stressed on its ending. Unlike regular verbs, which have accented stems in the singular and the third plural of the present indicative and subjunctive and the singular imperative forms, all the forms of estar are accented on their endings. This is best explained historically, since estar was once a monosyllable *star. The initial e- was added to prevent a nonpermitted initial cluster st-, but the original accent pattern of the inflected forms was preserved.

One final theme modification is entirely phonological in nature.⁴ A stem final ll or ñ absorbs the following /y/ of the theme. This assimilation occurs only in er-ir verbs in third preterit, the past subjunctive, and imperfective participle forms:

Infinitive	Infinitive stem and theme vowel	
bullir	/bu(l)l-y-i-/	/bu(l)l-y-θ-ó/
		/bu(l)l-y-θ-é-ra/
		/bu(l)l-y-é-ndo/
teñir	/teñ-y-i-/	/teñ-y-θ-ó/
		/teñ-y-θ-é-ra/
		/teñ-y-é-ndo/

These constitute no pedagogical problem other than the fact that the orthography requires the dropping of an i. We can generalize the phenomenon here by saying ll + y or ñ + y are nonpermitted sequences in Spanish, which are always resolved by dropping the y.

TENSE-ASPECT VARIATIONS

There is considerable consistency between the sets of forms in a paradigm for constituents 1 and 4—the stem and person-number marker—and to a lesser extent for constituent 2—the theme vowel. The constituent which distinguishes the sets (and represents a residue of phonological material not otherwise assigned) is number 3—the tense-aspect marker. There is complete consistency of these markers within all sets except the future, where /rÁ/ alternates with /ré/; the imperative, where /θ/ alternates with /d/; and the preterit, which has the most erratic pattern of the whole paradigm (these are discussed below). In the present tense, indicative and subjunctive, the tense-aspect marker is zero,

4. In some dialects, these changes are mere orthographical accommodations. A Madrid informant does not distinguish the palatals of puliendo ~ bullendo, but does of teniendo ~ tiñendo. Many Spanish speakers in New Mexico do not distinguish either pair.

so its function is carried by the particular combination of other constituents that are overtly present.

Variations of tense-aspect markers occur mainly in preterit tense forms and in perfective participles, two patterns where irregularities frequently enter. For the preterit, there are (as in the theme) two alternate systems for er-ir verbs. They are summarized below:

	Regular	1st alternate	2nd alternate
1	/t/	/e/	/t/
2	/ste/	/ste/	/ste/
3	/ó/	/ó/	/é/
1	/θ/	/θ/	/θ/
2	/ste/	/ste/	/ste/
3	/ro/	/ro/	/ro/

Examples with sample verbs are:

1	kom	θ	i	θ	pás	θ	e	θ	fu	θ	f	θ
2												
3												
1												
2												
3												

The modifications are limited to the first and third singular forms, and consist of variations of vowels and stress patterns. As the chart shows, the alternate tense-aspect systems accompany the comparable alternate theme vowel systems previously discussed.

The partial similarity of the first alternate system of tense-aspect markers of the preterit with the theme vowel of the present tense of regular er-ir verbs leads to considerable difficulty. In both sets, the stress of first and third singular forms is on the stem, but the comparable endings are complementarily opposite.

	Present indicative		Preterit
1	díg-o	3	dih-o
3	díg-e	1	dih-e

The tense-aspect form of the verb must be recognized, not by the ending, but by the stem. If a student learns the present tense forms first, there is almost inevitably some conflict in reinterpreting the endings as they occur in the irregular preterits. Errors are common:

- *Cuando yo dijo "Cómo están ustedes," él no dije nada.
- *Yo dijo un chiste.
- *Usted tradujo ese libro, ¿verdad?
- *Yo vine a la clase ayer.

This problem resulting from internal inconsistency requires special drill and attention to establish proper habits of expression. It is particularly difficult since first and third singular forms overlap in so many of the sets.

Even when the student approximates the correct form of the irregular preterit, he is likely to be under pressure to follow the regular stress pattern. This incorrect analogy causes errors like:

- *Pablo vinó esta mañana.
- *Ella no me dijó eso.

Another modification of the aspect-tense markers can be seen in verbs which in some sets cross theme classes: dar, estar, andar, ir. The first three are conjugated in the preterit as if they were -er-ir verbs, and ir is conjugated in the present as if it were an -ar verb. When such crossing occurs, the tense-aspect marker accompanies the theme, rather than remaining with the original stem. This is evidence that the first constituent cut in a verb form is properly made between the stem and the affix constituents.

Finally, there are two common modifications of the aspect markers of perfective participles (tense is not present in these forms). The regular /do/ marker is changed to /to/ or simply /o/, always accompanied by a zeroing of the theme vowel with certain irregular er-ir stems:

Infinitive	Infinitive stem and theme vowel		
escribir	/eskrib-i-/	/eskrí	to/
romper	/rromp-e/	/rró	to/
volver	/bolb-e/	/bwél	to/
resolver	/rresolb-e/	/rreswél	to/
abrir	/abr-i/	/abyér	to/
cubrir	/kubr-i/	/kubyér	to/
freir	/fre-i/	/frí	to/
morir	/mor-i/	/mwér	to/
poner	/pon-e/	/pwés	to/
ver	/b-e/	/bís	to/
decir	/deq-i/	/dích	o/
hacer	/aq-e/	/éç	o/

PERSON-NUMBER MARKERS

There are no variations of the person-number markers, but there are some difficulties in internalizing the system. For instance, two person-number forms (first and third singular) are both marked with a zero suffix. Since the categories themselves do not fall together, the distinctions must be maintained by other constituents, usually by the theme vowel or by the tense-aspect marker, though sometimes by the stem. The entire paradigm, however, fails to support the necessity of making a distinction, since in the present and past subjunctive, the imperfect, and the conditional, first and third singular always fall together.

In one instance, there is complete identity of two forms which are syntactically employed in consistently different patterns. The same form serves as regular singu-

lar imperative and as the third singular present indicative. The distinction between them must be made by observing syntactic agreement with the subject, by the position of accompanying enclitic pronouns, or merely from the context.

NON-FINITE VERB FORMS

The tense-aspect slot in the formation will be a positive choice in forty-five of the potential forty-eight forms. In two of the remaining three forms, only aspect is chosen, PERFECTIVE or IMPERFECTIVE. Thus hablado and hablando, although they have an aspect reference, do not have a tense or time reference (it is supplied, when needed, by an accompanying form). The last remaining form is a completely negative selection; zero aspect and zero tense are chosen, and the result is a form specifically marked with no aspect or tense limitation. This is the INFINITIVE or "name" form hablar. It is interesting to note that of forty-eight possibilities the least typical verb form has traditionally been the dictionary entry.

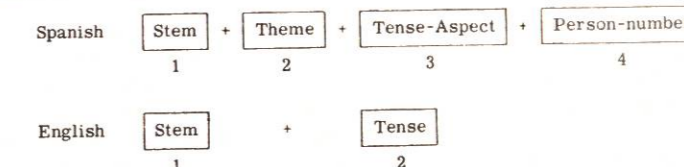
These three, the -r, -do, and -ndo forms, have usually been referred to as the NON-FINITE or non-conjugated forms of the verb (VERBALS). They are different from other verb forms in two important ways: (1) they appear with conjugated forms in verb constructions of a variety of types (traditionally called "compound tenses"), in which instance they normally appear after the conjugated form, and (2) when not appearing with a conjugated form they function in other word classes, as follows:

(-r form or infinitive)	noun
(-do form or perfective participle)	adjective
(-ndo form or imperfective participle)	adverb

COMPARISON

There are two basic distinctions which most sharply differentiate the Spanish and English verb systems: the constituent structure of forms, and the pattern of inflection. Within these areas there are vast and far-reaching systemic differences.

The constituent structure of English verbs is simply stem plus tense suffix. Aligned with the Spanish the differences are emphasized.



The implications are obvious. An English-speaking student will have no feeling whatsoever for the expression of a theme in verb forms, and he will not be accustomed to the expression of person-number categories with the verb.

There is nothing in the system of English verbs which can be compared with the Spanish classification by theme class. It is a concept that is totally foreign to the English-speaking student. Theme class in verbs, like gender class in nouns, is deceptively

simple. This simplicity often leads to underemphasis in the classroom on the difference of form which must be practiced. The Spanish system is logically simple and clear, and not a problem to explain; but to internalize the system is a serious problem for the student.

Theme class confusions can be readily noted in the speech even of advanced students. There are fewer errors in writing, where there is time for correction according to the rules. The following errors have been observed, showing confusions in a variety of formal patterns:

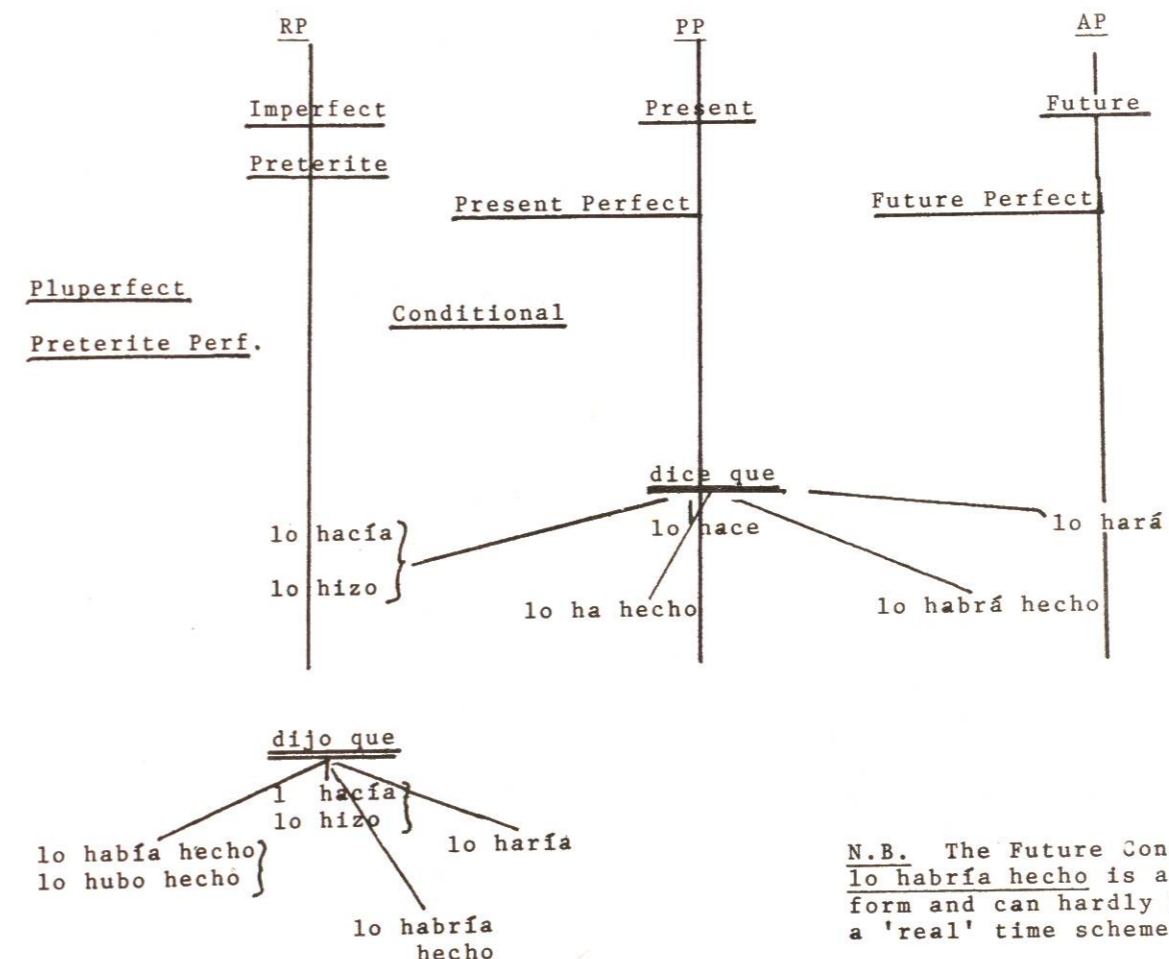
- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| *Estoy escuchando. | *Le dolaba el estómago. |
| *Si Ud. está leyendo, no puedo hablar. | *Entendaba mucho. |
| *Ni siquiera han trabajado. | *Aprendaba mucho español. |
| *La piscina está dividida en cuatro secciones. | *Tomía el desayuno. |
| *No quedía muy lejos. | *Aprendé mucho. |
| *¿Dónde cazía lagartos? | *Fuimos porque nos invitieron. |
| *Examiné mi rifle, pero no lo ve. | *Juan comó pero no paguó. |
| *Ofresó su ayuda. | *Vivó en Uruguay. |
| | *Tomieron un taxi. |

Theme class patterns can probably be practiced most effectively associating similar subpatterns and by drills which shift forms from one aspect-tense category to another.

The other major systemic difference in the Spanish and English verb systems is the pattern of inflection. English verb forms, like Spanish, have certain features in common: they are made up of stem and affixes; there are stem changes in irregular verbs; there are some similar categories of aspect and tense that are expressed; and both have regular and irregular patterns of conjugation with a large majority of regular verbs, but irregularities in some of the most common verbs. In spite of these features, the differences are much more conspicuous than the similarities.

Although English verbs cannot be classified by theme class, they can be compared to Spanish with respect to patterns of regularity. To do this, we must first discuss the English patterns.

There is an important difference that must be taken into account in comparing the irregularities of the Spanish and English verb systems. In Spanish, the irregularities are noted mostly in the individual forms of the verb; the design of the full conjugation is relatively stable. In English, verbs may also be irregular by reason of variations in individual verb forms, but there are additional differences in the number of forms that make up the basic pattern of conjugation. Spanish verbs all have forty-six to forty-eight forms, but English verbs vary in having from one to eight forms:



VERB FORMS, TENSE SYSTEM, AND ORGANIZATION OF EVENTS

Almost half of every elementary textbook is regularly devoted to teaching the forms of the verb and their functions. The amount of space and energy given to this problem can be explained, in part, by the fact that the verb is the most structurally complex form in the Spanish language. However, it has been shown in the section on morphology that much of this complexity can be reduced to systematic order by making a morphemic breakdown of the verb form. Similar economies can be achieved in teaching the function of the verb forms by establishing, first of all, the nature of the system and its relationship to events.

It is important, at the very outset, to deal with a number of misconceptions which seriously interfere with effective teaching. For several centuries both the scholar and the classroom grammarian have accepted the notion that the verb system is a time system. This belief is made manifest by the very word *tense* itself which derives from the French *temps* and, ultimately, from Latin *tempus*, meaning time. A standard, unabridged dictionary gives as one of its definitions of tense the following: "A form taken by a verb to indicate primarily the time ... of the action, being, or state; also, the temporal relation thus expressed."

The notion that the Spanish tense system deals primarily with time can readily be destroyed by making a careful analysis of the function of the morphemes of which tense forms are composed. Spanish verb forms, as already pointed out, have three parts: the stem and two

suffixes. The stem is the lexical part of the form, that is, it labels the action (when the form deals with an event), the state, or the grammatical function of the form (copula, for example). In all conjugated forms the second suffix, as already demonstrated, deals with the person and the number of the subject (*a, mos, n, s, is, d*). One of the prime functions of the first suffix is to indicate the difference between indicative and subjunctive mode (*comemos* versus *comamos*).

The verb forms which do not have person and number suffixes are the infinitive (*comprar, vender, vivir*), and the two participles (*comprado, comprando; vendido, vendiendo; vivido, viviendo*). The first suffix in all these forms has no semantic function; it is simply the class or thematic vowel. The third element (second suffix) is *r, do, or ndo*, which deal with aspect. At any given point, for example, *muriendo* describes an event in process while *muerto* describes a state which results from the completion or perfection of that event. This is the basic difference between *Está muriendo* (the event in progress) and *Está muerto* (the event has terminated with this result). The infinitive suffix *r* is aspectually neutral; it stands for the event in all its aspects.

None of the parts of the verb described so far has anything to do with time. It is linguistically improper and pedagogically confusing, as a consequence, to label *muriendo* as Present Participle and *muerto* as Past Participle. The form *muriendo* describes an event which may be in progress at some point in the past (*Estaba muriendo*), the present (*Está muriendo*), or the future (*Estará muriendo*). The form *muerto* describes an event completed in the remote past (*Había muerto*), anterior to the moment of speaking (*Ha muerto*), or before some point in the future (*Ya habrá muerto*). Neither form, obviously, deals with time.

Time plays a significant role in the tense system in a highly restricted and specialized fashion. This may be demonstrated by comparing the parts of the present and the past set of the conjugated verb forms.

In the following model the parts which are morphemically different are in blackface type. Remember that allomorphs of the same morpheme are functionally identical (*h = hab*).

PRESENT SET	PAST SET
<i>vend-e-mos</i>	<i>vend-ia-mos</i>
<i>h-e-mos vend-i-do</i>	<i>vená-i-mos</i>
<i>vend-e-r-e-mos</i>	<i>hab-ia-mos vend-i-do</i>
<i>hab-r-e-mos vend-i-do</i>	<i>vend-e-r-ia-mos</i>
	<i>hab-r-ia-mos vend-i-do</i>

It should now be immediately apparent that the only morphemic difference between these two sets of forms lies in the contrast between *e* in the present set and *ía ~ i* in the past set. This means, in a very practical sense, first, that Spanish views all events from just two axes of orientation (the present moment of speaking and a recalled moment of speaking) and, second, that the language has only two tenses, the present and the past. It follows, naturally, that a pedagogically effective description of each component morpheme must result in a formulation which differs radically from what is encountered in the usual textbook.

The first most important step in this new formulation is to make the student clearly aware of the fact that each morpheme in a verb form has a separate function. The next step is to describe how these forms are related to the Spaniard's way of organizing reality and sending messages.

The nucleus of every verb form is the stem which labels the event or state being talked about. All of the other morphemes in a verb form deal with something the Spaniard wants to say about the referent of the stem or about his way of dealing with this event. Precisely what this is may be discovered by first making an inventory of the form parts given in the model above and, then, describing the function of each part.

The component elements of the model paradigm are:

1. The main verb stem: *vend*
2. The auxiliary stem, which has two allomorphs, *h* and *hab*
3. The class vowel, either *e* or *i*
4. The person-number suffix: *mos*
5. The participial suffix: *do*
6. The infinitive marker: *r*
7. The vowel *a*, which appears in *ía*.

The stem of the main verb offers no problems; it merely labels the event under consideration. The person-number suffixes, rather obviously, have nothing to do with the tense system. They describe the subject performing the event. The class vowel, as such, has no semantic function. It only indicates that the verb is an *e* verb not an *a* or *i* verb. This vowel does perform one function which can be put aside for the moment, that is, it marks indicative mode (*vendemos ~ vendamos*).

It should be remembered, now, that language serves as a medium of communication only because sounds and forms stand in contrast with

each other. To understand, consequently, the tense system and how it functions, it is necessary to observe how the remaining parts of the model paradigm relate to each other.

There are just three sets of contrasting elements: (1) the first suffix (*e*) of the present set contrasts with the first suffix (*ía ~ i*) of the past set, (2) the *do* and *r* contrast with each other in both sets, and (3) the *ía* of the past set stands in contrast with *i*.

There are three very simple and fundamental facts about the nature of reality and man's organization of it which explain these three contrasts.¹ First of all, man can deal with events in only two basic fashions: (1) he may recall them, experience them, and anticipate them, and (2) he may talk about them. All four of these activities, it is important to note, can only take place in the present, that is, we recall, experience, anticipate, and talk *now*. These activities, moreover, are events in their own right, and they serve, consequently, as the prime axis of orientation around which all other events are organized. In short, every event that we talk about must be set in some relation to the act of talking about it. There are just two possible relationships. This may be explained somewhat easier if the prime axis of orientation is treated as a mathematical point.

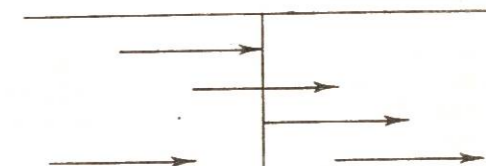


Fig. 3

All events take place in time and have two basic relationships to each other, that is, they are either simultaneous or sequent. Since time is a linear entity (the fourth dimension or coordinate) there are only three possible relationships between an event and a point in time. The event may be anterior to, simultaneous with, or posterior to the point. These relationships are examples of linear or serial order. Second, all events, theoretically, have a beginning, a middle, and an end which are described, in technical terms, as *initiative*, *imperfective*, and *terminative* aspect. There are just five possible relationships between the three aspects of an event and a point: the event may begin

¹ For a detailed discussion of this entire problem, see William E. Bull, *Time, Tense, and the Verb. A Study in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics, with Particular Attention to Spanish*. University of California Press, Berkeley, 1960.

or terminate before or after the point; the event may begin or terminate at the point, and, finally, it may be in progress (imperfective) at the point. These relationships may be diagrammed as in Figure 3.

With these facts established, the functions of the crucial contrastive pairs become fairly obvious. The first suffix in both sets serves to mark the major axes of orientation, that is, the act of speaking (the present) and some recalled act of speaking or experiencing (the past), marked by *e* (present set) and *ía ~ i* (past set). All events that are talked about are set in relation to these two prime axes in terms of two ways of relating events to each other, that is, order or aspect. In both sets *do* marks aspect and *r* indicates order, actually posteriority.

The present set may be analyzed as follows. The Present *vend-emos* describes an event which, in terms of order, is simultaneous with the event of speaking, and, in terms of aspect, imperfective at the moment of speaking. The form contains no morpheme which indicates either order or aspect. This is indicated by zero.

The Present Perfect is composed of the auxiliary verb (*h-e-mos*) whose function is to carry the axis, mode, and person-number marker. The main verb (*vend-i-do*) has the stem, the class marker, and the aspectual suffix *do*. The Present Perfect, then, describes an event whose initiative or terminative aspect is anterior to the event of speaking. In other words, at the moment of speaking the event has already either begun or come to an end. The form *do* may be considered ambivalent: it may be treated either as an aspect or order marker. What has been terminated before the act of speaking is automatically anterior to that act.

The only morphemic difference between the Present Perfect and the Future, as pointed out in the section on morphology, is the contrast between *do* and *r*. If zero in *vendemos* expresses simultaneity and *do* in *hemos vendido* indicates anteriority, then *r* in *venderemos* must, by elimination, indicate posteriority or, in terms of man's potential of dealing with events, anticipation. The form *venderemos* contains the same auxiliary as *hemos vendido* and the basic contrast, as a result, stems from the fact that the event, in one instance, is anterior to the prime axis (the event of speaking) and, in the other, posterior to this axis. Said in other words, the *emos* of all three forms is present tense and the three-way contrast between *ø*, *do*, and *r* indicates the order relationship between the event of speaking and the event being talked about. In short, this event is either anterior to, simultaneous with, or posterior to the event of speaking.

There are just two differences between the three forms just described and their back-shift equivalents in the past set. First, all of the

forms of the present set contain *e*, the prime axis marker, while all the past set forms contain *i*, which functions as the mark of the recalled or retrospective axis of orientation. Second, a comparison of *vend-i-mos* and *vend-ía-a-mos* shows that *a* marks imperfective aspect. In other words, *vendíamos* describes an event which was imperfect at the recalled axis while *vendimos* describes an event which, in theory, can have been only terminative or initiative at the recalled axis of orientation. The form *vendimos*, it should be noted, has no morpheme indicating aspect. This function is marked by zero.

Aside from the axis marker and a variant allomorph in the auxiliary, the Pluperfect and the Conditional have precisely the same structure as the Present Perfect and Future. The *do* indicates anteriority and the *r* posteriority to the recalled axis of orientation.

A comparison of the two sets of three forms already described shows the pattern in Figure 4. The abbreviation PP stands for the prime axis; RP for the retrospective axis.

Anterior	Simultaneous	Posterior
PP		
<i>h-e-mos vend-i-do</i>	<i>vend-e-mos</i>	<i>vend-e-r-e-mos</i>
RP		
<i>hab-ía-mos vend-i-do</i>	<i>vend-ía-mos</i> <i>vend-i-mos</i>	<i>vend-e-r-ía-mos</i>

Fig. 4

The difference between the two sets may now be stated as follows: RP is anterior to PP or, expressed in terms of time, RP is past and PP is present. The relationship between the event spoken about and the two axes of orientation is indicated by an order marker (*r*) in *venderemos* and *venderíamos* and by an aspect marker (*ø*, *a*, *do*) in all the other forms. It is to be noted, contrary to what the titles suggest, that the Future and the Conditional perform identical functions. One indicates anticipation at PP; the other anticipation at RP. In other words, the Conditional is to *vendíamos* precisely what the Future is to *vendemos*.

There remain to be discussed, now, two forms: the Future Perfect and the Conditional Perfect. Both of these contain the *r* which indicates posteriority and, at the same time, the *do* which marks either initiative or terminative aspect. This means, then, that the event being anticipated at either PP or RP will be perfected (initiated or terminated)

before some other event or point in time which is also being anticipated: *Dice que a la una ya lo habrá terminado; Dijo que a la una ya lo habría terminado.*

To achieve a better understanding of these two forms, it is helpful to observe that there are four perfect tenses in Spanish. Each one contains the morpheme *do* which, in terms of order, indicates anteriority. For an event to be anterior, it must be anterior to something, that is, to another event or to a point in time (which, in reality, is also an event). It is necessary, in view of these facts, to postulate the existence of four axes of orientation. The two prime axes (which are actually experienced) and two anticipated axes (which are never experienced). In other words, the speaker at PP anticipates an axis of orientation, AP, and states that an event anticipated at PP will be perfected before AP: *Antes de las dos mañana (AP) ya se habrá ido.* Once this has been done, the speaker can recall (at PP) that he anticipated (at RP) another axis (RAP) and say, for example, *Le dije que antes de las dos del día siguiente (RAP) ya se habría ido.*

The teacher should, now, observe that the English tense system exhibits the same basic structure as the Spanish. There are four perfect tenses and four axes of orientation. English, however, uses two auxiliary verbs to form the perfects (*to have* and *to will*). The Present Perfect, like Spanish, is composed of the Present of *to have* and the Perfect Participle (*he has sold, eaten, talked*). The Future Perfect is made up of the Present of *to will*, the form *have* plus the Perfect Participle (*he will have sold, eaten, talked*). English has one form of the Present which has no Spanish parallel, the construction with *do* which is used in forming questions (*Do you eat?*) and emphatic statements (*He does eat*). This is duplicated in the past set by *Did you eat?* and *He did eat*. The simple past (*He sold, ate, talked*), as is well known, may be equivalent to either the Preterite or the Imperfect in Spanish. In terms of the basic features, however, it is proper to say that both English and Spanish exhibit the same over-all structure in their tense systems. This is demonstrated in Figure 5.

To make the diagram easier to read, a single time line is represented by four separate lines. The two major axes of orientation are labeled PP (prime point) and RP (retrospective point). The two anticipated axes are AP (anticipated point) and RAP (retrospective anticipated point). The three notions of order (anteriority, simultaneity, and posteriority) are indicated by the symbols *-V*, *OV*, and *+V*. The *V* stands for the mathematical term *vector*, indicating direction.

A number of important observations are now in order. It is to be noted, first, that both systems are composed, in principle, of four sets

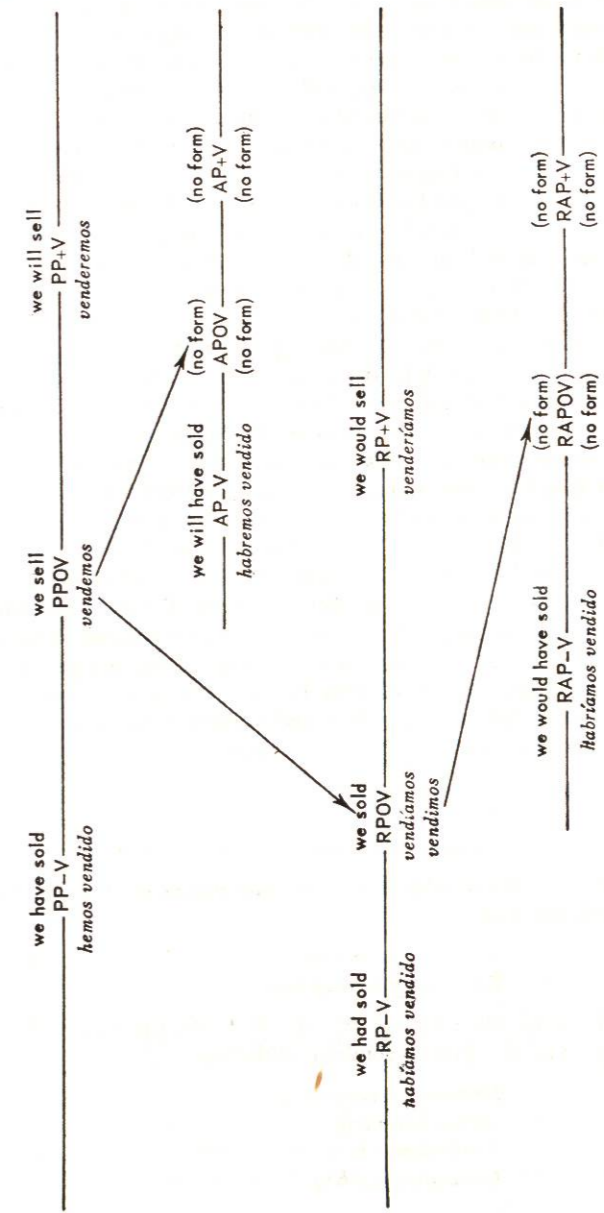


Fig. 5. Comparison of the Spanish and English Tense Systems