

of three forms which represent the three fundamental notions of order (anteriority, simultaneity, and posteriority). Second, that in both systems the notion of anteriority (minus vector) is expressed by the Perfect Participle, an aspectual form which means initiated or terminated anterior to the axis of orientation. Third, that all Spanish forms indicating posteriority (anticipation) contain the morpheme *r* whose equivalent in English is *will* or *would*. Fourth, that in both languages there are just two basic sets of tense forms, those oriented to PP (the present tense forms) and those oriented to RP (the past tense forms). Both languages, then, have only two tenses, the present and the past. (This happens to be also true of all the major languages of the world.) Fifth, that the anticipated sets in both languages are defective; there are no forms indicating zero and plus vector.

Attention now needs to be directed to the fact that a system based on four axes of orientation (with three order relations to each) cannot be synchronized with the three notions of calendar time: past, present, and future, or yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The traditional assumption that the tense system is a time construct has led textbook writers (and teachers) to believe that the functions of tense forms can be defined by relating them to the adverbs of time. The Preterite, for example, is associated with *ayer* (*lo vendimos ayer*), the Present with *hoy* (*lo vendemos hoy*), and the Future with *mañana* (*lo venderemos mañana*). This association, which appears to be quite logical, can only lead to confusion and contradictions in a pedagogical explanation of the function of tense forms. It is to be observed, first, that the contrast between *ayer*, *hoy*, and *mañana* does not explain why all these forms are also compatible with *hoy*:

*Lo vendimos hoy.*  
*Lo vendemos hoy.*  
*Lo venderemos hoy.*

Neither does it explain why both *vendemos* and *venderemos* are compatible with *mañana*:

*Lo vendemos mañana.*  
*Lo venderemos mañana.*

Nor can this association explain why the Preterite, the Present Perfect, the Present, and the Future combine with *hoy*:

*Lo hemos vendido hoy.*  
*Lo vendimos hoy.*  
*Lo vendemos hoy.*  
*Lo venderemos hoy.*

Finally, the attempt to relate tense forms to calendar time leads to the notion that *vendíamos* deals only with the past while, in fact, it is compatible with *ayer*, *hoy*, and *mañana*:

*Le dije que lo vendíamos ayer.*  
*Le dije que lo vendíamos hoy.*  
*Le dije que lo vendíamos mañana.*

The same combinatory potential is exhibited by *venderíamos*:

*Le dije que lo venderíamos ayer.*  
*Le dije que lo venderíamos hoy.*  
*Le dije que lo venderíamos mañana.*

The function of the tense forms, rather obviously, cannot be explained in terms of their compatibility with adverbs of calendar time. The reason for this becomes more apparent when one considers the underlying principles of the two systems. The words *ayer*, *hoy*, and *mañana* carry two pieces of information. First, they stand for the same interval of time as *día*. Second, each represents one of the three fundamental order concepts: *ayer* is the day anterior to PP, *hoy* is simultaneous with PP, and *mañana* is posterior to PP. In other words, these intervals of time are oriented (as are the past, the present, and the future) to the prime axis of orientation. They cannot, as a result, be used in talking of events oriented to RP. For example, the backshift of *Dice que lo hará mañana* can only be, after a day has passed, *Dijo que lo haría el día siguiente*. Under similar conditions the backshift of *Dice que lo hizo ayer* customarily becomes *Dijo que lo hizo el día anterior*. Because *ayer*, *hoy*, and *mañana* are oriented to PP they must be replaced in a back-shift by time intervals oriented to RP: *ayer* becomes *el día anterior*, *mañana* is replaced by *el día siguiente*, etc. As a result, any attempt to define the function of the forms of the past set by time adverbs oriented to PP leads only to serious contradictions.

The tense system is firmly based on the principles of relativity, and the function of each form, as a result, needs to be described in terms of the relationship between the event it labels and its axis of orientation. For example, the difference between the Present Perfect and the Preterite cannot be shown by observing that both describe events anterior to PP. In this sense they are identical, and a great many natives, consequently, treat them as free variants: *En este momento se fué ~ En este momento se ha ido*. The Present Perfect, however, deals with events oriented to PP while the Preterite also describes

events either initiated or terminated at RP. In the sequence *y en aquel momento se levantó y gritó* the form *gritó* cannot, in standard usage, be replaced by *ha gritado*. The Present Perfect, in other words, does not describe an event oriented to RP.

The Conditional, as demonstrated earlier, is perfectly compatible with *ayer*, *hoy*, or *mañana*. This has led some grammarians, who have tried to explain tense in terms of time, to the conclusion that it is some kind of special mode. This is a fundamental error. The Conditional describes an event which is posterior to RP (anticipated at RP). If RP happens to be anterior to *ayer*, then this event may take place quite logically within any of the intervals of time labeled *ayer*, *hoy*, or *mañana*. It is possible, in fact, that an event anticipated last week may not take place for months, years, or for several centuries.

It should now be obvious that if one wishes to avoid confusing the student it is necessary to abandon the traditional definitions of the tense forms. To say that the Conditional is a past tense does not mean that it *must* stand for an event which is anterior to PP. It means, rather, that it stands for an event which is oriented to an axis of orientation which is past, that is, anterior to PP. It is important to observe, in this connection, that there is only one member of the past set, the Pluperfect, which is not compatible, in the proper context, with *mañana*. Even the Preterite can be used to speak of an event being anticipated at PP (*Pues, hágalo mañana y se acabó*). The Imperfect Subjunctive regularly combines with *mañana* (*Si estuviera aquí mañana, podríamos hacerlo en una hora*). So does the Imperfect Indicative and the Conditional. The word *past*, consequently, can be legitimately used in speaking of tense forms only when it describes the axis of orientation. In this sense there is a set of past tenses, but this does not imply that these forms cannot be used to describe events which are to take place in the distant future. According to this formulation the Future (*llegará*) and the Conditional (*llegaría*) perform identical functions. Their difference lies only in the fact that one indicates anticipation at PP and the other at RP.

In Figure 5 each morpheme of the tense system appears to have a unique contrastive function. The zero of *vendemos* stands in fixed contrast with the *do* of *hemos vendido* or the *r* of *venderemos*. Similarly, the *e* of the present set contrast with the *ía* or *i* of the past set. These basic contrasts exemplify the fundamental structure of the tense system and the systemic function of each morpheme. In other words, these functions can be defined without the aid of context. *¿Qué has hecho?* stands in clear contrast with either *¿Qué haces?* or *¿Qué harás?* Similarly, *¿Qué haces?* contrasts neatly with *¿Qué hacías?*

These examples, however, tell only half of the story. No satisfactory description of all the uses of the Spanish tense forms is possible without recognizing that all of them have non-systemic functions. This means, in a very practical sense, that each tense form has a minimum of two potentials: a prime or basic function which must be assigned to it in order to account for the fundamental structure of the tense system and a secondary function which cannot be explained in terms of the basic system. The systemic functions, as just pointed out, can be established without the aid of context. The non-systemic functions, on the contrary, appear only when there is an obvious logical conflict between the systemic function and the context (or the facts in the universe of discourse). This situation may be exemplified as follows.

In terms of the basic system, all forms containing the morpheme *r* indicate anticipation, that is, the event described is posterior to either PP or RP. When these forms are combined with adverbs indicating the same order relationship, the *r* and the adverb are in logical agreement:

*Estará aquí pronto, mañana, la semana que viene.*  
*A la una mañana ya se habrá ido.*  
*Me dijo que estaría aquí el día siguiente.*

It is possible, however, to create combinations in which the *r* and the time-order adverb are in logical conflict, that is, the *r* indicates posteriority while the adverb expresses either simultaneity or anteriority. For example:

*Estará allí mañana.*                      *Estará allí ahora mismo.*  
*Ahora mismo se ha ido.*                *Ahora mismo se habrá ido.*  
*En aquel momento estaba allí.*      *En aquel momento estaría allí.*  
*A esa hora ya se había ido.*            *A esa hora ya se habría ido.*

The Spaniard, by arbitrary convention, assigns special meanings to these two types of combinations. There are three patterns or formulae.

1. Posteriority + posteriority = anticipation (the systemic function): *Estará aquí mañana*; *A la una mañana se habrá ido*. The Future combines with an adverb indicating futurity, that is, posteriority to PP.

2. Posteriority + simultaneity = probability or conjecture (a non-systemic function): *Estará allí ahora mismo*. The Future combines with an adverb indicating present, that is, simultaneity.

3. Posteriority + anteriority = probability or conjecture (a second non-systemic function): *Ya se habrá ido*. The Future Perfect combines with an adverb indicating anteriority to the moment of speaking (PP).

Since the present set and the past set have essentially identical structures each of the patterns just exemplified has its back-shift equivalent. *Estará allí ahora* becomes *Estaría allí en aquel momento*; *Ya se habrá ido* is replaced by *Ya se habría ido*, etc.

In all the examples just cited the future form is, so to speak, brought back one step in the order system, that is, the Future describes a hypothetical event at PP; the Future Perfect a similar event anterior to PP, etc. A second set of non-systemic functions is created by precisely the reverse process. For example, the Imperfect and the Conditional, which are oriented to RP, may be brought forward and combined with adverbs oriented to PP. This illogical combination indicates contrary-to-fact: *Si estuviera aquí ahora mismo, lo haría*. The formula is: RP + PP = contrary-to-fact. It is to be noted that it is not the subjunctive which provides this information but the combination of conflicting forms. The indicative (in sub-standard usage) produces the same results: *Si lo tenía en este momento, ya se lo daba*. English has the same pattern: *If I had it at this moment, I would already be giving it to you*.

The back-shift equivalent of these examples exhibits a somewhat different pattern. Since there is only one retrospective axis of orientation (RP) the forms move forward within the system. The Pluperfect replaces the Imperfect and the Conditional Perfect assumes the role of the Conditional: *Si hubiera estado aquí en aquel momento, lo habría hecho*. Note that the morpheme *do*, which systemically indicates perfective aspect (anteriority), here stands for imperfective aspect (simultaneity).

The existence of both systemic and non-systemic functions of tense forms poses numerous problems in teaching. To understand the student's problems the two systems need to be contrasted in terms of both functions. From the point of view of systemic functions the Spanish and English systems are very much alike. The Preterite and the Imperfect, of course, have no precise English parallel. All other forms have at least one matching function. This can be pedagogically deceptive since it gives the impression that a one-to-one translation from English to Spanish is always possible. This is not consistently so. There are numerous detailed points of difference. For example, Spanish uses the simple form of the Present to describe a single event in progress (*Hace masa*). The parallel English form, with only a restricted number of exceptions, describes habitual activity (*She makes dough*). English requires the Progressive to get the same idea (*She is making dough*). English uses the Present Progressive to speak of planned actions yet to be consummated (*I am*

*leaving tomorrow*). Spanish never uses the Progressive in this fashion, only the simple Present (*Me voy mañana*).

The non-systemic functions, as might be expected, do not match as neatly as the systemic. English still uses the Future and the Future Perfect to express conjecture or probability but the vast majority of students have no clear understanding of this function. Automatic projection cannot be trusted. To use English as the point of departure in teaching requires a prior explanation of the difference between *She is home now* ~ *She will be home now* and *He has already done it* ~ *He will have already done it*. The matching process terminates with these examples. English does not use the Conditional or the Conditional Perfect to express probability. English does, however, use the lexicon to express what Spanish does with a verb suffix. Students commonly have trouble understanding this parallelism. The difficulty stems from their inability to observe that a word and a suffix can perform the same function, and from the fact that they do not have a clear-cut understanding of the meaning of words like *wonder* and *must*. As a result, they fail to see, for example, the semantic equivalences in the following:

I wonder what time it is?	¿Qué hora será?
It must be one o'clock.	Será la una.

Most students, in addition, need training in order to distinguish between *must* indicating conjecture (*He must work a lot*) and *must* indicating compulsion (*He must work a lot*).

The fact that *must* is a defective verb creates very special problems in establishing the parallelism between conjecture in English and the non-systemic function of the tense forms in Spanish. The problem is to discover what in English cues the proper choice in Spanish. For example, in *He must be here* and *He must have been here* the basic contrast is between *be* and *have been*. *Must* indicates conjecture; *be* and *have been* the order relation to PP. So *be* describes a conjectured event simultaneous with PP and the Spanish equivalent requires the Future (*Estará aquí*). In contrast, *have been* refers to an event anterior to PP, so Spanish uses the Future Perfect (*Habría estado aquí*).

The entire problem is complicated by the fact that English also uses *must have been* to describe an event oriented to RP: *He must have been there before one o'clock*; *He must have been there at that moment*. The key to the choice of the proper Spanish equivalent is the order relationship expressed by the adverbs. *At that moment* indicates simultaneity with RP, so Spanish uses the Conditional

(*Estaría allí en aquel momento*); *before one o'clock* indicates anteriority to RP, and Spanish expresses this plus conjecture with the Conditional Perfect (*A la una habría estado allí*). It may be mentioned, in passing, that the Spanish translations of the defective verb *ought* can be taught by the procedures just outlined.

English exhibits the same non-systemic functions as Spanish in dealing with irrealty or statements contrary to fact. The forms of the past set are used to speak of the present and the future and the Pluperfect and the Conditional Perfect replace them in back-shifts:

If I were you, I would do it.	Si fuera Vd., lo haría.
If I had been you, I would have done it.	Si hubiera sido Vd., lo habría hecho.

English tends, more than Spanish, to replace the subjunctive in these constructions by the indicative (*If that was so, we would know it*). This is irrelevant to the non-systemic function. Remember that it is the use of a past set form at the present which indicates irrealty.

Much of the confusion and frustration that the student exhibits in dealing with the Spanish tense system stems from the fact that he does not understand that the same message can be sent by alternate constructions. An analysis of the system shows predictable alternatives.

**Future and Future Perfect.** The Future Perfect, as already shown, contains *r*, which indicates posteriority to PP, and *do*, which expresses anteriority to the anticipated axis of orientation (AP). The notion of anteriority can be expressed by a lexical item and, as a result, *Lo haremos antes de la una* conveys the same message as *A la una lo habremos hecho*. The *r* of *haremos* indicates posteriority to PP while *antes* indicates anteriority to *la una*. In actual usage the Spaniard prefers this alternate to the future perfect construction which is used so little that it hardly need be taught to elementary students.

The back-shift equivalent of the Future Perfect (*A la una lo habriamos hecho*) is virtually obsolete. It is almost always replaced by the Conditional and an order word (*Lo haríamos antes de la una*).

**Present and Present Progressive.** The Present and the Present Progressive are usually treated as potential free variants when describing an event which is in progress at the moment of speaking. This is not entirely correct. The statement of natural law requires the Present even though the event is in progress (*La tierra gira alrededor del sol*). The progressive, in these instances, is used to emphasize the

fact that the event is actually in progress at the moment of speaking (*Si, chiquito, en este momento la tierra está girando alrededor del sol*).

Most of the student's difficulties in dealing with the Present and the Present Progressive are created by the fact that Spanish and English have different conventions regulating the use of these forms. English uses the Progressive to speak of planned actions yet to be carried out (*She is getting married*); Spanish never does this. It uses either the *ir a* construction (*Va a casarse*) or the simple Present (*Se casa*). English, contrary to Spanish convention, may use either the Present or the Present Progressive to describe a customary or habitual action which is not actually in progress at the moment of speaking. One can, for example, say of a man who is actually fishing either *He works in a factory* or *He is working in a factory*. This conflicts with Spanish conventions. Spanish uses the Present to speak of the norm. For example, Pedro is by trade a machinist. It is normal to expect him to work in a factory (*Pedro trabaja en una fábrica*). In contrast, a lawyer or school teacher would not be expected, in terms of his profession, to be working in a factory. This is a deviation from the norm, and is expressed by *Está trabajando en una fábrica*. Another example of this contrast might be *Llora mucho* (the normal pattern) and *Está llorando mucho* (there is something wrong; this is unusual). It follows, then, from these observations that *¿Qué haces?* and *¿Qué estás haciendo?* are potentially different. To a child playing a game one might say, *Chiquito, ¿qué haces?*, but a child setting fire to grandmother's skirt may well elicit *¡Chiquito! ¿Qué estás haciendo?*

In both English and Spanish the Progressive is more restrictive than the Present. English, like Spanish, does not use the Progressive to state a natural law. Both languages use the Progressive to state specifically that the action is literally in progress at the moment of speaking. Both, in principle, may also use the Present for the same purpose. English, however, puts great limitations on this function. Verbs like *hear*, *see*, *love*, *hate*, *welcome*, *wonder*, or *guess*, which label personal events, are used in the simple Present to speak of an action in progress. This is not possible with external or physical events. *I make pies* is not the same as *I am making pies*. This difference has not been thoroughly described by linguists. One can say *I hear you* but must say *I am listening to you* when the activity is in progress. Spanish, in contrast, can use the simple Present in all these examples. In actuality Spanish prefers the Present and students

should, as a result, be discouraged from projecting a too frequent use of the Progressive.

**Present Perfect and Preterite.** The morpheme *do* of the Present Perfect indicates that the event is perfected (initiated or terminated) prior to PP. The tense suffix of the Preterite indicates the same fact, that is, with minor exceptions, the Preterite describes an event either initiated or terminated prior to PP. To understand the difference between these two tense forms it is necessary to have a clear understanding of their polar contrasts.

In its basic systemic function the Present Perfect describes an event anterior to and oriented to PP. The amount of anteriority is, in principle, irrelevant. The systemic function of the Preterite, in contrast, indicates that an aspect of an event (either initiative or terminative) is simultaneous with and oriented to RP. At these poles the two forms are not interchangeable. An event simultaneous with RP cannot be expressed by a systemic function of the Present Perfect. This means, in a very practical sense, that a morpheme indicating anteriority cannot be used to express simultaneity. This is a contradiction of the systemic function of the morpheme.

In teaching, special emphasis needs to be placed on the orientation of the two forms. It is obvious, in principle, that any event anterior to PP may be described by either the Present Perfect or the Preterite. The contrastive difference lies in how relationships are organized or, said in other words, the relevance of the event to either the past or the present. An event which has over-riding current relevance will require the Present Perfect (*¡Dios mío! ¡Vaya por el médico! ¡Papá se ha herido!*). The action of *herirse* has a direct bearing on what is about to happen.

The importance of current relevance can be made more dramatic by this example. Two strangers have just met. They obviously share no common experience associated with the past. Neither, under these circumstances, can say to the other *¿Estuvo Vd. en Madrid?* The Preterite implies an event relevant to some point in the past. Since this is impossible, the only meaningful question is *¿Ha estado Vd. en Madrid?* The Preterite, in other words, is associated with the past while the Present Perfect, as its name suggests, is associated with the present.

This difference in orientation implies, obviously, that the two forms have different combinatory potentials. The precise nature of this difference cannot be made apparent without first discussing the struc-

ture of calendar systems and the difference between **point present** and **extended present**.

It has already been shown that the prime point (PP) of the tense system needs to be treated as a mathematical point, a present without dimension. At this point (the instant of speech) all events are categorized as either anterior (perfected), simultaneous (imperfective) or posterior (anticipated). The same principle is applied to intervals of calendar time. At PP the interval called *hoy* must be, so to speak, imperfective, that is, the day has begun but has not yet come to an end. The interval *hoy* is, then, an extended present which encompasses the point present (PP). The calendar interval *ayer* has the same length as *hoy* but is anterior to *hoy* and does not encompass PP. It is possible with these facts in mind, to establish three kinds of order relationships: (1) the event is anterior to PP, (2) the event is anterior to PP but within the interval of time encompassing PP, and (3) the event is anterior to PP but within an interval of time which is also anterior to the interval encompassing PP.

The combinatory potentials of the Present Perfect and the Preterite may now be stated in terms of these factors.

1. When an event is anterior to PP, but not oriented to RP, the Present Perfect and the Preterite are potential free variants. Choice depends on the principle of current relevance. When this is not significant to the message, either form may be used (*Ya se fué, Se ha ido ya; Se rompió, Se ha roto*). Either form indicates that the event is perfected anterior to PP.

2. When the event is anterior to PP but encompassed by the time interval containing PP, the alternatives just described are still operative (*Se fué hoy, se ha ido hoy; se rompió hoy, etc.*).

3. When the event is anterior to PP, but not oriented to RP, and is encompassed by a calendar interval anterior to the one containing PP, only the Preterite is used (*Se fué ayer; Se rompió ayer; Lo hicieron el año pasado; Lo conocí en 1914, etc.*). The elimination of the Present Perfect in these contexts explains its name. It describes, in its systemic function, an event perfected anterior to PP but encompassed by the extended present. Events which are anterior to the extended present (*hoy, esta semana, este año, etc.*) are, by convention, associated with the past and are described by a form from the past set, in the current instance, the Preterite.

**Preterite and Imperfect.** The contrastive functions of the Preterite and Imperfect have been a major source of difficulty for both teacher and student. There is no need for this when the problem is properly for-

mulated. To get a useful formulation it should be observed, first, that the Preterite and Imperfect, contrary to what is commonly said in many textbooks, are not separate tenses. They contrast only in terms of aspect. The Imperfective, as its name suggests, labels events which are imperfective. The Preterite stands for either the initiative or terminative aspect of events.

There are three sets of contrasts which need to be kept sharply differentiated and have to be taught separately. First, since the Preterite and Imperfect are oriented to RP, they not only stand in contrast with each other but, in addition, stand in contrast with the Present. The Present, in its systemic function, states that an event is in progress (imperfective) at PP. The Preterite, like the Present Perfect, states that the event is perfected anterior to PP (*¿Lo hace? No. Ya lo hizo.*). The event is not oriented to RP; it is treated as being simply anterior to PP.

The Imperfect, like the Preterite, may stand in contrast with the Present. The Present may describe a series of events or customary actions which have been going on in the extended present and which, it is assumed, will continue in the future (*José hace reatas; María canta bien*). In principle these activities are imperfective at any point within the extended present. They can, then, be set in contrast with different activities which were in progress anterior to the extended present:

*José hace reatas. Antes hacía anillos.  
María canta bien. Hace poco cantaba mal.*

These events, it should be noted carefully, are not oriented to RP. The contrast is exclusively between what happens in the extended present and what used to happen prior to this present. In other words, what used to happen makes sense only when compared with what is taking place now (*Si, vivía en México, pero ahora vive en California*).

The second contrast between the Preterite and Imperfect exists because the Imperfect, as a back-shift of the Present, may describe planned actions which, at RP, have yet to be executed. Thus the backshift of *Dice que se casan* is *Dijo que se casaban*. The consummation of the event is anticipated at RP. The Preterite does not perform this function. When combined with a verb of reporting or observation it always describes an event anterior to the event of reporting or observing (*Dice que se casaron; Dijo que se casaron*). A perfect tense can replace the Preterite in these cases (*Dice que se han casado; Dijo que se habían casado*). The Preterite, then, deals with what has started or finished; the Imperfect describes what is still

in progress, actually in these examples, with the stages leading up to the event.

The third contrast between the Preterite and the Imperfect exemplifies their function when the event under consideration has one aspect which is simultaneous with RP. There are just three possible relationships simply because events have only three aspects (initiative, imperfective, and terminative). In other words, an event may begin at RP, be in progress at RP, or terminate at RP. The Imperfect regularly describes the event in progress (*A la una moría, cantaba, se afeitaba, componía, caminaba, etc.*). The Preterite is used to describe either the initiative or terminative aspect. Since this one form has a dual function the difference, obviously, must be inferred from the nature of the event or from context. The role of the event will be discussed first.

It was pointed out earlier that Spanish has no formal way of classifying events. This does not mean that they are not divided into functional sets. In fact, all events are members of one or the other of two grand sets. One set is composed of events which cannot be observed or reported until they are terminated. Two cars, for example, do not collide until contact is made. A glass does not break until a crack appears. We do not drop something until we let loose of it. A door is not closed until it touches its frame. A plane does not land until its wheels touch the runway. In these examples, when the event takes place, it automatically terminates. It cannot be extended and it cannot be repeated without going through all the phases of the cycle again, that is, the door can be closed again only after being opened. The plane cannot land again without first taking off another time. We cannot drop the handkerchief before we pick it up again. Because each phase in the cycle must be gone through before the event can be repeated, these events are called **cyclic events**. It is to be noted, and with extreme caution, that this term applies only to events, not to the verbs which stand for them.

The second set of events is composed of events whose characteristics are all observable at the instant of their initiation. The acts of eating, crying, walking, hearing, running, speaking, moving, etc. can be observed and defined at their very inception. They do not have to reach termination to take place and, once begun, they can, in theory, be extended indefinitely. These are called **non-cyclic events**.

Cyclic and non-cyclic events underlie many rules of usage which cannot be appropriately discussed at this point. For the moment it is sufficient to observe that when there is no context other than what is needed to define RP, the Preterite regularly indicates the initiative

aspect of non-cyclic events and the terminative aspect of cyclic events. This may be demonstrated by comparing *A la una murió* with *A la una oyó el ruido*. In the first example the event terminates at one o'clock; in the second it begins at one o'clock. *Morir* stands for a cyclic event (you have to be reincarnated to do it again) while *oír* labels a non-cyclic event (once you begin to hear a noise you can keep on doing so as long as it persists).

It is important, now, to re-emphasize that cyclic and non-cyclic describe events, not classes of verbs. A verb may have ambivalent potentials. The act of eating, for example, is non-cyclic; it can be extended. In contrast, eating an apple is an event which eventually comes to an end because the apple is consumed. To eat, in the general sense, is non-cyclic. To eat an apple, in contrast, is cyclic. It must be understood, as a result, that the function of the Preterite, like any verb form having dual potentials, is determined by context or the universe of discourse. In *Protestó mucho, pero, al fin, se sentó y comió* the form *comió* may mean "began to eat" or "ate the meal." There are, however, many contexts in which no such ambivalence is possible. The answer to "At what age did you begin to walk?" may be *Anduve a los once meses*. Here the Preterite unequivocally indicates initiative aspect, the beginning of an activity that is still going on. A similar lack of ambiguity appears in this example. A car stopped running because of a faulty wire. A mechanic replaced the wire *y luego funcionó maravillosamente*. It might be noted, at this juncture, that the classical rule which states that the Preterite refers to an event completed in the past does not describe the facts. If this were true, the Spaniard could not describe the formation of the earth which was blasted from the sun in a cataclysmic explosion and, being propelled into orbit, *giró alrededor del sol*. Neither could the Spaniard translate *Genesis* into his language. For the Lord said, "Let there be light *y hubo luz*." The earth is still revolving around the sun and there is still light. The Preterite may describe events completed in the past or events which are now going on but were initiated in the past.

It may be said, now, in recapitulation, that at RP the Imperfect describes the imperfective aspect of either cyclic or non-cyclic events (*moría, caminaba*) while the Preterite is used in speaking of the terminative aspect of cyclic events or the initiative aspect of non-cyclic events (*A la una se fué; El presidente habló a la una*).

This formulation eliminates the need for special rules dealing with *supo ~ sabía, conoció ~ conocía*, etc. To know, in the sense of possessing knowledge, and to know, in the sense of being acquainted

with, have all the characteristics of non-cyclic events. Both are definable at their inception and both may be extended indefinitely. It follows, then, that *saber* and *conocer* differ in no way from other non-cyclic events. The Preterite (*supo, conoció*) indicates initiative aspect (the beginning of knowing, in either sense) while the Imperfect (*sabía, conocía*) describes the event in progress. The Spaniard's way of organizing reality is, however, thoroughly disguised by the standard English translations. English, first of all, uses three different verbs: *to know, to meet, and to find out*. Two of these (*to meet* and *to find out*) label cyclic events and represent, consequently, a quite different way of organizing the same reality. It is improper, as a result, to attempt to define the meaning of Spanish by these translations. The two cultures are looking at reality through different windows and from a frame of reference of different logics.

It is, perhaps, needless to say that the Preterite and Imperfect cannot be effectively taught by using English cues. The *ing* and *used to* patterns do, of course, consistently signal the choice of the Imperfect. The simple English past tense is, however, completely ambivalent, and speakers of English, as a result, are not trained to observe aspectual differences. It follows, then, that the first step in teaching the Preterite and Imperfect needs to be training in this new discrimination. This can be done quite effectively with English examples. Once the student can recognize the three aspects of an event, the rule poses no problem. The middle always takes the Imperfect, the two ends, the Preterite. There are no exceptions.

The student, obviously, does not have to distinguish between initiative and terminative aspect in order to select the Preterite. He only needs to know that the event is not imperfective at RP. The distinction is necessary, of course, in order to comprehend the message. Without this knowledge he cannot, for example, understand the function of the contrasting forms of *saber* and *conocer*.

A final word of caution to the teacher may be worth while before leaving the question of the Preterite and Imperfect contrast. It should be remembered, first, that the existence of cyclic and non-cyclic events makes it necessary, in general, to use two verbs to exemplify the difference between initiative and terminative aspect. Second, great care is needed to keep the student from confusing the three basic contrasts between the Preterite and the Imperfect. Textbooks rarely model these contrasts in minimal pairs and many of them try to account for all functions with one omnibus rule. Under these conditions the student never acquires the native's feel for the various discriminations.

**Preterite and Pluperfect.** The Pluperfect, in its systemic function, describes an event perfected prior to RP (*A esa hora ya había ido a casa*). The Preterite may perform this same function when RP is established by using a verb of reporting (*Confesó que fueron al campo, cogieron la fruta, y la comieron*). Since what is reported must be anterior to the act of reporting there is no need for a special form to say this.

**Indicative and Subjunctive.** The systemic difference between the Indicative and the Subjunctive is usually not spelled out in teaching texts. The basic difference arises from the fact that modern Spanish, for all practical purposes, does not have a full complement of subjunctive forms. The tense system, as already demonstrated, is based on three order relations and four axes of orientation. Each set of tenses, however, has only two forms of the subjunctive. Each form, as a result, must perform two functions. *Venga* may stand for an event simultaneous with PP (*Dudo que venga ahora*) or one being anticipated at PP (*Dudo que venga mañana*). The form, consequently, has all of the potentials of the Present and the Future. Also, in the example just cited, *venga* may stand for planned action and be the equivalent of *viene* (*Sé que viene mañana*) or for a predicted event, and be the equivalent of *vendrá* (*Creo que vendrá mañana*). Both forms of the Imperfect Subjunctive exhibit the same ambiguity (*Dudaba que viniera ~ viniese al día siguiente*).

The Present Perfect and Pluperfect Subjunctive exhibit the same dual potential. The Present Perfect may describe an event anterior to PP (*Espero que haya decidido*) or one posterior to PP and anterior to AP (*Espero que, a esa hora, ya haya decidido*). The back-shifts are *Esperaba que hubiera ~ hubiese decidido*.

The traditional names for these forms disguise their functions and frequently confuse the student. It is linguistically improper to suggest to the student that *vendemos* and *vendamos* differ only in terms of mode. The system is defective, and the order function of the subjunctive has been neutralized. Much confusion can be avoided by a new formulation, that is, by stating, for example, that the Present and Future Subjunctive have the same form. This is pedagogically valid since the obsolete Future Subjunctive is normally not taught in anything but the most advanced classes. The student who is trained in this fashion will have less difficulty comprehending that in adverbial clauses the indicative describes what is being recalled and the subjunctive what is anticipated. This special contrast will be discussed in the following section.

## REVIEW

1. What makes the verb the most structurally complex form in Spanish?
2. *Tense* derives from what Latin and French words?
3. What is the function of the verb stem? The person-number suffixes?
4. What marks the different verb classes?
5. Is there an error in speaking of *ar, er, and ir* verbs?
6. Does the infinitive suffix *r* have an aspectual function?
7. What is wrong with using the terms *Present* and *Past Participle*?
8. What is the only morphemic difference between the present and past set of tense forms?
9. Can you explain what is meant by an axis of orientation?
10. Can you isolate and define all the morphemes of the tense system? For *a* and *i* verbs also?
11. What are the three basic contrasts in the tense system?
12. What are the two basic ways man may deal with events?
13. Where, in time, do all of man's activities take place?
14. What are the three possible relationships between two events or an event and an axis of orientation?
15. How many aspects may an event have? Can you define these in simple terms?
16. Can you diagram the five possible relationships between the aspects of an event and a point in time (axis of orientation)?
17. What are the functions of the first suffix? When is it zero?
18. Can you make a simple analysis of each tense form and exemplify each function by minimal pairing?
19. What is the morphemic difference between the Present Perfect and the Future?
20. What is the morphemic difference between *vendimos* and *vendíamos*?
21. What do PP, RP, AP, and RAP stand for?
22. The existence of four perfect tenses requires what conclusion about axis of orientation?
23. How do the Spanish and English systems differ?
24. How many tenses do the major languages of the world have? Can you prove this morphemically?
25. Why is it impossible to define tense function by calendar adverbs of time?
26. What two pieces of information are carried by calendar adverbs of time?
27. To what axis is *ayer* oriented?
28. What is the back-shift of *mañana*?
29. In what way does relativity affect the description of the function tense forms?
30. Can you demonstrate that the Conditional is the Future of the past? By meaning? By a morphemic analysis?

31. Must all past tenses deal with past events?
32. What is meant by systemic and non-systemic functions?
33. Can you give examples of all systemic and non-systemic functions?
34. What are the formulae for expressing conjecture or probability?
35. Is the subjunctive necessary in expressing irrealis?
36. What are the basic differences in the function of English and Spanish tense forms?
37. Can you explain how English uses the lexicon to express what Spanish does with the verbal suffixes?
38. What problems does the defective *must* create for the student learning Spanish?
39. Can you isolate and describe the comparable functions of
  - (a) Future and Future Perfect
  - (b) Present and Present Progressive
  - (c) Present Perfect and Preterite
  - (d) Preterite and Imperfect
  - (e) Preterite and Pluperfect?
40. What is the significance of the point present and the extended present in choosing tense forms?
41. What are the basic differences in systemic function between indicative and subjunctive?

## THE AUXILIARY CONSTITUENTS OF THE VERB PHRASE

# 6

The verb phrase is the focal point of a large proportion of the difficulties that exist in grammatical description and pedagogical presentation. We owe much to the analysis of the semantic correlates of the tense-aspect system to Twaddell (1960), and Bull (1960, 1961), although we have not followed either of them in detail. There are two kinds of problems: those of the verbal elements themselves, and those of the non-verbal elements which may appear in a verb phrase. No one has exhaustively described the number and variety of classes into which verbs themselves fall in any language. Here, with English examples, are some of the considerations (by no means all) that enter into verb classifications:

1. What kinds of subjects are permitted?

A verb like *propose*, for example, in a sentence like:

He proposed two new resolutions.

cannot be used with a non-human subject without personifying that subject; in:

The alligator proposed two new resolutions.

either the word *alligator* is a peculiar name for a person or the sentence occurs in an animal fable in which all the animals are personified.

2. What kinds of objects, if any, are permitted?

A verb like *interest*, *terrify*, or *amaze* seems to require a human—or at least an animate—object:

The volcano terrified the people.

(but it presumably did not terrify the trees, the rocks, the sand).

3. How many objects, if any, are permitted?

Some verbs allow no object:

They competed in the Olympics.

Some allow only one:

They believed his story.

And some allow two:

They gave him a book.

4. What kinds of adverbs, if any, are permitted?

The class of locative adverbs (LOC) includes certain prepositional phrases: *in New York*, *in the other room*, *on the table*; and the class of directional adverbs (DIR) includes others: *to New York*, *to the table*. DIR can occur only with verbs of motion:

He went to New York.

but not, for example, with verbs of mental state, which take LOC:

He thought about it 

at
in

 the movies.

but not

\*He thought about it to the movies.

Some verbs cannot occur at all without an adverb:

He put it in the garage.

but not

\*He put it.

5. What kinds of transformations can the verb undergo?

Only certain transitive verbs allow omission of the object (*He sells for a living*) or deletion of the agent (*This book reads easily*). The verbs that take complements are of several types: those that take complements consisting of *be* + *Pred* (*He believed me to be intelligent*); those that take complements consisting of *to* + *VP* (*He wanted me to go*); those that take complements consisting of *ing* + *VP* (*She imagined him doing it*); and so on.

6. What kinds of auxiliaries can appear in the verb phrase?

Although we can say:

He might have been being fresh when she slapped him.

we cannot say:

\*He might have been being in the park when she slapped him.

That is, *might have been being* is all right as an auxiliary with some classes of VP, but not with others.

Discussion of the VP, because of the variety of these considerations, is complicated. It requires examination of one constituent at a time, always bearing in mind the fact that none of the parts are independent of the whole. The phrase structure rule which breaks the full verb phrase of Spanish into its constituents is this: