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List of Abbreviations

L1 – First Language

L2 – Second Language

impf. – imperfective aspect

perf. – perfective aspect

ger. – German

sr. – Serbian

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1. Introduction

It has been established by numerous studies that German L1 learners of English exhibit difficulties when it comes to acquiring the English aspectual system, resulting in either an overuse or almost complete avoidance of progressive forms (Dürich 2005, Komaier 2013). This is explained by the fact that German does not generally make aspectual differentiations and thus the correct application of the morphologically marked progressive form causes most problems. Another study by Schmiedtovà (2003) shows that when learning a Slavic language, German speakers tend to overuse perfective aspect, while English speakers use imperfective aspect more frequently. These and other studies seem to prove that the L1 tends to have a relatively large influence on the acquisition of aspectual systems of various foreign languages. In order to research this claim, a comparison of the acquisition of English aspect between German L1 learners and learners with an L1 which has an aspectual system seems to be adequate. For this purpose Serbian, a language which is very common in Viennese classrooms, has been chosen. Serbian, unlike German, differentiates aspect morphologically and can thus, in this regard, be compared to English. The main difference between the aspectual systems of English and Serbian are, however, that in English the aspectual opposition is between progressive and non-progressive (or simple), whereas in Serbian it is that between perfective and imperfective.

The aim of the thesis is to see whether the acquisition and use of verbal aspect of Serbian L1 learners of English with a proficiency in German differs from monolingual German speaking ones due to the differences of their mother tongues as well as how relevant of a factor a student's L1 is when acquiring correct aspectual use. Since Austrian (and particularly Viennese) schools have many Serbian speaking students, a study in which the use of verbal aspect by Serbian speaking students in Austrian schools is analyzed seems reasonable in the realm of English teaching, since a clear divergence in the results of these two groups of learners could give some indications to possible improvements of English teaching classrooms.

This thesis is divided into two main parts, which are preceded by a brief overview of the differences between Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian. This kind of clarification seems necessary given the complicated status regarding the naming of the language(s) and, since in this thesis the term *Serbian* is used, to avoid confusion.

The first part will cover the theoretical background on aspect in general. Firstly, the categories of both grammatical and lexical aspect will be discussed, since their relation is an important factor in the acquisition of grammatical aspect. This will be followed by a discussion of the grammatical systems of English and Serbian, but also the means German has at its disposal to express aspectual differentiations, will be discussed. These will then be compared to each other. Finally, some theoretical background will be provided concerning the L2 acquisition of aspect. This will include the interlanguage theory, which will also cover the basics of error analysis. Furthermore, the aspect hypothesis will briefly be presented, which claims that the acquisition of aspect is largely influenced by a verb's semantic quality, and can thus predict in which order grammatical aspect is acquired by a language learner irrespective of their L1.

The second part of this paper is a presentation of the study. In order to establish in how far the acquisition of English aspect differs between these two groups of learners, a small scale study with 30 participants (15 with German as their L1, 15 with Serbian as their L1) has been conducted and evaluated via error analysis. The main aim of the study is to determine the most important factors relevant for the acquisition of the aspectual system of English in the case of German L1 speakers and Serbian L1 speakers with German as their L2. Since it is insufficient to solely compare the results of the two groups with each other, to establish whether a learner's L1 is the dominant factor, the study is further divided into two smaller parts. The first part is concerned with the analysis of the results according to verb groups, i.e. the aspect hypothesis is tested and the results are then compared within the two groups with different L1s. This is done in order to identify in how far the aspect hypothesis is independent of a learner's L1. The second part of the study compares the two groups according to prototypical uses of the progressive and simple forms, respectively. Since the basis of this study is the assumption that Serbian L1 influence will be seen most clearly in the use of the English progressive, due to the analogy of progressive and imperfective aspect, categories which favor the use of progressive aspect in English and imperfective aspect in Serbian are taken into consideration and the results are compared within the two groups of learners. These categories are the Inzidenzschema (term adopted from Pollak 1960), simultaneity and duration. In addition, the category of habituality is included, which is supposed to test negative Serbian L1 interference. Habituality is part of imperfective aspect in Serbian, whereas

in English it is usually expressed by a verb's simple form and in the case of past habituality, constructions with *would* or *used to* can be used as well. Finally, the results will be discussed and suggestions will be made on how and if the outcome of this study can be useful in the field of English classroom teaching of aspect.

2. On Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian

As the title of the present thesis suggests, the acquisition of German L1 and Serbian L1 learners of English will be compared. Serbian (besides Bosnian and Croatian) is one of the varieties of the language that used to be called Serbo-Croatian until the early 1990's. The theoretical research for this thesis will largely be based on Serbian material and the majority of the participants for the practical research will be students with Serbian as their L1. For that reason I decided to only use the term *Serbian* in this paper. Still, since also Bosnian and Croatian sources will be drawn upon, it appears reasonable to include a brief explanation of the linguistic situation concerning Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian and have a look at the main differences between these three varieties.

Although the standard languages in Serbia and Croatia are almost identical, Serbians call their language Serbian, while Croats call theirs Croatian (Mattusch 1999: 74). Hetzer even goes as far as to say that Croatian and Serbian are one and the same language (1993: 33). Regarding the three languages' morphology, the most striking difference is the pronunciation of the common Slavic sound which is generally known as Jat (Ђ, Ѓ). In the standard languages of Bosnia, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia there are two different realizations of that sound. The Serbian standard is ekavian, i.e. a Jat is always realized as /e/, which can be either short or long and can carry all of the four accents Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian can have. The Serbian variant in Bosnia or Montenegro, however, is ijekavian, as in standard Croatian and Bosnian, i.e. a long Jat is pronounced /ije/, whereas a short one is pronounced /je/ and palatalizes a preceding /l/ or /n/, e.g. lepši vs. ljepši //lepʃi/ ('more beautiful') (Brown, 1994: 11).

The term Bosnian is reserved for the Muslims of Bosnia (Völkl, 2002: 211). With regards to phonology, Bosnian tends to preserve the /x/ sound in words in which standard Serbian and Croatian have already lost it, e.g. *lahko* vs. *lako* (easy, light). Another peculiarity of Bosnian is the preservation of double consonants in certain Turkish loanwords like *Allah* or *džennet* (engl. 'Jannah'), whereas in Serbian and Croatian the doubling of the consonants is usually disregarded. With regards to vocabulary, Bosnian tends to use more Turkish loanwords in comparison to Serbian, and especially to Croatian (Völk, 2002: 212). A Serbian peculiarity is the use of the

da-construction (i.e. *da* 'that' in combination with a verb in the present tense in agreement with the subject) after modal verbs in cases in which in Croatian and mostly Bosnian the infinitive is used, as in *želim da kažem* ('I want to say', lit. 'I want that I say') instead of *želim kazati* ('I want to say') (Neweklowsky, 2002:446).

Besides these morphological and phonological differences, there are also some lexical differences among the three standard languages, like Croatian. *kolodvor* vs. Serbian. *stanica* 'station, e.g. for trains, buses, etc.' (Wingender, 2002: 284).

3. The Verbal Category of Aspect

3.1. Aspect vs. Tense

The first issue which needs to be addressed before starting the discussing on verbal aspect is the difference between aspect and tense. Although both terms are often treated as one category in traditional grammars of many languages, including English (Comrie 1976: 3), they differ, in fact, significantly from each other in that they are different verbal concepts.

The reason aspect and tense are sometimes confused is owed to the fact that they tend to be very closely connected to each other, i.e. often a verb form carries both tense and aspect. Still, it is possible to make an independent interpretation of both categories, regardless of how intertwined they are in certain languages (Maslov 1985: 2). Both aspect and tense are concerned with time, but in a different way. Generally speaking, tense expresses time in relation to the moment of the utterance. Thus if we speak of a situation which took place before the speech time, we use the past tense, if the described situation refers to the future, the future tense is used and if the moment of the utterance and the moment we describe overlap, we use the present tense (Li, Shirai 2000: 2). Since they refer to the moment of speech, they are generally described as deictic (Comrie 1976: 5; Krause 1998: 24; Maslov 1985: 2).

Aspect on the other hand is concerned with “the temporal contour of a situation described” (Li, Shirai 2000: 2). It does not relate the time of a situation to any other point in time, but is concerned with the internal temporal structure of a situation. Thus Comrie describes aspect as “situation internal” whereas tense is “situation-external” (1976: 5). He exemplifies the difference by comparing French *il lisait* with *il lut*, and English *he was reading* with *he read*. In both cases the difference is one of aspect and not of tense, since all four sentences have an absolute past reference. Thus, in these cases we need to differentiate between perfective and imperfective aspect and not in terms of tense (Comrie 1976: 3).

3.2. Aspect

Having indicated that tense and aspect are in fact two distinct verbal categories, it is now necessary to look in more detail at aspect and clarify what it actually refers to. Like tense, aspect is a verbal category used to express temporal concepts (Li, Shirai 2000:1), and while tense can be divided into present, past and future, the most common distinction within verbal aspect is that between perfective and imperfective aspect. As we will see later, this is not the only categorization of aspect, but it is often seen as the prototypical one and studies on aspect often do not allow a divergence from this perfective/imperfective pattern (Krause 1998: 1). The traditional approach to describing these two aspects is by linking perfective aspect to a completed action, whereas the imperfective refers to incompleteness. Bache gives the Russian example *On pročítal knjigu*, which corresponds to English *he read the book* - which indicates that the process of reading was completed, in other words, that the reader finished the book. In contrast, the sentence *On čítal knjigu* ('he read (impf.) the book', 'he was reading the book') only differs in verbal aspect, i.e. instead of a perfective verb its imperfective counterpart is used. This sentence only carries the information that the action of reading took place, but does not say anything about whether the reader finished the book or not (Bache 1985: 7). However, one problem with the notions of completed vs. ongoing, as Bache claims, are perfective verbs like *poljubít'* 'to take a liking to, to fall in love' or *zaplakat'* 'to start to weep' which denote the beginning of a situation, hence describing these verbs as completed actions is difficult to justify (1985: 7).

Comrie illustrates aspectual distinction with the following sentence, presented in five languages which have an aspectual opposition, where an action occurs while another action is going on:

- (1) English: John was reading when I entered.
Russian: Ivan čítal, kogda ja vošel.
French: Jean lisait quand j'entrai.
Spanish: Juan leía cuando entre.
Italian: Gianni leggeva quando entrai.
(Comrie 1976: 3)

In the above examples the first verb serves as the background, while the main action is presented by the second verb. Thus, the first verb is imperfective, as it is presented in its internal temporal structure, implying that John's reading took place before and (possibly) after the second action occurred. The second verb is presented as a whole, without any inner structure, incorporating beginning, middle and end in one word (Comrie 1976: 4). This way of establishing whether a language makes aspectual differentiation was first used by Pollak (1960) and labeled "Inzidenzschema" (1960: 132), a term I will also use in the remainder of this paper to refer to this kind of situation.

Although Krause criticizes this way of identifying aspect, as it shows only one possible meaning of the imperfective, namely progressivity, it can nevertheless function as a starting point in explaining the concept of aspect (1998: 14).

Perfective aspect looks at a situation from outside, not distinguishing any of the internal structure of the situation, while the imperfective looks at the situation from inside. In an example like *John read that book yesterday; while he was reading it, the postman came* both forms of the verb *to read* refer to the same situation of reading. In the first instance 'John's reading' is seen as a complete event without an inner structure, whereas in the second one the 'reading' is the frame in which another action (the postman's arrival) takes place (Comrie 1976: 4). Leiss similarly describes aspect as a choice the speaker makes of whether they want to position themselves inside or outside of the verbal event. The French term *aspect* and the Russian *vid* have the meaning of "point of view". The choice of an imperfective verb is directly connected to the inside perspective. A perfective verb always implies outside perspective. So the event described by a perfective verb can be seen as a whole. It gets contours and is thus limited/bounded and for that matter completed (1992: 34). This view of subjective positioning by the speaker has, however, been criticized, since the choice of which aspect to choose is clearly not always given and the speaker is obliged to use the one correct aspectual form, perfective or imperfective (Krause 1998: 12, 13).

3.2.1. Perfective and imperfective

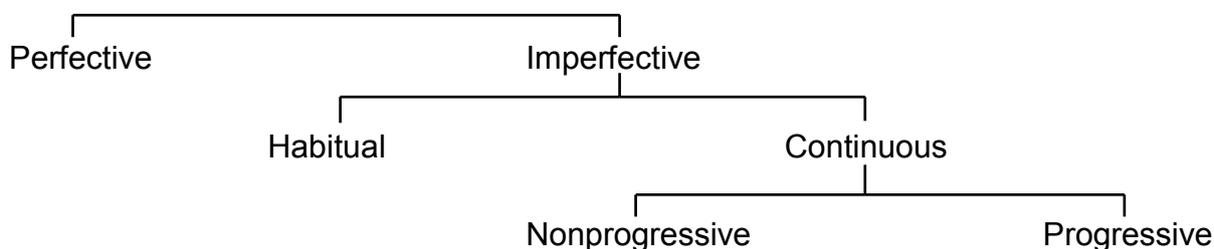
As already stated, perfectivity sees a situation as a whole, not dividing it into separate phases. Comrie uses the metaphor "blob" to refer to perfective situations rather than

calling them “points“ as they do not necessarily refer to a momentary situation. They may very well have internal complexity but have defined limits (1976: 18).

With regards to tense, perfective aspect is somewhat limited. So, for instance, since what happens at the moment is ongoing, and not completed, perfective aspect is inherently incompatible with present tense (Dahl 1985: 80, 81). Furthermore, in many languages perfective aspect is only compatible with past tense, Dahl thus further groups perfectives as either “only past” or “only non-present” with regards to restrictions on time reference (1985:80). While in Romance languages like French there is only perfective aspect with past time reference, in Slavic languages there are fewer restrictions. In Russian, for instance, a sentence like *Ja napišu pis'mo* ‘I write (Perfective Non-Past) a letter’ is possible, but since it cannot be interpreted as present tense, it refers to the future (Dahl 1985: 79).

Imperfective aspect looks at a situation from the inside (Comrie 1976: 16), but does so in two possible ways. On the one hand it can refer to one single ongoing action (progressive), and on the other hand it can be used to describe a series of regularly repeated events (habitual). There are languages which have a single imperfective aspect while other languages subdivide the concept of imperfectivity into the above mentioned categories, resulting in categories which only partly cover imperfective aspect in its entirety (Comrie 1976: 24, 25). To illustrate the most typical subdivisions of aspect, below is a classification of aspectual oppositions according to Comrie (1976: 25):

Table 1 Classification of aspectual oppositions



As can be seen, Comrie puts the progressive as a subcategory of the continuous, although in English grammars (e.g. *Grammar for English Language Teachers* by Parrot) and coursebooks (e.g. *Into English, More!*) the term ‘continuous’ is often used

to refer to the progressive. Comrie, however, points out that there are imperfective situations which are neither habitual nor progressive, leading to the conclusion that there is a non-progressive, non-habitual aspect which can be grouped alongside the progressive under the term 'continuous' (Comrie 1976: 33). To illustrate his claim he gives the French example *Jean savait qu'il parlait trop vite* ('John knew that he was talking too fast'). In the French sentence both verbs are used imperfectively, whereas in the English translation (if the sentence is interpreted as non-habitual) it becomes clear that only the second verb is progressive, whereas the first verb cannot appear progressively (1976: 34).

Cvikić states that although the terms 'progressive' and 'continuous' are often used interchangeably, they are actually "dvije jezične pojave" [two linguistic phenomena], referring to the fact that, for instance, the Cantonese language differentiates between them. She points out that the progressive expresses an action (not a state) which is ongoing. The continuous, on the other hand, refers to states which continue (Cvikić 2007: 191). This, indeed, confirms to Comrie's claim that states are "typically continuous" (1976: 51), but diverges from his definition that the progressive is a subcategory of the continuous. In other words, what Cvikić labels as "continuous" is in fact the nonprogressive subtype of continuous aspect in Comrie's classification.

The term 'continuous', may thus be used in the following three ways:

- a) It can be used synonymously for 'progressive',
- b) be applied to both progressives and states, or
- c) refer to imperfective states only.

As this lack of consistency with the term 'continuous' can lead to misunderstandings, for reasons of clarity, I will not use this notion in the remainder of the paper and only use the terms 'states' and 'progressive' respectively.

3.2.2. Habitual Aspect

As sub-types of imperfective aspect, both the habitual and the progressive are used when a situation is viewed with regard to its internal temporal constituency, without regard to any temporal bounds. But while the progressive refers to a single event describing a process in its course, with no implication to its completion, the habitual refers to a series of recurring events or bounded states (Comrie 1976: 33).

Before continuing, two terms which are often used interchangeably have to be clarified – habituality and iterativity. Dahl warns that these two terms must not be confused since iterativity expresses something that “happens more than once”, while habituality refers to a certain regularity and adverbs with the meaning of *usually* can be used in combination with habitual aspect in languages which have means to express it. The use of habitual aspect indicates that what is expressed in the sentence took place in the majority of those occasions (Dahl 1985: 97). Comrie similarly states that repetition alone is not enough for a situation to be labeled habitual. He exemplifies this with the sentence *the lecturer stood up, coughed five times, and said . . .*, where the *used to*-construction, which is used to express habituality in English, cannot be used, i.e. *the lecturer stood up, used to cough five times, and said . . .* would not be possible. Similarly, languages like French or Russian, which possess imperfective aspect, would express this iterativity in the previous sentence using perfective aspect, while habituality would have to be expressed by imperfective aspect. On the other hand, a situation can be habitual without being iterative, as in *The Temple of Diana used to stand at Ephesus*, which only states that the temple stood there for a certain period of time, without interruption (Comrie 1974: 27). His definition of habituality, therefore, is that it “describe[s] a situation which is characteristic of an extended period of time“. Since any situation that can be extended in time, or that can be iterated a sufficient number of times over a longer period can be called habitual (Comrie 1976: 30).

Of the languages he investigated, Dahl found that habitual aspect is expressed either by the most unmarked category ('Simple Present' in languages with a past/non-past distinction) or in languages with a perfective/imperfective distinction by an imperfective form (1985: 102). This is consistent with Comrie's classification of habitual aspect as part of imperfective aspect. Furthermore, most languages do not have separate forms for generic and habitual meaning (1985: 102).

3.2.3. Progressive Aspect

As progressivity only partly covers the category of imperfectivity, it is more limited, since normally it is not used to express habituality and generic meaning (Krause 1998: 14). Logically, where some form of the progressive would be used, Slavic

languages tend to use the imperfective (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 525). Zandvoort describes it as “an action or an activity [...] in progress” (1969: 52).

While in some languages which have means to express progressivity it is mandatory to use these forms, in other languages the use of progressive forms is completely left to the speaker’s preference or dependent on register (e.g. in Baltic Finnic it is used more frequently in formal contexts, whereas in Romance and most Germanic languages the opposite is true). Some languages again have several different ways of expressing the idea of progressiveness (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 527). The progressive in English falls into the first category, forcing speakers to use the specific progressive forms to convey progressive meaning (Comrie 1976: 33).

Verbs normally belong to one of two classes, those that can appear in the progressive forms, and those that cannot. Moreover, this distinction corresponds to that between stative and non-stative verbs. Thus progressiveness can generally be described as the combination of progressive meaning and non-stative meaning. Naturally, then, stative verbs do not have progressive forms, since this would involve an internal contradiction between the stativity of the verb and the non-stativity characteristic for the progressive (Comrie 1976: 35).

With regards to the ways the progressive is expressed morphologically in languages, Dahl found that in about 85 percent of the languages he investigated the progressive was formed periphrastically, mostly by means of auxiliaries (1985: 91). This is also consistent with Bertinetto et al.’s results, which conform to Blansitt’s (1975) classification of progressive constructions in languages, according to which the progressive is constructed in one of two ways:

- a. Affixal progressive markers
- b. Complex verb phrases as progressive signals
 - i. verb phrases with a copula as auxiliary
 - ii. verb phrases with a motion or postural verb as auxiliary
 - iii. verb phrases with a pro predicate (do-type) as auxiliary
 - iv. verb phrases with a special progressive auxiliary verb

(i), (ii) and (iv) represent the most common types among the languages of Europe. (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 520).

An example of a language which expresses the progressive aspect by means of an affix is Turkish, where the suffix *-yor* is used. e.g. *çalışıyordu* 'he was working'. Most other languages fall under category b., i.e. they use complex verb phrases. Among these subtypes (i), in which the copula is used to express the progressive, is the most common. English and Spanish, among other languages, belong to this group, e.g. *Peter is writing a letter* or *Estaba hablando con una chica* ('I was talking with a girl'). Unlike English, Finnic languages, like Finnish and Estonian, combine a copula with an infinitive, as in Finnish *Minä olen myymässä lipuja* ('I am selling tickets'). Other languages, among which are Danish, Dutch and German form the progressive by combining a copula with a prepositional phrase containing a non-finite verb form (mostly an infinitive), as in Dutch *Peter is aan het zwemmen* ('Peter is swimming') (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 521, 522).

In some languages it is possible to express the progressive by combining the copula with lexical expressions like *busy*, *be at work*, *be after* or *be under way*. An example would be Dutch *Wim was bezig de stofzuiger te maken* ('Bill was busy repairing the vacuum cleaner') (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 521, 522). Constructions with a motion or postural verb as an auxiliary are sometimes understood as progressive, as in Dutch *Marie loopt bloemen uit te venten* ('Mary is hawking flowers'), where the verb *to walk* functions as an auxiliary (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 523). These kinds of constructions, however, often convey ideas like ingressivity or near future, future or past, and are not always interchangeable with progressives formed by copular construction (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 523). Swedish and Yiddish, for instance, use the verb *to hold* as an auxiliary for progressive constructions, e.g. *En ny kyrka håller på att byggas* ('A new church is being built') (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 523, 524). Other means languages possess in order to express progressivity include the use of a particle, as is the case in Albanian, where *po* is used as a marker for progressive aspect, as in *Po laj* ('I am washing') or word order as is the case in Hungarian and Finnish (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 521 - 525).

Although the progressive may convey a number of meanings, Bertinetto et al. point out three main types: focalized progressive constructions, durative progressive constructions and absentive constructions. The focalized progressive signals that an event is ongoing at a certain point in time – the focalization point – while the durative progressive constructions are relative to a time interval. The third type, the absentive

constructions, Bertinetto et al. argue, can be added alongside the first two types, since in certain languages (e.g. Finnish) identical constructions express all three concepts. Absentive constructions are used to describe an event in which the agent is absent from the deictic center (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 527).

Focalized progressive constructions are compatible with non-durative verbs, where it is interpreted as an event that is about to occur, as in *The grandfather was dying* or *The train is leaving* (Bertinetto et al., 2000: 534). Durative progressive is often used with adverbials indicating a time span, e.g. “for the whole duration of...” (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 535). Statives may be used in the progressive either when temporariness is emphasized (2) (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 535) or when they lose their stative meaning and are interpreted as activities (3) (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 537).

(2) The statue is standing in a garden [i.e., for a limited period] (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 535)

(3) John is being clever. (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 537)

With regards to imperative mood, progressive aspect is rather unusual. Exceptions are languages with a fully grammaticalized progressive aspect like English or Catalan where such combinations exist (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 537), as can be seen, for instance, in the following example:

(4) Be working when the boss returns! (Bertinetto et al. 2000:537)

From the frequency of situations in which it is used in his study, Dahl asserts that the prototypical use of the progressive is to express an 'on-going activity' which describes a dynamic situation at a certain point in time and is thus, in its primary use, not compatible with stative constructions. He further indicates that the practice often found in literature to apply the term 'durative' to the progressive is not accurate since in situations in which only the duration of a process is stressed, as in *John was singing for 10 minutes*, progressive constructions were usually avoided (Dahl 1985: 91).

With regards to the differences between imperfective and progressive aspect, Dahl gives the following characteristics: Firstly, while the perfective-imperfective opposition is closely linked to past and non-past time reference, progressive aspect is basically independent of time, allowing it to be used in the present, the past and the future.

The progressive with future reference, however, tends to be the least frequently used while the present progressive seems to be universally the most frequently used. Secondly, unlike imperfective aspect, progressive aspect is rarely used in habitual contexts and Dahl points to only “a handful” such uses in his study. Lastly, progressives are normally only used in dynamic, i.e. non-stative situations. To back up this last point, Dahl refers to the fact that not one single progressive construction was used with the verb *to know* in his material (Dahl 1985: 92, 93). With regards to differences in marking of imperfective and progressive aspects, respectively, progressivity is commonly marked periphrastically while imperfective marking is generally formed morphologically by means of pre- or suffixation (Dahl 1985: 93). However, the differences between progressive and imperfective often are not clearly distinguishable in languages, resulting in a diachronic development from a progressive to an imperfective aspect or vice versa (Dahl 1985: 93).

3.3. Lexical Aspect

The verbal category discussed so far and referred to as *aspect* denotes what is also called grammatical aspect (or viewpoint aspect). A related yet different verbal category is lexical aspect. Although both grammatical and lexical aspect are closely linked to each other, they refer to two different notions and must be viewed separately. Since lexical aspect is a key factor in the acquisition of grammatical aspect, it will be dealt with in more detail in this section.

While grammatical aspect only determines the internal temporal structure of a situation, lexical aspect (or situation(al) aspect, inherent aspect or Aktionsart) describes the inherent character of a verb or verb phrase (Li, Shirai 2000: 3). Characteristics which determine a verb’s lexical aspect are qualities like whether it has inherent duration like *talk*, is punctual like *recognize*, has duration but an end point like *build a house* or is a state like *want* (Bardovi-Harlig 2000: 193).

Agrell, who first distinguished lexical from grammatical aspect, defines it as:

Bedeutungsfunktionen der Verbalkomposita (sowie einiger Simplicia und Suffixbildungen), die genauer ausdrücken, wie die Handlung vollbracht wird, die Art und Weise ihrer Ausführung markieren (Agrell 1908: 78).

Leiss follows Agrell's basic definition of lexical aspect, and only includes verbs altered by a prefix or suffix which carries a semantic meaning, changing the meaning of the simple verb, and excludes verbs "ohne morphologische Merkmale" (i.e. simple verbs) such as *arbeiten* (1992: 35). Thus, according to her, only verbs like e.g. *erjagen* (not *jagen*), fall under the realm of Aktionsart. This way of defining Aktionsart, however, is applicable to languages with a verbal morphology heavy on affixes like Slavic, and to a lesser degree German, but is rather difficult to apply in the context of English, where similar effects are achieved by adding an object or forming a phrasal verb. The main difference between grammatical and lexical aspect, according to Leiss, is that with grammatical aspect there always exists an aspectual pair consisting of a simple imperfective verb, and a usually prefixed perfective one. However, only an empty prefix (i.e. a prefix which does not carry a semantic meaning, and only has a perfectivizing function) is suitable as an aspectual counterpart to an unmarked verb. All other prefixed verbs have to be regarded as "Aktionsartverben", because of the lexical change they undergo by the addition of a prefix (Leiss 1992: 38). This, of course, would mean that German, for instance, has Aktionsartverben but no real aspectual pairs, due to its lack of empty prefixes, i.e. prefixes which do not carry a semantic meaning. Still, Leiss argues, that "die Grenze zwischen Aktionsartverben und Aspektverben nicht exakt festgemacht werden kann" as defining aspectual pairs is often a matter of context (1992: 39). Thus, if a verb is given perfective meaning by adding a non-empty prefix, this same verb may still be a suitable aspectual partner in certain semantic contexts (1992: 39). This shows that it is often difficult to cut a clear line between lexical and grammatical aspect. Which also becomes clear by the fact that often both terms are used interchangeably (Krause 1998: 18).

In this paper, however, I will use the broader definition of lexical aspect which encompasses all verbs and groups them according to their semantic properties. This is also generally how the term 'lexical aspect' is used in studies dealing with the acquisition of grammatical aspect. The following two sections represent the most common ways to classify verbs according to lexical aspect.

3.3.1. Vendler's Classification

The most widely used categorization of lexical aspect classes is the one presented by Vendler in his essay "Verbs and times" (1960) and it is still often used as the basis in studies on the acquisition of aspect (above all with regards to the aspect hypothesis). It will also be the terminology used in this study.

Vendler groups verbs (or, more precisely, verb phrases) into four categories, according to their semantic properties.

1. activity verbs, which include verb phrases like *running* and *pushing a cart*, which do not have a "terminal point", i.e. if someone is interrupted while running, it would still be true that running took place.
 2. accomplishment verbs are verb phrases which have a terminal point like *run a mile* or *draw a circle*. If one of these actions were to be interrupted, the verb phrase would not be true anymore. e.g. if one is about to draw a circle and is interrupted, one did not draw a circle.
 3. achievement verbs take place at a single moment like *reach the hilltop* or *win the race*.
 4. state verbs e.g. *to love*, which last for long periods of time.
- (Vendler 1957: 145-147).

What needs to be added is that in Vendler's categorization, habits are also interpreted as states. *Are you smoking?* refers to an activity, while the question *Do you smoke?* he describes a state (1957: 151, 152). Furthermore, certain verbs can have different functions. While in *He is thinking about Jones* the verb *think* is a process, in *He thinks that Jones is a rascal*, it describes a state (Vendler 1957: 152).

3.3.2. Lexical Aspect according to their semantic qualities

Another way of categorizing verbs and verb phrases into different lexical aspectual groups is by means of the three oppositions of punctual vs. durative, telic vs. atelic, and states vs. dynamic situations. With regards to punctual and durative situations it has to be pointed out that a situation can last for a period of time (thus be durative) but at the same time be perfective as in Russian *ja postojal tam čas* ('I waited there for an hour'). Punctuality refers to situations that take place momentarily. If a punctual

verb like *cough* is used progressively, it usually becomes iterative (Comrie 1976: 41). Telic situations have a final point of completion of an action whereas atelic situations do not (Comrie 1976: 44). Important to note is that telic situations need a “process leading up to the terminal point“ (Comrie 1976: 47). The difference between a state and a dynamic situation is that while all phases are identical with states, for dynamic situations this is not true, i.e. in a phrase like *John knows where I live*, in every point in time the situation is exactly the same, whereas in *John is running*, the phases differ at different points in time, e.g. in one instance his right leg touches the ground, and in the next it is up again. The other difference between states and dynamic situations is that “[t]o remain in a state requires no effort, whereas to remain in a dynamic situation does require effort” or an “input of energy”. This effort, Comrie claims, can be either “from inside”, as in *John is running* – since if John stops running he will come to a halt or “from outside”, as in *the oscilloscope is emitting a pure tone*, in which case the oscilloscope will not continue emitting a tone if it is turned off (Comrie 1960: 48,49).

Applied to Vendler’s verb classes, states can be described as static, durative and atelic. Activities, likewise, are durative and atelic, but are dynamic. Accomplishments differ from activities in that they are telic while achievements are dynamic, punctual and telic. Furthermore, semelfactives are often added to Vendler’s original four classes. They, like achievements, are punctual, but differ from them in that they are atelic. The following table by Smith (1991) gives a good overview of which semantic qualities assign which verb to which verb class.

Table 2 Vendler’s verb classes according to their semantic qualities

	states	activities	accomplishments	semelfactives	achievements
dynamic	-	+	+	+	+
punctual	-	-	-	+	+
telic	-	-	+	-	+

(Shirai, Li 2000: 16; from Smith 1991: 30)

It is necessary to note that the number of potential classes of Aktionsarten is limitless, as there are numerous semantic criteria which can function as the basis for a classification (Krause 1998: 20, 21).

3.3.3. Relevance of Lexical Aspect for Grammatical Aspect

With regards to grammatical aspect it can be said that there are two groups of verbs which naturally occur in the progressive, namely activities and accomplishments (Vendler 1960: 144) and those which are usually not used progressively – states and achievements (Vendler 1960: 146). Rothstein points to the fact that achievements, being near punctual, can hardly be in progress, thus eliminating the possibility to use them progressively in its primary sense (2004: 5).

In languages with a perfective/imperfective opposition, state verbs are usually imperfective do not have a perfective counterpart. So, generally, only achievements, accomplishments and activities are subject to the aspectual opposition, while states generally only have imperfective aspect (Dickey 2010: 78).

States, in their primary sense, do not occur progressively due to their nature of being static and not dynamic. In English, however, especially in cases of temporary states, progressive marking is possible. This, however, will be discussed in more detail in section 4.1.1.1. "Secondary Uses of the English Progressive".

Since achievements are punctual, in languages with a perfective/imperfective opposition, they are primarily used perfectively. If they are used imperfectively, they express the stage leading up to the terminal point as in the following Russian sentence:

- (5) On umiral, kogda vrač prišel.
He was dying when the doctor arrived
(Smith 1991: 304)

Another example of an aspectual pair involving an achievement verb is Russian *lečit'* (impf.) and *vylečit'* (perf.) which correspond to English *treat* and *cure*. In Russian, unlike English, a single verb is used, which is used imperfectively to refer to the activity which leads to the point of curing, i.e. *treat*, or perfectively, when only the achievement is expressed, i.e. *cure* (Mourelatos 1978: 418).

With regards to semelfactives, Smith claims that "they are incompatible with imperfective aspect". Thus, similarly to what happens when they are used progressively, in their imperfective form they have to be interpreted as a "multiple-event" activity, i.e. a repeated action. An example is the Russian sentence:

- (6) On stučal v okno, kogda ja vyšel
He was knocking at the window when I went out.
(Smith 1991: 304)

3.3.4. Modifying Lexical Aspect

As we have seen it is possible to convert an atelic verb (phrase) into a telic one by adding an object, e.g.

- (7) He drew. (atelic)
(8) He drew a circle. (telic)

There are, however, also other possibilities in languages. With regards to German and Serbian, the same effect can be obtained by adding a prefix to a verb. Since only where the prefix does not change the meaning of the imperfective verb but only makes it perfective, one can refer to real aspectual pairs (Comrie 1976: 89). As already stated, in German, for instance, prefixation is always connected to a change of meaning of a verb besides perfectivizing it, as in *jagen* (hunt) vs. *erjagen* (hunt down), thus only a change of Aktionsart may be achieved (Leiss, 1992: 31). In Serbian, on the other hand, there are both empty prefixes, which create real aspectual pairs, but also ones which carry a meaning (Schuyt, 1990: 65). Similarly to how prefixes work with regards to perfectivizing verbs in Slavic languages, English uses free particles to express a similar idea. So a verb like *eat up* will rather be used perfectly than only *eat*. What is important to note, however, is that this kind of perfectivizing verbs is not grammaticalized to the point it is, for instance, in Slavic languages (Dahl 1985: 86). Milivojević also makes clear that in the case of English these free particles always alter lexical aspect of a certain verb, instead of just the grammatical aspect. For example, if a telic particle is added to an activity, it will transform it into an accomplishment (2005: 68).

Lexical aspect in Serbian and German will be discussed in more detail in chapters 4.2. and 4.3., which deal with aspect in these two languages.

4. The Aspectual Systems of English, Serbian and German

4.1. Aspect in English

In the previous chapters it has been established that English is in fact a language with an aspectual distinction, which is best visible through its distinct progressive form. According to Bache the problem in the discussion of aspect in the English language is the attempt to apply the Slavic aspectual system to the English language, as it is often regarded as the general model of aspect. This, however, is not possible since English morphology differs significantly from that of the Slavic languages (1985: 26, 27). Still, there are obvious similarities between English and Slavic aspect, as Bache notices that

[o]n the semantic level it cannot be denied that there is a certain resemblance between the Russian *on čital knigu* (imperfective) and the English *he was reading a book* on the one hand, and between *on pročital knigu* (perfective) and *he read the book* on the other (Bache 1985: 26).

Only if there are different grammatical forms for aspects, i.e. if the aspectual distinctions are grammaticalized, one can speak of aspect as a grammatical category. In English, for instance, there is a grammaticalized aspectual opposition, namely that between progressive and non-progressive meaning. A comparison to the imperfective/perfective pairs in other languages, however, is restricted, since the progressive can generally only be compared to imperfective verbs which are non-stative and without their habitual meaning (Comrie 1976: 7, Hlebec 1990: 17).

Riđanović even claims that aspect in English is “much more clearly expressed [...] than in many other languages in which it has been traditionally recognized” (1976: 20). Bache confirms this by stating that on a morphological level English progressive forms are much more easily distinguishable from simple forms than are, for instance, Slavic imperfectives from their perfective counterparts (Bache 1985: 26).

4.1.1. The Progressive

Since the distinctive aspectual category in English, the progressive, has already been completely grammaticalized, its use is mandatory and the only means to express progressivity (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 527). Morphologically, progressive aspect in

English is formed by combining the copula with the present participle (Bertinetto et al. 2000: 521). In practice this means that a form of *to be* (*am, is, are, was, etc.*) is accompanied by a verb with the suffix *-ing*, as in *I have been trying to learn Japanese for over three years.* (Parrott 2010: 178).

4.1.1.1. Uses of the English Progressive

Progressive forms are generally only used with dynamic (i.e. non-static) verbs (Dahl 1985: 93). Statives seldom use the progressive as they already have a durative meaning (Riđanović 1976: 117).

The prototypical situation of Inzidenzschema, in which an ongoing situation is interrupted by a punctual one, requires the progressive aspect to express the ongoing situation (Hlebec 1990: 19):

- (9) Don't ring me at 7 o'clock. I shall be eating my supper. (Wittaker 1983:146-147)

Furthermore, the progressive may also be used to express simultaneity, i.e. to express two parallel ongoing situations (10) and for long durations (11).

- (10) John was sleeping, while Mary was reading.
(11) Susan was spanking her daughter for five minutes.
(Hlebec 1990: 19).

With regards to the progressive in combination with certain tenses, I shall now give a brief overview of the main functions of the progressive when used in the present, past, present perfect, past perfect and future:

The **present progressive** is used for temporary actions which have begun but have not finished, i.e. actions which are in the process of being completed. It refers to events which are taking place for a limited period of time, including the moment of speaking. Those events can be constant, but may also be repeated or intermittent, and not necessarily taking place at the moment of the utterance. Furthermore, it is often used with changing and developing states, such as *become, decline, or decrease* (Parrott 2004: 192), as in

(12) Moral standards are declining (Parrott 2004: 193).

The **present perfect progressive** is normally used to express the duration so far of a present action (13) but also to indicate repetition (14).

(13) We've been driving for hours.

(14) I've been using the swimming pool since we moved into the district.
(Parrot 2004: 237)

With regards to achievements, the difference between the simple and the progressive is clearly that of repetition. An achievement verb used in the present perfect simple indicates that the action most likely happened just once (15), whereas when used in the present perfect progressive the achievement verb is to be interpreted as either repeated or extended (16):

(15) Your wife has rung.

(16) Your wife has been ringing.
(Parrot 2004: 237)

Another use of the present perfect progressive is to indicate incompleteness. *I've persuaded Bob to join our sports club* implies that my persuasion was successful and thus Bob is either already a member of our sports club or about to become one, while *I've been persuading Bob to join our sports club* expresses that I have been trying to convince Bob to join the sports club but still have not managed to persuade him (Williams 2001: 109). Another example of how the progressive is used to convey the meaning of incompleteness is the sentences *Who's been eating my dinner?* And *Who has eaten my dinner?* In the first sentence it is implied that some of the dinner is left, while in the second one nothing is left (Hlebec 1990: 22). In the case of the present perfect the rules concerning its progressive use are less strict and especially *want* and *like* are often used in the progressive, as in the following example:

(17) I've been wanting to have an opportunity to talk to you for a few days.
(Parrott 2004: 238)

The **future progressive** is used for events which are assumed to be taking place before a certain point in the future and possibly continue thereafter, as in

(18) I'll be working then (Parrott 2004: 205).

Apart from expressing future events in progress, it can also be used as a “neutral way of referring to the future” without any implications of “intention, arrangement, prediction or willingness”, e.g. *They’ll be bringing the children.* (Parrott 2004: 205).

The **past progressive** is used when an action is described that started before a certain point in the past, is still in progress at that point and either continues (19) or stops (20) after that point (Parrott 2004: 223)

(19) I was still working at 6 o’clock. (and I continued working after that point)

(20) He was working at his computer when the power cut occurred.

(Parrott 2004: 223)

Furthermore, the past progressive can be used to describe actions that last throughout whole periods of time (all day, the whole lesson, etc.) in order to stress that the action “was happening at every moment during the specified period” (21), and to represent the background of a story in narratives (22) (Parrott 2004: 223, 224).

(21) We were slaving away from morning to night. (Parrott 2004: 223)

(22) Mona was washing dishes with a vengeance when Mrs. Madrigal walked into the kitchen. (Parrott 2004: 224)

The past perfect progressive is used to refer to ongoing or repeated events or actions taking place before another point in the past.

(23) The family had been living in the house for two years before they noticed the bulge in the wall. (Parrot 2004: 225)

4.1.1.2. Secondary uses of English Progressive aspect

Comrie notes that the English Progressive has developed into a stage in which it is not solely used to express prototypical progressive meaning (1976: 38) and that it “has, in comparison with progressive forms in many other languages, an unusually wide range” (1976: 32). This observation is also supported by Dahl’s findings. In his study he investigated the uses of the progressive in 28 languages. The sentence *I’m living in London* (i.e. for the time being), for instance, was expressed progressively only by English speakers, whereas speakers of all the remaining languages used non-progressive expressions (1985: 93).

In the following subchapter we will have a brief look at some of these secondary uses, most notably the progressive use of state verbs, as well as the Interpretative Progressive, the Progressive Futurate and the Habitual Progressive.

The progressive with state verbs

As has already been established, stative verbs are those which usually do not change (e.g. *admire, like, love, resemble*, and others). Still, they can be either simple or progressive depending on context (Hlebec 1990: 30). The reason for this lies in the English compatibility with progressives and temporary states. While in the examples below, (24) is ungrammatical as it is a permanent state, a sentence like (25) (Leech 1971: 22ff), which emphasizes the temporality of the state, is perfectly acceptable. States in which there is a change of intensity (26), or ones which result from the actions of an agent (27) can also be used in the progressive.

(24) *Paris is being between London and Berlin.

(25) I'm feeling tired.

(26) They're believing in God more and more.

(27) The children are being difficult.

(Binnick 2006: 250)

Hlebec likewise states that temporariness can be expressed by the progressive (1990: 21). Even stative verbs like *live* or *stand* may be used in the progressive in English when they refer to "a more temporary state". So while, for instance (28) implies that this is my permanent address, (29) indicates a temporal state.

(28) I live at 6 Railway Cuttings

(29) I'm living at 6 Railway Cuttings

(Comrie 1976: 37)

With regards to the verb *to be* Ljung differentiates between two classes of adjectives and their ability or disability to be used with a progressive form. The first category includes adjectives like *angry, polite* or *kind* which are regularly used in progressive constructions. Adjectives of the other category, however, cannot appear with a progressive form of 'to be'. These are, among others, *tall, blue* or *dirty* (1980: 31). Thus a sentence like *John is being polite* is possible and always implies temporary agentive meanings (Ljung 1980: 31). *John is angry* refers to his inner state, while

John is being angry refers to his behavior at the moment of the utterance (Ljung 1980: 32). Parrott similarly points to the fact that although state verbs are normally incompatible with the progressive, in cases in which a “special emphasis to the temporariness of the state” is intended to be given, such forms are possible, as in *Are you wanting another drink?* (addressing a friend with an empty glass) (2004: 193). This allows the conclusion that in English lexically stative verbs can sometimes be used non-statively and thus be used in the progressive (Comrie 1976: 36). Comrie further illustrates this phenomenon stating that *I'm understanding you* is not possible since *understand* is a state verb but in examples like *I'm understanding more about quantum physics as each day goes by*, *understand* is viewed as a process, as the degree of *understanding* develops and can thus be used in the progressive (1976: 37).

A similar group of verbs, which Hlebec calls “verbs of stance”, which include verbs like *learn*, *lie*, *live*, *sit* or *study* are a group of durative verbs and also accept both simple and progressive aspect (Hlebec 1990: 35).

Lee (2011) discusses three further secondary uses of the progressive – the interpretative (or experiential) progressive, the progressive futurate and the habitual progressive, which will also briefly be described in this section.

The interpretative (or experiential) progressive

Whenever a state verb is used progressively it also always has an interpretative meaning, giving “the speaker’s interpretation of some behavior that somebody is engaged in” (Ljung 1980: 69). Thus a sentence like *John is being angry* and *Mary’s being an idiot* are interpretations of the speaker about a present situation. Ljung further notes that this use of the progressive can also be applied to non-state verbs as in *Mr Blunden was concerned with art; he was making something*. Here the first sentence is just an observation, while the second part the speaker interprets the behavior and thus puts the verb in the progressive (1980: 70). The interpretative progressive does not have an aspectual function as the meaning of ongoingness has nothing to do with the content of the utterance (Lee 2011: 1083).

The Progressive Futurate

Unlike other languages with progressive aspect, English offers the possibility to express future time reference using the present progressive, termed the Progressive Futurate by Huddleston (2002: 171), as in *He is leaving tomorrow* (Lee 2011: 1073). According to Parrott this future reference of the present progressive is used “when arrangements have been made”, thus it is often called arranged future. It is often specified by *next week*, *at Christmas* etc. unless it is clear the speaker refers to the future (Parrot 2004: 201, 202). As arrangements can only be made by people, the progressive futurate is exclusively used where human agency or intention is involved (Leech 1987: 64). Furthermore, it is mostly used when referring to a near future (Huddleston 202: 171).

The habitual progressive

At first sight this kind of construction appears to be contradictory, if we presuppose that the habitual aspect is not marked morphologically in English. Normally the present simple is used for habits with certain time expressions (*all the time*, *always*, etc.). In some cases the use of the progressive is preferred, however. This is done to either stress the repetitiveness of an action or express the speaker’s irritation with it e.g. *They’re forever asking me to visit them* (Parrott 2004: 193). A second sort of characteristic is that habits in the progressive may refer to temporary habits, or those holding for a limited period (Lee 2011: 1077), as in *We’re going to the opera a lot these days* (Comrie 1976: 37).

Apart from the secondary uses, a characteristic of the English progressive which complicates its analysis is the number of situations in which both the progressive and simple can be used without any significant difference in their meaning (Comrie 1976: 37). One such example is presented by Binnick:

(30) You’re looking/you look good. (Binnick 2006: 250)

4.1.2. The Simple Form

The aspectual opposition to the progressive in English is the simple form. It is used with events that are either complete in itself and thus not able to change or develop, or it continues indefinitely into the future without a change (Williams 2001: 91). With regards to the English simple verb's role as an aspect, Williams points out that it is difficult to determine whether it can in fact be called an aspect, since, depending on the verb, it may be perfective in certain cases and imperfective in others (2001: 93). Binnick also agrees that the aspectual interpretation of a simple verb form depends on its aspectual class. Therefore, an eventive expression is normally interpreted as a complete eventuality (31), while an atelic situation such as a process (32) or state (33) is interpreted as an incomplete one.

- (31) Mr. Blandings built his dream house.
 - (32) The children played.
 - (33) John was hungry.
- (Binnick 2006: 248)

Due to its capacity to express both perfective and imperfective aspect, a simple form can be used for both durative and punctual situations (Hlebec 1990:30). The simple aspect is usually used to express habituality, as in *I get up early* (Parrott 2010: 189). Furthermore, scientific laws, permanent truths and other permanent situations are regarded as states and are thus used with the simple form of English verbs. Examples include *Ice floats on water* or *Light travels faster than sound*. However, Williams also stresses the complexity of the English aspectual system. As has been discussed in the previous section, states, when interpreted as actions, may be used in the progressive. This is also true with a sentence such as *The Earth revolves around the sun*, which normally can be described as a permanent truth. If it is interpreted as an event which is constantly changing – and since the Earth is in constant motion, i.e. its position relative to the sun changes constantly – it must be interpreted as an action, and is to be expressed progressively (2001: 103). In narration the simple verb often expresses sequentiality, e.g. *Peter closed/closes the door and locked/locks it*. Every following verb in the simple form then represents an action that follows the last one. When accompanied by expressions typical for progressiveness, such as certain conjunctions (*as, while*), verbs (*continue, go on*) or adverbs (*here, there, away, up*, in combination with verbs of movement) the simple

form may be used to express even progressive situations, e. g. *Away she goes* (Hlebec 1990: 28). An often cited situation in which the simple form can be used in a progressive sense is the live commentating of sporting events, e.g. *Federer serves to Nadal and runs to the net* (Parrot, 2004: 190). According to Parrott the use of the simple form in this context is preferred as it is shorter and saves time (2004: 190). States are normally only used in the simple form (see chapter 4.1.1.1. for progressive uses of states). These include verbs which denote existence (*be, exist*), mental states (*believe, doubt, know, etc.*), wants and likes (*want, like, love, hate, etc.*), possession (*belong, own, etc.*), senses (*feel, smell, etc.*), appearance (*appear, look, etc.*) and sometimes perception verbs (*hear, see, etc.*). Furthermore, performative verbs normally use the simple form (Parrott 2004: 191)

(34) I pronounce you husband and wife.

(35) I declare the fête open.

(Parrott 2004: 191)

4.1.3. Habitual Aspect

Like the progressive, the habitual aspect is a sub-aspect of the imperfective. In English however, only the progressive has a distinct morphological composition while the habitual can basically always be understood from the simple form, since eventive expressions in the present tense normally have either habitual or generic interpretations and normally do not express ongoingness (Binnick 2005: 340).

With regards to past habitual situations, however, also separate expressions exist. These include the construction with *used to* and *would* which can be used as a means of describing past habits and repeated actions which lasted for a period of time (Parrot 2004: 250, 251). Binnick similarly states that in situations where in French imperfective aspect would be used and where in English progressive aspect is inappropriate, *used to* or *would*, as well as the simple past can always be used (2006: 33). While *used to* is used to describe repeated actions and states as well as extended states in the past, *would* can only be used for repeated actions and states. Thus in *We used to live in the town centre*, one could not use *would* instead, whereas in *She would [...] be hungry when she got home from school*, *would* can be replaced by *used to* (Parrot 2004: 251). There is also a tendency to use *would* in favour of *used to* in combination with frequency adverbs, like *always* or *usually* (Parrot 2004:

252). Another difference between *would* and *used to* is that the habit expressed with *used to* is not true for the present, while this is not implied with *would* (Binnick 2006: 35).

(36) Susan would swim every day.

(37) Susan used to swim every day.

(Binnick 2006: 35)

Looking at these two sentences, the phrase *and still does* can be added only to the sentence with *used to*, not however to the one with *would*. The reason is, according to Binnick, that *used to* does not have a present tense counterpart, while *would* has *will* and the simple past has the simple present which can be used for present habitual (2006: 35).

Other characteristics of *used to* Binnick mentions are that it does not allow definite temporal adverbials like in (38), it is avoided with negation and animate, first-person subjects are preferred in combination with *used to* (Binnick 2006:37).

(38) *I used to live in York in 1914. (Binnick 2006: 37)

Although *used to* is generally regarded as a marker of habitual aspect, there exist some peculiarities with regards to its use that complicate making this claim sustainable. Comrie, for instance, points to the fact that *used to* can be used with stative verbs which refer to a single extended state, which makes it hard to call it a solely habitual marker (1974: 33, 34). Binnick even calls the *used to* construction an “anti-present-perfect”. While the present perfect is used for situations which began in the past but include the present, *used to* constructions implicitly exclude the present (Binnick 2006: 41, 42).

Unlike the obligatory usage of progressive forms, in order to express past habituality in English, the constructions with *used to* and *would* can always be replaced by the past simple, so that these forms, although regularly used by speakers of English, are never mandatory (Parrot 2004: 251).

The following section will look into aspect in Serbian in more detail. It will basically cover perfective, imperfective and bi-aspectual verbs, the aspectual morphology of Serbian verbs, i.e. how aspectual pairs are formed, and finally, the main uses of imperfective and perfective aspect.

4.2. Aspect in Serbian

One of the distinctive features of Serbian verbal morphology is that of verbal aspect. Serbian verbs are generally classified into two categories, called *perfective* (svršen or perfektivan) and *imperfective* (nesvršen or imperfektivan), depending on whether the verb denotes an action which is completed or ongoing. Verbs usually come in aspect pairs, i.e. an imperfective verb normally has a perfective counterpart and vice versa (Hlebec 1990: 80; Klajn 2005: 105, Stanojčić, Popović 1992: 97; Riđanović 1976: 2). An example of such an aspectual pair is *skočiti* “to jump, to dive” (perf.) vs. *skakati* “to be in the process of jumping or diving; jump or dive repeatedly” (impf.) (Riđanović 1976: 2).

4.2.1. Imperfective Verbs (*nesvršeni* or *imperfektivni glagoli*)

Stanojčić and Popović describe imperfective verbs as actions, states or processes with an unlimited duration. They further divide imperfective verbs into *duratives* (trajni glagoli) like *šetati* ‘to go for a walk’ or *jesti* ‘to eat’ for long or short, uninterrupted actions or states and *iteratives* (učestali glagoli) like *kuckati* ‘to knock repeatedly’ or *javljati se* ‘to stay in touch’ for repeated actions or states, without limitation but with interruptions (1992: 97, 98). According to Klajn, imperfective verbs denote an ongoing action, taking place in the past, present or future, without limitation. He makes no further distinction like Stanojčić and Popović but notes that most imperfective verbs can be used iteratively. He gives the following two examples,

(39) Učenici pišu (impf.) zadatak. ‘The students write/are writing an exercise.’

(40) Pisaću (impf.) ti svakog dana. ‘I will write you every day.’
(Klajn 2005: 105)

with the additional note that the verb *pisati* in (40) is used iteratively¹ (2005: 105). As the present tense expresses ongoing actions, only imperfective verbs can be used in a main clause with that tense. So one might say *Čitam* (impf. present.) *knjigu* ‘I am reading a book’ while **Pročitam* (perf. present) *knjigu* is ungrammatical (Klajn 2005: 106). Some verbs (mostly statives) among which are *imati* ‘to have’, *morati* ‘must, to

¹ It needs to be noted, at this point, that Stanojčić and Popović, as well as Klajn, use the term *iterative* to refer to both iterativity and habituality, which is obvious from the examples they provide.

have to', *smeti* 'may', *postojati* 'to exist', *važiti* 'to be valid' and others are imperfective and do not have a perfective counterpart (Klajn 2005: 106).

4.2.2. Perfective verbs (*svršeni or perfektivni glagoli*)

Perfective verbs can be divided into several groups, among which are **punctual verbs** (*trenutno-svršeni glagoli*), such as *pasti* 'to fall', *dati* 'to give' and *uzeti* 'to take'; **inchoative verbs** (*početno-svršeni glagoli*) including *zapevati* 'to start singing', *zaspati* 'to fall asleep' and *poleteti* 'to take off (e.g. planes)'; **terminative verbs** (*završno-svršeni glagoli*) *pojesti* 'to eat up', *napuniti* 'to fill (up)', *izgoreti* 'to burn down' and other subgroups like **ingressive** (*ingresivni glagoli*), **intensive** (*intenzivni glagoli*) or **sative verbs** (*sativni glagoli*) (Klajn 2005: 105).

4.2.3. Bi-Aspectual Verbs (*dvovidski or biaspektualni glagoli*)

A small number of verbs carry characteristics of both aspects, and are thus called bi-aspectual. An example of such a verb is *videti* 'to see' (Klajn 2005: 106). In such cases only the context of a sentence can determine whether the verb in question has perfective or imperfective meaning (Stanojčić, Popović 1992: 98). In the sentence *Pred sobom je video beskrajnu ravnicu* (In front of him he saw an endless plain) the verb is imperfective, whereas in *Obradovao se kad me je video* (He was happy when he saw me), the verb carries perfective meaning. Other examples of bi-aspectual verbs include *čuti* 'to hear', *razumeti* 'to understand' and *ručati* 'to have lunch' (Klajn 2005: 106). Another important subcategory of verbs which needs to be added to the group of bi-aspectual verbs are newer loanwords ending in *-ovati*, *-isati*, and *-irati*. The first group is an inherited Slavic ending and is used in Serbian with both native stems, as in *imenovati* 'to name' (from *ime* 'name') and with loan stems, e.g. *pakovati* 'to pack' (from German *packen*). The suffix *-isa-* is of Greek origin and includes verbs such as *mirisati* 'to emit an odor', *bojadisati* 'to paint', *krunisati* 'to crown'. This suffix is very rarely used with native stems. One exception is *saborisati* 'to be in session' (*sabor* 'assembly'). The third suffix, *-irati*, is the most productive of the three, and a rendition of the German verbal suffix *-ier(en)*, e.g. *marširati* 'to march'. This group of verbs, as well as those in *-isati*, are almost exclusively used with loan words. Some of the few exceptions include *ludirati se* 'to play the fool' (from *lud* 'foolish'), and *skrozirati* 'to puncture something completely' (from *skroz* 'through') (Magner 1963:

625). Newer verbs in *-ira-*, *-isa-*, and *-ova-* are assigned to the following categories on the basis of their aspectual properties: They are either bi-aspectual (*markirati* 'to mark'); only imperfective (*respektirati/respektovati* 'to respect'); in its plain form imperfective, but perfective when prefixed (impf. *studirati* 'to study' but perf. *prostudirati*) or bi-aspectual in its plain form and perfective after prefixation (impf./perf. *forsirati* 'to force' but perf. *isforsirati*). The majority of these newer verbs, however, are bi-aspectual (Magner 1963: 629).

The verb *kazati* 'to say' is bi-aspectual only in the present tense. In the sentence *Svi to kažu* 'Everyone says that' it is imperfective, while in *Čekam da mi kažu šta se desilo* 'I'm waiting for them to tell me what happened' it has perfective meaning. In the past and future tenses it can only be used perfectly (Klajn 2005: 106).

4.2.4. Aspectual Morphology of Serbian Verbs

Slavic languages are generally described as very consequent and regular in their perfective/imperfective opposition, i.e. usually there are two sets of verb forms, a perfective and an imperfective one, usually distinguished by the absence or presence of affixes or by conjugational differences. However, it is often difficult to recognise the aspect of a verb simply from its form (Bache 1985: 8). The same is true for Serbian verbs as Hlebec demonstrates with these examples: *rešiti* 'to solve', for instance, is perfective, while *rešavati* is imperfective. In this case the perfective verb is made imperfective by the stem extension *-ava-*. But *tešiti* 'to console' is imperfective, while *utešiti* is perfective. Here the imperfective verb is made perfective by the addition of the prefix *u-*. Dickey agrees that perfectivization by prefixation in Slavic languages is complex, in so far, as there is not one certain prefix with the function of perfectivizing imperfective verbs, but a number of different prefixes that can function as empty prefixes (or *préverbes vides*) (Dickey 2010: 77).

To shed some light on how aspectual pairs are formed it is necessary to take a closer look at the verbal morphology of Serbian with regards to the formation of aspectual pairs.

4.2.4.1. Simple Verbs

Simple verbs, i.e. verbs which are not modified by any kind of affix, are generally imperfective. The exception is the class of verbs in *-nuti*, *-ne-* and a relatively large number of unprefixed imperfectives in *-iti*, *-i-* (Schuyt 1990: 59). Furthermore, there are a number of verbs of the e-conjugation which are perfective. These include *biti* (with the stem *bude-*) 'to be', *leći* (*leže-* and *legne-*) 'to lie down', *pasti* (*padne-*) 'to fall', *reći* (*reče-* and *rekne-*) 'to say', *sjesti* (*sjedne-*) 'to sit down', *sresti* (*sretne-*) 'to meet' (Schuyt 1990: 59).

Verbs in *-nuti* (*-ne-*)

The group of simple verbs which end in *-nuti* are generally perfective (*crknuti* 'to die' (of animals), *dignuti* 'to lift', *stignuti* 'to arrive'). There is, however, also a considerable number of imperfective verbs ending in *-nuti*. These include: *brinuti se* 'to bother', *čeznuti* 'to long, to yearn', etc. Many of them denote verbs that lead to a certain state and are often connected with corresponding nouns or adjectives, e.g. *čvrstnuti* (*čvrst* 'strong'), *kisnuti* (*kiseo* 'sour'). Other imperfectives of that group denote ongoing actions, e. g. *tonuti* 'to sink'. The perfective verbs in *-nuti*, *-ne-* have the following functions:

1. a *ne-* extension to the present stem of unprefixed perfective verbs emphasizes the perfective nature of those verbs (*legne-* instead of *leže-* 'to lay down', *padne-* instead of *pade-*, 'to fall' etc.)
2. perfectivization of imperfective verbs, e.g. *pjevnuti* 'to sing a little' from *pjevati* 'to sing', *spavnuti* 'to sleep a little' from *spavati* 'to sleep'. These verbs are mostly semelfactives, ingressive or diminutives (taken from Leskien 1914: 475)
3. Primary perfectives in *-nuti*, *-ne-*, which have derived imperfectives in *-ati* (*-je-*), *-ati* (*-a-*), *-avati* (*-ava-*), or *-ivati* (*-uje-*). e.g. *dignuti* (or *dići*) vs. *dizati* 'to lift', *crknuti* vs. *crkavati* 'to die', *krenuti* vs. *kretati* 'to move', *sagnuti* vs. *saginjati* 'to bend'
(Schuyt 1990: 62,63)

Verbs in *-ati, (-je-)*

The vast majority of verbs in *-ati, -je-* belong to the group of imperfective verbs. Exceptions include certain individual verbs as well as a group of verbs in *-sati, -še-*. These verbs are mostly of Turkish, and in a few cases of Greek or Slavic origin. Verbs of that group include *begenisati, begeniše-* 'to please', or the bi-aspectual *kalajisati, kalajiše-* 'to cover with tin'. There is also a more recent group of verbs in *-sati, -še-* comprising verbs of Western origin, which are mostly bi-aspectual, such as *definisati, definiše-, ignorisati, ignoriše-* or *kontrolisati, kontroliše-*. Some of these verbs, however, may be made explicitly perfective by adding a prefix, as in *prokontrolisati* (Schuyt 1990: 64).

Verbs in *-ovati, (-uje-)*

Perfectives in *-ovati, -uje-* include *osnovati* 'to found' or *darovati* 'to give', while some of the bi-aspectual verbs are *imenovati* 'to name', *rukovati se* 'to shake hands' or *savjetovati* 'to advise' (Schuyt 1990: 64).

Verbs in *-ati, (-a-)*

While also mostly an imperfective category, some perfectives (*manjkati* 'to lack', *obećati* 'to promise') as well as bi-aspectual verbs (*čestitati* 'to congratulate') may also be found in this group of verb. A special subgroup of this type of verbs is loanwords ending in *-irati* which are mostly bi-aspectual, e.g. *bankrotirati* 'to go bankrupt' and *finansirati* 'to finance' (Schuyt 1990: 65; examples from Magner 1963: 626).

Verbs in *iti-, (-i-)*

This group has a very large number of perfective verbs compared to the other groups of simple verbs. Examples include *baciti* (perf.)/*bacati* (impf.) 'to throw', *javiti se* (perf.)/*javljati se* (impf.) 'to get/stay in touch', *roditi* (perf.)/*rađati* (impf.) 'to give birth', etc. (Schuyt 1990: 65).

Imperfective compounds

There are a number of imperfective compounds, i.e. prefixed imperfectives in Serbian which are mostly verbs ending in *-ati/-jeti*, and which denote a state, e.g. *sadržati* 'to contain' from *držati* 'to hold', *podležati* "to be subject to" from *ležati* 'to lie' (Schuyt 1990: 65, 66). Due to their nature of being prefixed, these verbs are, of course, difficult to differentiate from perfective verbs by their form alone.

4.2.4.2. Perfectivization

As most simple verbs fall into the category of imperfective verbs, they have to be made perfective to complete the aspectual pair. The process of transforming an imperfective verb into a perfective one is called *perfectivization* (sr. *perfektivizacija*). This can be done by adding either a suffix to the root of the verb as in *tresti* (impf.) - *tresnuti* (perf.) 'to shake' or a prefix as in *čuditi se* (impf.) - *začuditi se* (perf.) 'to wonder' (Klajn 2005: 107). The most common way to form a perfective verb from an imperfective one is by adding a prefix. This prefixation, however, often brings about a change in meaning to some degree (Schuyt 1990: 65).

Prefixation

Most often, perfective verbs are formed by prefixing imperfectives. e.g. *piti* 'to drink' (impf.) vs. *popiti* 'to finish drinking, to drink up' (perf.). For the purpose of forming a perfective verb by prefixing an imperfective one, a number of different prefixes can be used. Most of these prefixes also exist as stand-alone prepositions with their own independent meanings which are mostly related to the meaning of the identical prefix used in the perfectivization of imperfective verbs. Thus, besides giving verbs a meaning of completion, these prefixes often also equip verbs with a meaning that is related to their respective preposition. Below is a list of perfective verbs derived from the imperfective *ići* 'to go'.

Table 3 Derived perfective forms of the verb *ići*

Derived perfective verb	Preposition corresponding to the prefix
poći "start out, leave"	po "after"
doći "come"	do "to, up to"
otići "go away"	od "from, away from"
ući "go in"	u "in, into"
izići "go out"	iz "out"
preći "go over, cross"	preko "over"
naći "find"	na "on, against"

(Riđanović 1976: 3,4)

In many cases the prefixed perfective verb carries terminative, ingressive, inchoative, resultative and other features as opposed to its simple imperfective counterpart. These different meanings which develop by adding different prefixes are subject to the realm of Aktionsarten. In other cases the prefix does not alter the verb's meaning and is purely aspectual, and can thus be called "empty" (Schuyt 1990: 67).

Some of the most productive prefixes include²:

- *do-* (to).– e.g. *trčati* (impf.) 'to run' – *dotrčati* (perf.) 'to run to, to run towards', *pisati* (impf.) 'to write' – *dopisati* (perf.) 'to write to'
- *za-* (for) – e.g. *štititi* (impf.) – *zaštititi* (perf.) 'to save', *beleti* (impf.) 'to be white' – *zabeleti* (perf.) 'to turn white'
- *iz-* (out) – e.g. *lečiti* (impf.) 'to treat (medically)' – *izlečiti* (perf.) 'to treat successfully, to cure'
- *na-* (on) – e.g. *pisati* (impf.) – *napisati* (perf.) 'to write', *učiti* (impf.) 'to learn, to study' – *naučiti* (perf.) 'to learn'
- *pro-* (not used as a stand-alone prefix, as a prefix often the meaning of passing (through), beginning with sth. etc.) - e.g. *čitati* (impf.) – *pročitati* (perf.) 'to read', *bušiti* (impf.) – *probušiti* (perf.) 'to pierce, to drill (through)'
- *s(a)* (with, from) – e.g. *mešati* (impf.) – *smešati* (perf.) 'to mix (up)', *leteti* (impf.) 'to fly' – *sleteti* (perf.) 'to land'
- *od* (from) – e.g. *juriti* (impf.) 'chase' *odjuriti* (perf.) 'chase away'

² where there is only one translation, the prefix can be regarded as empty, i.e. it only changes grammatical aspect, not the meaning

- u (in) *pisati* 'to write' *upisati* 'to inscribe', *ići* 'to go' *ući* 'to go in/to enter'

others include *po*, *pod*, *pre*, *pri*, *raz*, etc.

(Stanojčić, Popović 1992: 154)

The phenomenon that some prefixes alter the verb's Aktionsart in addition to its grammatical aspect, while others can be regarded as empty, as they only change a verb from imperfective to perfective by prefixation, can be explained by the semantic similarity or dissimilarity between certain prefixes and base verbs. This means that although a prefix actually carries a semantic meaning, it can, in combination with some verbs, be perceived as empty, while with other verbs a change of Aktionsart will be apparent. For instance, *pisati* 'to write' has the perfective counterpart *napisati*. The prefix *na-* has the meaning of 'on/onto a surface', and since the act of writing involves putting a text onto a surface, it feels as the natural prefix to be added to perfectivize the verb without changing its lexical meaning. Thus a real aspectual pair is created although the prefix does, in fact, carry a lexical meaning (Dickey 2010: 73). With this in mind it becomes apparent that only very few, if any, true empty prefixes exist (Dickey 2010: 74).

Stem change

Another way of changing one aspect to another is stem change, as can be seen in the example *skočiti* 'to jump, to dive' (perf.) vs. *skakati* 'to be in the process of jumping or diving; to jump or dive repeatedly' (impf.). This difference in the stem, although present in a number of aspect pairs, is not the predominant morphological distinguishing feature of such pairs (Riđanović 1976: 3).

4.2.4.3. Imperfectivization and Secondary Imperfectivization

The reverse process, i.e. transforming perfective verbs into imperfectives is called *imperfectivization* (sr. imperfektivizacija) (Klajn 2005: 108). While in some cases a non-prefixed perfective verb can be imperfectivized, more commonly a perfectivized verb (i.e. a prefixed perfective verb) is made imperfective, which is referred to as secondary imperfectivization. This means that an imperfective verb which is perfectivized by adding a prefix which slightly changes its meaning can again be imperfectivized by stem-expansion. So, in the case of the imperfective verb *pisati*, the prefix *pre-* can be added so it becomes perfective *prepisati*, with the meaning of 'to

write over again, to copy'; *prepisati*, again, can be made imperfective by stem-expansion, becoming the verb *prepisivati* 'to be copying, to copy from time to time' (Riđanović 1976: 3,4). Since certain prefixes change the meaning of an imperfective verb, but secondary imperfectivization basically only changes grammatical aspect from perfective to imperfective, one could speak of real aspectual pairs between prefixed perfectives and their secondarily imperfectivized counterparts.

There are several types of (secondary) imperfectivization in Serbian. Some of which are unproductive while others are highly productive. They can be divided according to the following infinitive endings:

-ati:

vraćati 'to give back', *rađati* 'to give birth', *javlјati* 'to inform/to notify', *lupati* 'to knock', *sedati* 'to sit' from the (mostly non-prefixed) perfectives *vratiti*, *roditi*, *javiti*, *sesti*. When *-ati* replaces *-iti*, the consonant before the *i* (if non-palatal) undergoes iotation, leading to verbs like *vraćati* from *vratiti*. Furthermore an *o* in the stem of such a perfective verb changes to *a* in its imperfective counterpart, as in *skočiti* and *skakati* 'to jump' (Stanojčić, Popović 1992: 152).

-avati/-evati:

This group of imperfectivizations concerns prefixed perfective verbs. Examples include *zadati* – *zadavati* 'to assign', *zaigrati* – *zaigravati* 'to start playing', *dospeti* – *dospevati* 'to reach', *zagrevati* – *zagrejati* 'to warm up'. In cases where *-avati* replaces *-iti*, non-palatal consonants before the *i* are iotified, as in *izraziti* – *izražavati* and *iseliti* – *iseljavati* (Stanojčić, Popović 1992: 152).

-ivati/-ijati:

This group, as well, mainly imperfectivizes prefixed perfectives, as can be seen by the following examples: *skriti* – *skrivati* 'to hide', *zamračiti* – *zamračivati* 'to darken', *ispiti* – *ispijati* 'to finish drinking', *dobiti* – *dobijati* 'to get'. Again iotation occurs in the imperfectivation process if the first *i* in the *-iti* ending is preceded by a non-palatal consonant: *zagrđiti* – *zagrđivati* 'to fence off', *zalepiti* – *zaleplјivati* 'to paste', *zaljubiti se* – *zaljublјivati se* 'to fall in love' (Stanojčić, Popović 1992: 152, 153).

Verbs derived from the verb *ići* 'to go' end in *-ći* in their perfective, and *-laziti* in their imperfective forms. Examples include *ući* – *ulaziti* 'to enter', *doći* – *dolaziti* 'to come',

naći – nalaziti ‘to find’, etc. (Klajn 2005: 109). An exception among the perfective/imperfective pairs in Serbian is perfective *reći* with its imperfective counterpart *govoriti* ‘to say’ (Klajn 2005: 106).

4.2.5. Uses of Imperfective and Perfective Verbs in Serbian

Typical for a language with a perfective/imperfective opposition, in Serbian imperfective aspect, naturally, expresses both habitual (41) and progressive aspect (42).

- (41) Svakog dana mi je pisao (impf.) ‘Every day he wrote me’
(42) Jovan je čitao (impf.) kad sam ušao (perf.) ‘John was reading when I entered’

The progressive, Hlebec claims, also implies a change of situation, unlike the imperfective, as in:

- (43) Sada ja čitam (impf.); pozajmiću ti knjigu kada je pročitam (perf.)
‘Now I am reading; I shall lend you the book when I finish reading it’.
(Hlebec 1990: 89)

In the first clause, *čitati* only carries the meaning of the activity of reading, *pročitati*, however, implies that there is a limit to the activity and a change of situation, which in this case is from the action of reading to the point at which the reading is completed (Hlebec 1990: 89).

Adverbs which express duration or continuity, such as *stalno* ‘continually’, *neprekidno* ‘uninterruptedly’, and *neprestano* ‘incessantly’ are only applicable to imperfective verbs, e.g. *Stalno je radio (impf.)/*uradio (perf.)* ‘He worked continually’. After the conjunctions *čim* ‘as soon as’ and *samo što/tek što* ‘no sooner...than’, the use of perfective aspect is obligatory, as in *Čim je pao (perf.)/*padao (impf.), skočio je* ‘As soon as he fell down, he jumped’ (Hlebec 1990: 83). With regards to the imperative, in Serbian only the negative imperative is compatible with imperfective verbs, e.g. *Ne trči (impf.)!* ‘Don’t run!’, whereas the affirmative imperative accepts both aspects, e.g. *Potrči (perf.), ako smeš!* ‘Run if you dare!’ (Hlebec 1990: 84). Simultaneity, i.e. subordinate clauses with *dok* ‘while’, require imperfective aspect, e.g. *Dok je padao (impf.)/*pao (perf.), list se okretao.* ‘While it was falling, the leaf was [sic] turning

around' (Hlebec 1990: 86). In some cases similar situations can be described by either aspect, with the difference that the imperfective verb (44) takes more time than the perfective one (45):

- (44) Dremao/dremkao (impf.) je dva sata. 'He dozed for two hours'
(45) Dremnuo (perf.) je pet minuta/? dva sata He took a nap for five minutes/? 'for two hours'
(Hlebec 1990: 86)

Verbs denoting mental activities are used with imperfective aspect if they imply "an unsuccessful or open-ended situation", while their perfective counterparts denote successful completion. Examples include *dokazivati* 'try to prove', *dokazati* 'prove successfully'; *polagati ispit* 'take an examination', *položiti ispit* 'pass an examination'; *popravljati* 'try to repair', *popraviti* 'succeed in repairing'; *rešavati* 'try to solve', *rešiti* 'solve successfully' (Hlebec 1990: 87). In addition, nominals in *-je* which are derived from imperfective verbs (e.g. *smirivanje* 'appeasement', *rađanje* 'giving birth', *uređivanje* 'putting in order', *osvajanje* 'conquering') remain imperfective, while those derived from perfective verbs (*smirenje*, *rođenje*, *uređenje*, *osvojenje*) are perfective (Hlebec 1990: 87,88).

4.3. Aspect in German

In the German language the category of verbal aspect is not as prominently featured as, for instance, in Slavic languages. Hentschel and Weydt remark that even in most German grammar books aspect is either only marginally mentioned or not mentioned at all (1994: 17, 18). It is safe to assume that the reason aspect is often neglected in studies concerning the German language is that it is not explicitly observable on a morphological level. Leiss, however, warns that "[m]an sollte einer Sprache eine grammatische Kategorie nicht vorschnell absprechen, nur weil sie nicht in den gewohnten Mustern transparent wird" (1992: 27), thus implying that although the German language does not express aspect morphologically in the way other languages do, it has other possibilities to express aspectual differences and for this reason the Slavic aspectual system, although more evident than in German, must not be regarded as the prototype of aspect (1992: 28). Similarly, Comrie claims that languages like German have means to express aspectual differences. The idea of

the difference between English *he read the book* and *he was reading the book* can be applied to German by translating the former sentence as *er las das Buch* and the latter by *er las im Buch* (lit. *He read in-the book*). However, this kind of expressing aspect in German is not generalizable and only applicable to some verbs and situations (1976: 8). Hentschel and Weydt similarly state that aspectual differences can also be expressed in languages like German, which do not have a distinctive aspectual system (1994: 34).

4.3.1. Imperfective and Perfective in German

As mentioned above, a perfective/imperfective opposition in a way comparable to those of Slavic languages does not exist in German. Still, some Aktionsartverben function in a similar fashion. As an example for the opposition completed/not completed, Leiss uses the German example *jagen (impf.)* vs. *erjagen (perf.)* (1992: 31).

The majority of simple verbs in German are imperfective (*lieben, lachen, laufen*). Some of the rare perfective ones include *kommen* and *finden*. “Aktionsartverben”, on the other hand, are (as is also the case in Serbian) generally perfective, which is due to the added prefix which adds a meaning of boundedness (Leiss 1992: 39, 40), which is also an observable feature of Serbian. As in German prefixes are never semantically empty, they not only change the perspective of a verb but also its semantic quality, as in *laufen* and *entlaufen*. This change of meaning thus prevents the forming of aspectual pairs (Leiss 1992: 40). She further adds that if those prefixes were empty, the German language would have aspectual pairs akin to those in Slavic languages (1992: 49). According to Leiss, proof that German verbs can be classified as either perfective or imperfective, is provided through the past participle (1992: 41), which she demonstrates with the following examples (taken from Milan 1985):

- (46) a. die *belagerte* Stadt
 b. die *geliebten* Kinder
 c. *der gefundene* Schlüssel
 d. die *eroberte* Stadt

By putting the second participles in a relative clause, the difference becomes visible.

- (47) a. Die *belagerte Stadt* ist eine Stadt, die *belagert* wird.
 b. Die *geliebten Kinder* sind Kinder, die *geliebt* werden.

- c. *Der gefundene Schlüssel ist der Schlüssel, der gefunden worden ist/wurde.*
- d. *Die eroberte Stadt ist eine Stadt, die erobert worden ist/wurde*

In (47) a. and b. the ongoingness of the event is clearly expressed through the present tense, whereas in c. and d. the relative clause has to be expressed through the past, signaling completedness of the event.

4.3.2. Progressive in German

With regards to the progressive subtype of the imperfective, the German language has a number of ways to convey it.

Of the progressive constructions formed by prepositional constructions, Krause (2001) mentions the ones formed with *an*, *bei* and *in*. He further claims that these constructions have already been grammaticalized to a certain degree, as evidenced by the fact that the prepositions *an*, *bei* and *in* are merged with the definite article in the dative case of the nominalized verb, becoming *am*, *beim* and *im*, and cannot be dissolved to *an dem*, *bei dem* and *in dem*, e.g. **Sie ist an dem / bei dem Essen* or **Er ist in dem Kommen* are not possible (Krause 2001: 94). The fact that the infinitive in these progressive constructions is written with a capital letter (which in German is always done to mark nouns in writing) may be seen as an argument not to categorize German prepositional progressive constructions as verb forms. Krause, however, rejects this argument by claiming that “[d]ie Funktion ist eine rein verbale” (Krause 2001: 95). Important to note is that these constructions are not used very frequently. The *am* + infinitive construction is the one used most frequently and is also easier identifiable and more unambiguous than the constructions with *beim* + infinitive and *im* + infinitive, which in some cases carry a locative meaning (Krause 2001: 104, 114). Hentschel similarly claims that the *am*-construction is the beginning of a developing progressive aspect in the German language, seeing proof in the fact that in many cases it cannot be substituted by a verb phrase + *gerade*, e.g. *ich bin am Verhungern* cannot be substituted by **ich verhungere gerade* (1994: 39,40). The *am*-construction is the one construction, compared to constructions with *bei*, *in*, *gerade* and *dabei sein zu*, that most clearly indicates progressive meaning and is the most developed one (Hentschel, Scheydt 1994: 40). Two further ways to express progressive meaning in German are the constructions with *dabei sein zu* + infinitive

(Krause 2002: 70, 71), and with the temporal adverb *gerade* which has a relatively high frequency (Krause 2001: 90).

An important difference between German constructions expressing progressivity and the English progressive is that in English its use is obligatory, whereas in German it is always optional. So, a sentence like **He eats at the moment* is ungrammatical as it requires the progressive. In German such sentences can always be expressed without additional progressive constructions but are still understood progressively (Krause 1997: 89).

Bohnmeyer points to the interpretative character of aspect in German. While German lacks aspectual marking, a verb's grammatical aspect is understood as imperfective in atelic contexts and as perfective in telic situations respectively (1998: 268). The following two examples clarify this claim. In (48) the verb *regnen* is to be interpreted imperfectively, while in (49) it has perfective meaning.

(48) Als wir in Nijmegen eintrafen, regnete es.

(49) Als wir in Nijmegen eintrafen, regnete es eine Stunde lang.

(Bohnmeyer 1998: 268)

Another example of a difference in aspectual interpretation based on a sentence's telic or atelic nature can be seen in the following two sentences:

(50) Als ich Marys Büro betrat, schrieb sie an einem Brief.

(51) Als ich Marys Büro betrat, schrieb sie einen Brief.

(Bohnmeyer 1998: 268)

In (50) the construction with *an* alters the phrase to an atelic meaning, since it refers only to an unspecified part of the letter which is being written. In (51) on the other hand is clearly telic, making a perfective interpretation more likely (Bohnmeyer 1998: 269).

4.4. Comparison of Aspect in English and Serbian

Section 4.3. presented a brief overview of how aspectual differences may be expressed in German. Since, apart from lexical aspect which gives a German verb perfective or imperfective meaning, progressive constructions in German are always optional. This means that progressivity can always be expressed by the simple verb form and remain grammatical. For that reason, German aspect will be disregarded in this section and only a comparison between the English and Serbian aspectual systems will be made.

Since English and Serbian show significant differences in their verbal morphology (and thus also in that of grammatical aspect) the question arises whether a comparative study in the realm of aspect of these two languages is even reasonable. Hlebec claims that if there is a morphological difference in aspect in a certain language and if a user of that language is obliged to use the correct aspectual form in order to produce correct speech, that language is considered aspectual. And since both English and Serbian make that distinction, it is justified to compare these languages in that regard (1990: 17). As already discussed, English and Serbian both have obligatory aspectual systems. They, however, differ in their aspectual oppositions. Following Comrie's model of aspectual subdivisions (compare chapter 3.2.1.), Serbian has the broad prototypical aspectual opposition of imperfective and perfective, without any further subdivisions. Thus, in Serbian imperfective aspect is used to express both habitual and progressive meaning. English, on the other hand, does not differentiate morphologically between imperfectivity and perfectivity, but does have an obligatory progressive construction. In opposition stands the simple form, which is used for both, non-progressive and habitual meaning.

With regards to tense-aspect-combinations it is important to note that the English aspectual opposition affects the entire verbal system (Krause 11: 1998), i.e. even the present tense, while in Serbian the present tense can only be expressed by imperfective aspect and has, depending on context, either progressive or habitual interpretation. In English both the simple and the progressive can be used in the present tense – the former conveys habitual meaning whereas the latter is used to express progressive aspect.

4.4.1. Correspondence of English and Serbian Aspect

The most obvious overlap of aspectual forms between English and Serbian is that of progressivity and imperfectivity. According to Hlebec “to translate the Exp. Form strictly literally would call for the Impv., and vice versa”³ while such a correspondence between the simple form and the perfective is not given (1990: 140). This correspondence can clearly be seen through the following English and Serbian examples which express progressivity:

- (52) The ducks are swimming in the pool.
'Patke plivaju (impf.) po jezeretu.'
- (53) He was digging in the garden for two hours.
'Kopao je (impf.) u bašti dva sata.'
- (54) While they were watching television, the phone rang.
'Dok su gledali (impf.) televiziju, pozvonio je telefon.'
(Hlebec 1990: 140)

One of the most significant differences in aspectual use between Serbian and English are the non-progressive uses of the English progressive, such as informality, casualness, tentative uses, emotivity, etc., which are never expressed imperfectively in Serbian (Hlebec 1990: 142,143). Thus a sentence like (55) has to be expressed perfectly in Serbian.

- (55) When will you be coming?
'Kad ćeš doći (perf.)?'
(Hlebec 1990: 142)

In cases where through context it is obvious whether a situation is progressive, English may either use the progressive or the simple form, whereas Serbian is required to use imperfective aspect in these kinds of situations (Hlebec 1990: 148):

- (56) While they watched/were watching the eagle, a line of warriors
crept/were creeping silently up the trail.
- (57) Dok su oni pogledom pratili (impf.) orla, kolona ratnika tiho se prikradala
(impf.) stazom.
(Hlebec 1990: 148)

³ Hlebec refers to the progressive by the name “expanded form”.

English simple forms correspond to both imperfective and perfective aspect in Serbian, depending on the semantic quality of the verb. Punctual meaning is always expressed by the simple form in English and perfective aspect in Serbian, as in the following examples (Hlebec 1990: 144):

- (58) Suddenly I believed him.
'Ođjednom sam mu poverovao (perf.)'
(59) Tom has drunk/drank three bottles of beer.
'Tom je popio (perf.) tri boce piva.
(Hlebec 1990: 144)

On the other hand, state verbs are normally only used by the simple form in English but are imperfective in Serbian (Hlebec 1990: 145):

- (60) We understand that you are an artist.
'Koliko znamo (impf.), vi ste umetnik.
(Hlebec 1990: 145)

Hlebec claims that since there is hardly any correspondence between the English progressive and Serbian perfective aspect but a rather strong one between progressive and imperfective aspect, learners must be careful not to substitute imperfective forms with the progressive. With regards to aspect acquisition, Hlebec points to the fact that Serbian speaking learners of English can substitute the simple for the perfective. The imperfective, on the other hand, can be replaced by either the progressive or the simple form. Thus it is important to understand the progressive, i.e. distinguish between a progressive and stative meaning of the imperfective (1990: 150).

To summarize, one can say that Serbian perfective aspect can (almost) always be translated by a simple form in English. A simple form, on the other hand, can be either perfective or imperfective. Regarding the English progressive, the appropriate Serbian translation is (almost) always imperfective in Serbian, while Serbian imperfectives do not always correspond to English progressive aspect.

5. L2 Acquisition of English Aspect

5.1. Error Analysis

With regards to second language acquisition it is important to understand the nature of the errors a language learner makes during their learning process. Two important concepts used in the last half century to explain those errors have been contrastive analysis and its successor error analysis. The idea of contrastive analysis was first introduced by Lado in his book *Linguistics Across Cultures* (1957), based on his observation that elements that are similar in a learner's L1 and L2 are easier to acquire than elements that are different (1957: 2). Based on this assumption, in the 1960's a number of linguists (e.g., Bowen, Martin and Stockwell 1965) used contrastive analysis to explain and predict learners' errors (Ellis 1994: 307). The problem with contrastive analysis, however, is that "in its strongest form" it was interpreted as a method to explain all learners' errors, hence claiming that the differences between a learner's L1 and L2 are the only source of error (Ellis 1994: 307, 308). Since empirical evidence proved that a learner's L1 is not the only source of defective linguistic production of the L2, contrastive analysis soon was considered insufficient to explain all learners' errors, so error analysis emerged as a supplement (Fisiak: 1981: 7). As opposed to contrastive analysis, which only looks at the differences between the L1 and L2, error analysis tries to understand the learners' language and all the errors it incorporates (Ellis 1994: 48). Corder describes the difference between contrastive analysis and error analysis by stating that contrastive studies discover and describe the differences between the L1 and L2, while error analysis observes whether the predictions made through bilingual comparison are true or not (Corder 1981: 35).

5.1.1. Learners' errors

When looking at the errors a language learner makes when producing linguistic output in their L2, one has to be cautious of how much importance to accord to them as they may have different causes. For that reason Corder distinguishes two types of learners' errors – those which are systematic and those which are unsystematic. Unsystematic errors are those which do not occur due to the speaker's lack of linguistic competence (e.g. slips of the tongue, etc.), whereas systematic errors are

concerned with linguistic knowledge. The first group (which he calls mistakes – a term he adopted from Miller 1966) is of no importance to language learning, while (systematic) errors are important in three ways: Firstly they help the teacher determine how far the learner’s knowledge of the L2 has progressed, secondly, they make the strategies and procedures visible that the learner is employing; and thirdly, it is important to the learners themselves as they are testing their hypothesis of how the L2 works – similarly to how a child would when learning their L1 (Corder 1981: 10, 11).

5.2. Interlanguage Theory

A concept closely linked to error analysis is that of interlanguage. Since it has been proven that learners’ errors are not solely subject to language transfer, but have different sources, interlanguage theory attempts to understand and analyze the learner’s language (i.e. interlanguage). Interlanguage indicates that a language learner develops their own language systems in all the stages during the learning process of an L2. According to Corder this system is “systematic, regular, and consequently [...] describable in terms of a set of rules, i.e., it has a grammar.” With regards to interlanguage (also called idiosyncratic dialect or transitional dialect) it is important to note that although it is not a shared language, it nevertheless can be similar among learners with “similar cultural background, aims or linguistic history” (Corder 1981:19). For example, it can be assumed that a group of learners speaking the same L1 and sharing a similar language learning experience, will have very similar interlanguages (1981: 20). Factors which lead to a deviation in their interlanguage include motivation, intelligence, attitude etc. (1981: 20).

Selinker (1972) formulates the following elements which make up a learner’s interlanguage:

- (1) Language transfer (some elements of a learner’s interlanguage are transferred from their L1)
- (2) Transfer of training (some interlanguage elements are the result of the way a learner was taught the L2)
- (3) Strategies of second language learning (the strategies a learner employs to learn a language)

(4) Strategies of second language communication (the strategies a learner employs to communicate with native speakers of the L2)

(5) Overgeneralization of the target language material (some interlanguage elements emerge from an overgeneralization of rules of the L2)

(Ellis 1994: 351)

5.3. L1 influence

Of the above mentioned elements defined by Selinker, L1 influence is, certainly, the most relevant for the present thesis. Lott defines L1 interference as “errors in the learner’s use of the foreign language that can be traced back to the mother tongue” (1983: 256). According to James, elements which are transferred from the L1 to the L2 depend on two factors. On the one hand on the similarity between the L1 and L2 structures, i.e. L1 interference tends to occur when the L1 and L2 structures appear to be similar to the learner, and on the other hand on how marked certain structures in the learner’s L1 are, i.e. unmarked forms in the L1 tend to be transferred more often to the L2 (1998: 179). This leads to either a correct use (positive transfer or interference) or incorrect use (negative transfer or interference) of certain elements of the L2 (James 1998: 179).

5.4. Aspect Hypothesis

Past research suggests a close relationship between lexical and grammatical aspect in the acquisition of tense and aspect in languages in both L1 and L2. This relationship refers to the fact that certain verbs of Vendler’ classification of accomplishments, achievements, activities and states (and consequently verb phrases possessing or lacking the semantic features of punctual, telic and/or dynamic) tend to be first acquired with a certain grammatical aspect (Li, Shirai 2000: 47ff). On the basis of these observations some researchers (Andersen and Shirai 1994; Bardovi-Harlig 1995; Robinson 1995) introduced the Aspect Hypothesis, which states that following generalizations concerning aspect acquisition can be made:

- (1) Learners first apply (perfective) past marking to achievement or accomplishment verbs, before applying them to activity and state verbs.

- (2) In languages with a morphological perfective/imperfective distinction, imperfective past marking occurs later than perfective past marking. Furthermore imperfective past is first used on stative and activity (i.e., atelic) verbs, and later on accomplishment and achievement (i.e., telic) verbs.
- (3) In languages with progressive aspect, progressive marking first occurs on activity verbs, and later on accomplishment/achievement verbs.
- (4) Progressive forms are rarely incorrectly used with stative verbs.
- (Li, Shirai 2000: 50)

Li and Shirai give the following table as a visual representation of the generalizations described above, i.e. the order of acquisition from the earliest (1) to the latest (4).

Table 4 Order of aspectual acquisition according to verb group

	State	Activity	Accomplishment	Achievement
(Perfective) Past	4 <=====	3 <=====	2 <=====	1 <=====
Progressive	? <=====	1 =====>	2 =====>	3 =====>
Imperfective	1 =====>	2 =====>	3 =====>	4 =====>

(Li, Shirai 2000: 50)

Although the Aspect Hypothesis is supposed to be applicable to both L1 and L2 acquisition, generalization 4 tends to be true rather for L1 than L2 acquisition (Li, Shirai 2000: 50). Furthermore, Li and Shirai point out that although these general patterns play an important role in the acquisition of grammatical aspect, findings of different studies vary significantly from the proposed aspect hypothesis (2000: 52).

5.4.1. L1 influence in the Acquisition of Aspect

Although neglected in the aspect hypothesis, Li and Shirai mention L1 influence as a possible factor in the acquisition of the aspectual system of the L2. They refer to a study by Quick (1997), in which Spanish students used the English progressive with achievement verbs more adequately than Chinese and Japanese students, since in Spanish such a combination is possible, whereas it is not possible in Chinese and only with a different meaning in Japanese (Li, Shirai 2000: 85). Furthermore, Rocca (2002) found that Italian learners of English tend to use progressive constructions on

stative verbs, which she links to a possible application of the rules for imperfective aspect to the progressive.

This seems to support the assumption that a learner's L1 has an influence in the acquisition of grammatical aspect. A similarity of the aspectual systems may facilitate the acquisition of aspect of the L2, but can also be a source of error in cases of partial correspondence of aspectual systems of a learner's L1 and L2.

6. Study

As already discussed, former studies which dealt with the matter of the acquisition of English aspect have suggested that a learner's L1 is a relevant factor in acquiring the aspectual system of an L2. Besides the influence of a learner's L1, the aspect hypothesis seems to play a significant role in the acquisition of L2 aspect as well, i.e. grammatical aspect for certain verb classes (as defined by Vendler) are acquired earlier than others. While the hypothesis has been proven correct by numerous studies, other studies suggest that a learner's L1 plays a more significant role (see chapter 5).

This present study attempts to look into the acquisition of English aspect from two angles. Firstly, the aspect hypothesis will be tested, i.e. the language learners' aspectual choice with activities, states, accomplishments and achievements will be analyzed and the results will be compared with the predictions of the aspect hypothesis, while the results of the two investigated groups will also be compared. Secondly, aspectual errors in situations typical for progressive or simple use (Inzidenzschema, simultaneity, duration and habituality) made by German and Serbian L1 learners of English will be compared to each other in order to determine the degree of impact a learner's L1 has on the acquisition of grammatical aspect. These two approaches have been chosen as an attempt to determine whether the aspect hypothesis or a learner's L1 is of greater importance when acquiring L2 aspect.

As mentioned before, the English progressive has a number of secondary uses (most notably to add emotivity, informality, tentativeness, unobtrusiveness, politeness or casualness), but since these uses are no criteria for a change of aspect in Serbian, they are excluded from this study.

6.1. Research Question

Since this study is concerned with the acquisition of English aspect, what will be observed is the correct use of either the simple or the progressive form. In English, to form the progressive, a morphological alternation of the verb is required, i.e. an *-ing* ending is added to the simple form of a verb. Similarly, in Serbian a change from imperfective to perfective aspect (or vice versa) is also done morphologically (as has

been discussed in chapter 4.2.), thus possibly leading Serbian L1 students to recognize and correctly use correct aspectual forms in English. Due to the significant parallels between Serbian imperfective aspect and the English progressive it appears reasonable to compare them with each other. But since these two categories only partly overlap (only the progressive function of the imperfective), both positive and negative L1 influence is expected to be observed. The Serbian L1 students may overuse the progressive in cases where a simple form would be obligatory or at least preferred, especially with regards to habitual aspect and state verbs. On the other hand, it could help them use the progressive more appropriately in its prototypical uses, i.e. for ongoing actions. This should be visible especially in cases of Inzidenzschema, simultaneity and duration. In the case of German L1 students, it will be observed if there is an underuse of progressive forms, as has been suggested by former research (Dürich 2005, Komaier 2013), due to a lack of an appropriate equivalent in the German language. Although the progressive in German can be realized by either adverbs like *gerade* or constructions like *am* + infinitive + *sein*, *beim* + infinitive + *sein* or *im* + infinitive + *sein* (compare chapter 4.3.), which is comparable to the English progressive under certain circumstances, it is always optional and in most cases not used at all by speakers of German.

The research question thus is twofold:

1. Which factor is more important in acquiring the tense-aspect-system of English: the aspect hypothesis or possible Serbian L1 influence?
2. Do Serbian L1 speakers, due to positive L1 interference, perform better than German L1 speakers in the case of typical progressive uses and worse with regards to states and habituality because of negative L1 transfer?

6.2. Method

With regards to the acquisition of grammatical aspect, different factors play a role (see chapter 5 on second language acquisition). Many of these factors can of course not be taken into consideration in this study (such as individual learner's strategies, motivation, etc.). So in order to test the aspect hypothesis, i.e. to observe whether the correct use of progressive aspect is acquired in a certain order, depending on the verb's lexical aspect, as well as to find to which degree the learners' L1 influences the use of aspectual forms in English, an error analysis seems to be the appropriate

method. This will provide the necessary information, as the deviations from the target language will become obvious through the errors the students produce and will also facilitate the comparison between the two groups. Although this study only concerns the written language, thus excluding spontaneous use of language, it should nevertheless suffice to give a general idea of the students' command of the English aspectual system.

6.3. Data and Participants

The data was collected from three different written tasks which were performed by three fifth grade classes (9th school year) of a secondary school (Bundesrealgymnasium) in Vienna's 12th district. Since this study is concerned with German L1 and Serbian L1 learners of English, specimens which did not fit the requirements were disregarded. In the end, 30 completed task sheets were considered for this study, 15 for each group of learners. The participants were at the end of fifth grade, i.e. they had five years of English learning experience at the time this study was conducted. As according to the Austrian curriculum for the first foreign language

(https://www.bmbf.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/lp/lp_ahs_os_lebende_fs_11854.pdf?4dzgm2) the students were supposed to be on a B1 level (intermediate) according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR), this seemed to be a suitable group to collect the data from, since this group of learners is advanced enough to have already been taught the English tense-aspect-system, yet still not able to constantly produce completely accurate structures.

The data was manually grouped according to Vendler's verb groups on the one hand, and, if the respective verb allowed it, put in one of the categories of Inzidenzschema, simultaneity, duration or habituality. Then, the verbs were evaluated according to the aspectual form in which they occur (progressive or simple) and to whether the applied form is appropriate. Verbs whose form is wrong but where it is clear what was meant, e.g. incorrect past tense forms like **writed* instead of *wrote* or the omission of third person 's' were used as valid data. Those cases where it was unclear which form of the verb was meant were disregarded (e.g. **is go*, etc.). In some sentences, where both aspects would be appropriate, both were counted as correct. Since this

study is solely concerned with verbal aspect, tense errors were not taken into consideration, thus a sentence like **Vanessa knows her best friend for two years* was considered correct, since here the state verb is used in its simple form.

Although Vendler (1960) interprets habits as states, I decided to treat them separately. Firstly, the vast majority of state verbs occurring in the results do not refer to habits, and secondly, since this study is concerned with aspect, it seemed more accurate to separately have a look at how the students cope with habitual aspect.

In order to refer to a sentence from the task sheets or a certain sentence produced by a student, every example sentence of the task sheets, as well as every student was given a number. The students were numbered according to their L1 (S for Serbian, G for German) and from 1 to 15 respectively. The sentences of the tasks were marked from task 1 to task 3 (T1, T2, T3) and the number of the example sentence (E1 – E20). So, for instance G2_T1/E12 would refer to the German L1 student who was given number two, task number 1 and example sentence number 12. In cases which refer to the instruction sentence only, without the students' answers, the reference is given without the numbering of a student, thus T1/E12 only refers to task 1, example sentence 12, as it is found on the task sheet.

6.4. Tasks

For this study three tasks were designed. The first one was a fill-in-exercise consisting of 20 English sample-sentences with the verb's plain infinitive form given in brackets. The students were then supposed to write down the appropriate verb form in the empty space. By providing the sample sentences for the participants, a more even distribution of the different verb groups could be achieved. The second task consisted of 10 German sentences which had to be translated into English. In this case the English context was, of course, missing. The aim was to find out whether the participants would use appropriate progressive and simple forms when translating sentences from German, which of course, does not express aspect. The third task consisted of a handful of questions about the participants themselves which they had to answer in form of an essay. For this task the questions were given in German rather than English. This decision was made so that the participants had to freely formulate their sentences in English without the possibility to copy structures and formulations from the questions if they were given in English. The essay part

included questions about the participants' mother tongues and also which language(s) they spoke at home, giving the basis for the selection of participants to be used for the study. It was also chosen so the students can freely use whichever verb forms they feel are appropriate and formulate their own sentences, giving a clearer picture of how they would naturally use aspectual forms.

The aim of this paper is not to analyze the participants' use of English aspectual forms according to a certain task but rather give a general picture of their command of verbal aspect in English. Thus all the results will always refer to all three tasks together. The decision to choose three different tasks was not only made to provide a greater variety of different situations for aspectual uses but also to be able to produce a more even distribution of different verbs according to verb group.

Since this study basically investigates two factors of aspect acquisition – the aspect hypothesis and L1 influence – for reasons of clarity this study will consist of two parts.

6.5. Study (part 1)

In this section the results of the first part of the study are presented, i.e. the numbers relating to the accuracy of the aspect hypothesis and the question whether a learner's L1 interferes with it are provided. In other words, the question in how far – if at all – the results between the German L1 and the Serbian L1 students deviate from each other will be considered.

Table 5 shows the total numbers of verb forms used by both groups. A total of 2251 verb forms occurred in all three exercises by all 30 participants combined, of which 1071 were used by the Serbian L1 students and 1180 by those with German as their L1. 582 of the total verb occurrences were progressive forms and 1669 simple verbs. The results show no substantial deviation between the two groups, as the percentage of erroneous verb forms by the Serbian L1 students is 22%, which is one percent higher than in the German L1 group. Similarly, when looking separately at the correct use of simple and progressive forms, no relevant difference between the two groups can be observed either. Of the 297 progressive verbs which occurred in the Serbian L1 group, 26% were used incorrectly. This percentage is slightly lower in the German L1 half, since here 24% of the progressive forms which were used were incorrect, thus showing a slightly better performance with regards to progressive use. Apart

from the slightly better performance of the German L1 group, the Serbian L1 students used progressive forms slightly more often (297 vs. 285). With regards to simple forms, the opposite is true. Here the German L1 group used 895 verbs in their simple form, of which 28% were incorrectly used, while the Serbian L1 students used 774 simple verb forms, 29% of which were erroneous.

The reason the number of verbs is slightly higher for the German L1 students is attributed to fewer cases of omitting a verb form in the first two exercises, as well as using more verbs in the essay part.

Table 5 Total numbers of correct and incorrect verb forms used

	Serbian L1	German L1	Total
Progressive correct	235	229	464
Progressive incorrect	62	56	118
Percentage incorrect	26%	24%	25%
Simple			
Simple correct	601	698	1299
Simple incorrect	173	197	370
Percentage incorrect	29%	28%	28%
Total			
Total	1071	1180	2251
Incorrect	235	253	488
Percentage	22%	21%	22%

With regards to aspectual use with verbs according to their lexical aspect, most incorrect uses could clearly be observed with activity and accomplishment verbs). Roughly a third of the activity verbs (Serbian L1 33%, German L1 32%) and a fourth of the accomplishment verbs (Serbian L1 26%, German L1 21%) were used incorrectly by both groups. Inappropriate aspectual use with states was relatively uncommon in both groups (Serbian L1 7%, German L1 11%) and only slightly more common with achievement verbs (Serbian L1 10%, German L1 14%) (see **Table 6**).

Table 6 Correct aspectual use according to lexical verb group

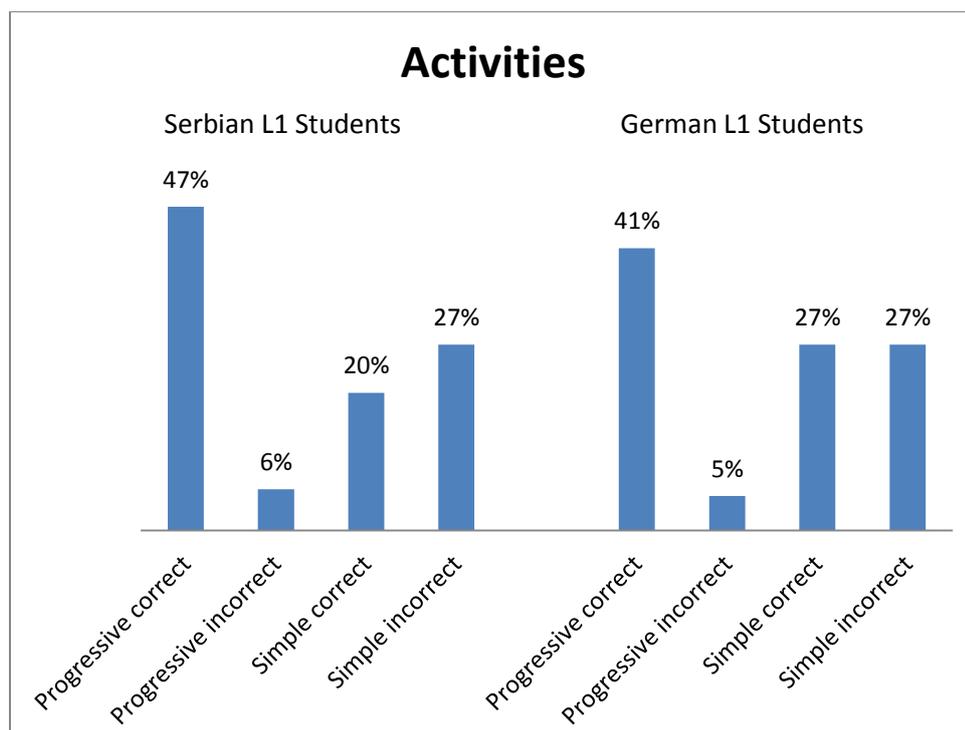
	Activities	States	Accomplishments	Achievements
Serbian L1				
Verbs (Total)	401	161	223	286
Incorrect aspectual use	134	12	59	30
Percentage	33%	7%	26%	10%
German L1				
Verbs (Total)	425	189	244	322
Incorrect aspectual use	136	21	52	44
Percentage	32%	11%	21%	14%

In the following section a more detailed analysis will be given of how appropriately both groups used grammatical aspect with the four verb groups of activities, states, accomplishments and achievements. For reasons of clarity and simplicity only the percentages are given, both in the diagrams and in the discussions, while whole numbers are stated only where it adds to comprehension.

6.5.1. Activities

Activity verbs are those for which, according to the aspect hypothesis, the progressive form is acquired the fastest. **Figure 1** below illustrates the aspectual choice with activity verbs by both the Serbian and the German L1 groups.

Figure 1 Aspectual choice with activity verbs



The results confirm that when an activity verb requires a simple form, the students of both groups rarely incorrectly (6% Serbian L1 and 5% German L1) use the progressive instead. Here are two examples of an incorrect progressive use of activity verbs:

- (61) Ben and his friends were playing football yesterday. (S1, S11, S12, G3, G7_T1/E3)
- (62) Nevertheless, he enjoys reading and **he has been reading* many books in his life. (S12_T1/E20)

(61) does not require progressive aspect since the action described is complete in itself and also does not stand in relation to a punctual situation, so that its ongoingness would have to be expressed. Still, both Serbian L1 (3) and German L1 (2) students used the progressive in this case. In the case of the Serbian L1 students this could be explained by a possible analogy they drew to Serbian imperfective aspect, as in *Ben i njegovi prijatelji su juče igrali (impf.) fudbal*, imperfective aspect would be used in order to stress the duration of the action. Language transfer in the case of the German L1 students can, of course, be ruled out. Yet, it is possible that they also linked progressive aspect to duration. With regards to (62) only one Serbian

L1 student used the progressive aspect for the second verb. Since, none of the other students used progressive aspect here, the source of error is likely a subjective misinterpretation of how progressive aspect is to be used. Possible L1 transfer can be ruled out, since the Serbian equivalent *Ipak uživa u čitanju i pročitao (perf.) je mnogo knjiga u svom životu* requires perfective aspect. The fact that the other Serbian L1 students did not use progressive in this sentence seems to support this claim.

However, what can be seen is that for both groups the biggest source of error was the incorrect use of simple forms instead of progressives (27% each), which can be seen in the following sentence.

(63) I _____ (work) on my English presentation for two weeks now and there is still lots of work to do. (T1/E1)

In (63) the majority (11 in each group) avoided using the present perfect progressive, but used present perfect simple (and in some cases present simple or even past simple) instead. The fact that in the Serbian translation imperfective aspect would be obligatory ('Radim (impf.) već dve nedelje na svojoj prezentaciji iz engleskog a ima još mnogo posla da se uradi') and in German the progressive could be understood through the *an* in *Ich arbeite schon seit zwei Wochen an meiner Englischpräsentation und es gibt immer noch viel zu tun*, did not lead to a use of the progressive by the majority of the students of both groups. In the reverse situation, i.e. having the German sentence given which had to be translated into English, the *an* given in (64), was correctly understood as a progressive by the majority of the students:

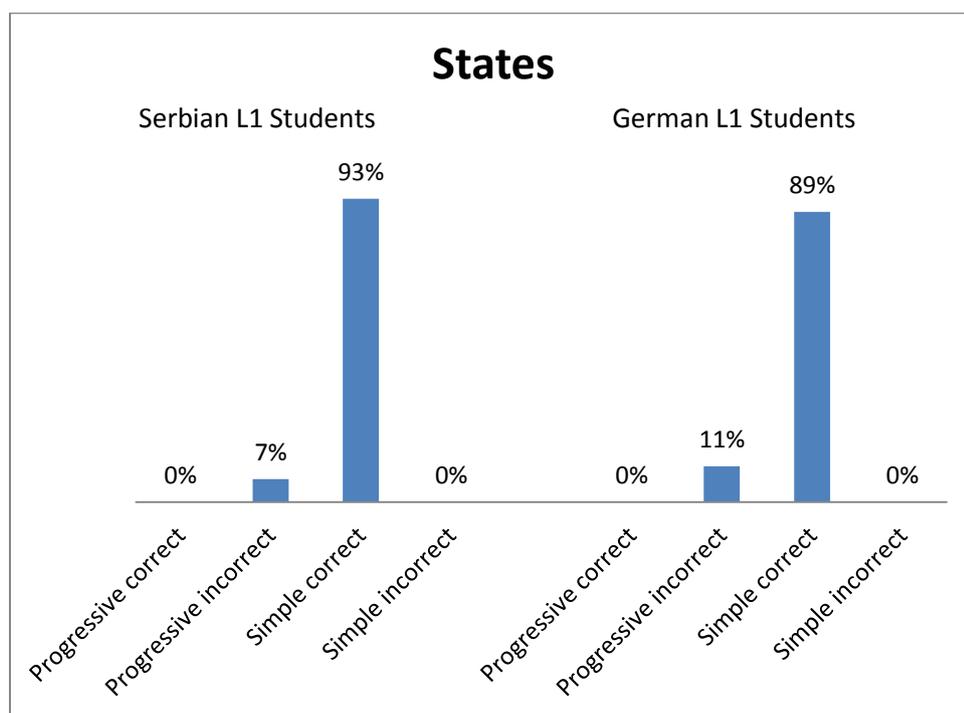
(64) Er schreibt schon seit Monaten an seinem Roman. (T2/E22)

Only 3 out of 15 Serbian L1 learners did not use the progressive here and one more of the German L1 group opted for a simple use of the verb instead of the progressive.

6.5.2. States

States are not used with progressive aspect if used in the prototypical sense, and since secondary uses of the progressive were excluded from this study, in all instances the simple form should have been used by the participants.

Figure 2 Aspectual choice with state verbs



As can be seen in **Figure 2**, states caused the students the fewest difficulties. Since states are imperfective in Serbian, it was expected that some sort of L1 interference would occur, causing the Serbian L1 students to use the progressive instead of the simple in some cases, similar to the overuse of progressives with state verbs by Italian learners of English observed by Rocca (2002). A progressive use of state verbs by the Serbian L1 group happened, however, in only 7% of the cases, whereas in the German L1 group, the percentage is even slightly higher at 11%. The situations where state verbs were used progressively were mostly found in the following two sentences:

(65) While I _____ (hate) reading the newspaper,
I _____ (enjoy) good novels (T1/E8)

(66) Vanessa kennt ihre beste Freundin schon seit zwei Jahren (T2/E28):

In (65) the conjunction *while* might have falsely been linked to simultaneity and the rule to use the progressive in combination with *while* has apparently been applied, either partly or completely. This led to sentences in which either both state verbs were used progressively (67) or only the first (68) or the second one (69).

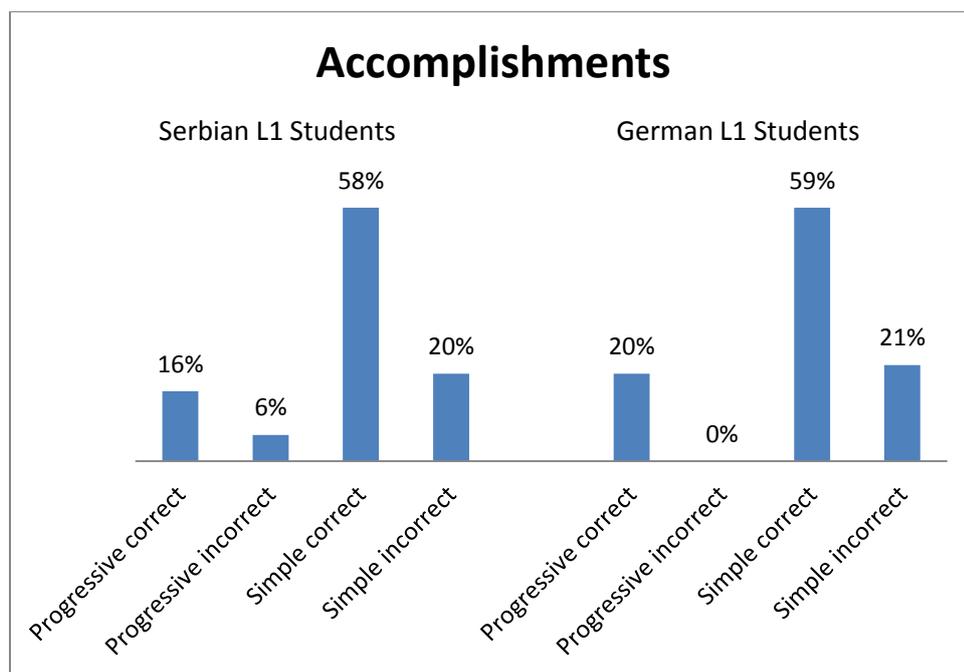
- (67) While **I was hating* reading the newspaper, **I was enjoying* good novels. (G7, G15, S2_T1/E8)
- (68) While **I was hating* reading the newspaper, I enjoyed good novels. (G3, G5, S3, S11_T1/E8)
- (69) While I hated reading the newspaper, **I was enjoying* good novels. (G4, S8_T1/E8)

In the case of (66) two Serbian L1 (S4, S8) and three German L1 students (G9, G11, G15) erroneously used the present perfect progressive instead of the simple, producing **Vanessa has been knowing her best friend for two years*. This could be attributed to how the students are taught this tense. Since the present perfect progressive often occurs with *for* or *since* (ger. 'seit'), they may have falsely assumed that the progressive must be used in all such cases, regardless of the kind of verb.

6.5.3. Accomplishments

According to the aspect hypothesis the correct application of progressive forms with accomplishment verbs is acquired following that of activity verbs. However, as can be seen in **Figure 3**, it still presents a common source of error for the investigated groups.

Figure 3 Aspectual choice with accomplishment verbs



The main source of error in both groups was the incorrect use of simple forms when progressive aspect would have been appropriate. Of all cases which required progressive aspect. A good example is the following:

- (70) Is your computer still broken? No, Bill _____ (already repair) it. He _____ (repair) my computers for years now.
(T1/E15)

While all but one student (S4) correctly used a simple verb for the first accomplishment verb, both groups almost exclusively (Serbian L1: 13/15, German L1: 14/15) did the same with the second one. In most cases the present simple or present perfect simple were used. The use of the present tense can be attributed to both German L1 and Serbian L1 interference, since in both languages the present tense would be used in a direct translation – *Er repariert* (present) *meine Computer schon seit Jahren* and *On već godinama popravlja* (present impf.) *moje računare*, but does not explain the avoidance of the progressive by the majority of the Serbian L1 learners, especially since the same verb is used perfectly in the sentence before. In addition to that, a small percentage of Serbian L1 students (6%) used the progressive where a simple verb would have been appropriate. Interestingly enough, this occurred mostly in the following sentence:

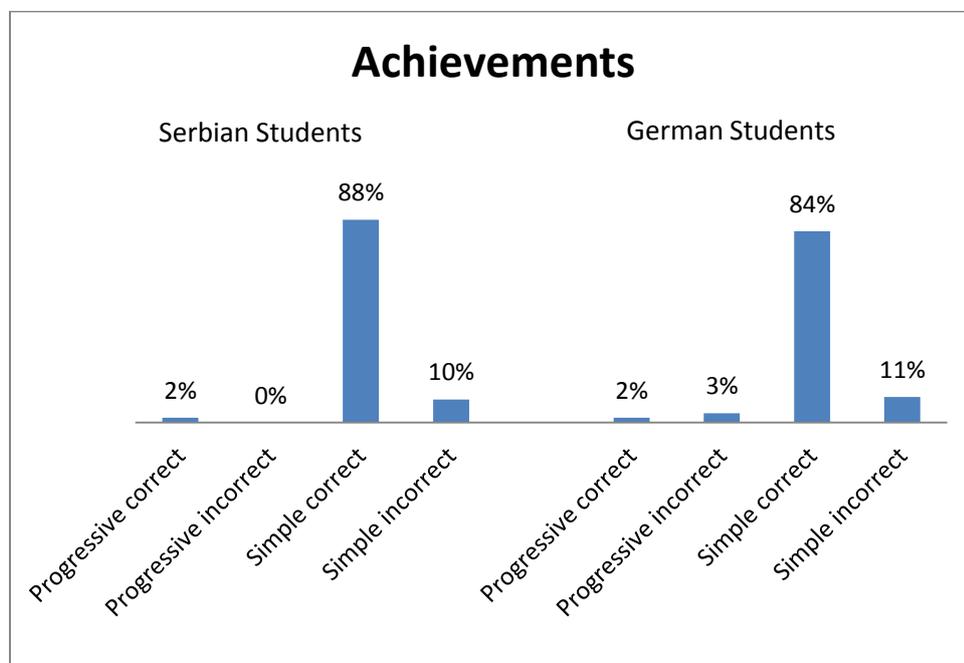
(71) My sister **was swimming* a whole kilometer and was very tired afterwards. (S5_T1/E12, S7_T1/E12, S8_T1/E12, S11_T1/E12)

Serbian L1 transfer, however, can be excluded here, since in Serbian *Moja sestra je otplivala (perf.) ceo kilometar i bila je jako umorna nakon toga*, perfective aspect would be preferred for the first verb. As was possibly also the case with a number of activity verbs, the verb could have been interpreted as having duration, which the students in question most likely associated with progressivity.

6.5.4. Achievements

As predicted by the aspect hypothesis, the correct progressive use of achievement verbs is acquired last (apart from states) by learners of English. Due to their quality of being punctual, they are naturally used in their simple form. As can be seen in **Figure 4**, when a progressive form was required (12% of the achievement verbs in the Serbian L1 group, 13% in the German L1 group) the students of both groups in most cases used simple forms instead (Serbian L1 83%, German L1 85%).

Figure 4 Aspectual choice with achievement verbs



A good example of a situation in which most of the students failed to identify a progressive use of an achievement verb is the following sentence:

- (72) Ken always looked like he _____ (die) when he did push-ups at the gym. (T1/E)

Here, 11 out of 15 Serbian L1, and 12 out of 15 German L1 students opted for the simple instead of the progressive, although in this case, of course, the verb *die* is to be interpreted as a (metaphorical) process leading up to death, thus requiring the progressive. The fact that in the Serbian translation *Ken je uvek izgledao kao da umire (imp.) kad je radio sklekove u teretani*, did not noticeably help the Serbian L1 group interpret it as a progressive.

If the simple form was appropriate, both groups generally used it correctly. Interestingly, however, only in the German L1 half there were instances found of incorrect progressive use with achievement verbs, as in:

- (73) She recognized his voice when she **was hearing* him on the radio last night. (G4, G7_T1/E19)

In this case the use of the progressive could possibly be explained by a confusion of the verbs *hear* and *listen*, since German basically translates both with *hören*. One student even used both verbs in the progressive, i.e. **She was recognizing his voice when she was hearing him on the radio last night* (G3_T1/E19) which, certainly, is more difficult to explain, and it is to assume that the student probably did not know the meaning of the verb *recognize*.

Summing up, the results of the first part of the study show that state verbs, as predicted by the aspect hypothesis, caused both groups the fewest difficulties. Although incorrect progressive uses occurred in both groups, their frequency was rather low (Serbian L1 7%, German L1 11%). With regards to activities, accomplishments and achievements the main source of error was avoidance of progressive forms. This is especially true in the case of achievement verbs, where in situations, in which the progressive would have been appropriate, the simple form was mainly used by both groups (Serbian L1 83%, German L1 85%).

Study (Part 2)

This part of the study focuses more specifically on possible L1 transfer by Serbian L1 learners in their choice of grammatical aspect in English and attempts to establish in how far this transfer facilitates the acquisition of English aspect compared to German L1 learners. In order to get the data needed, certain situations which require (or prefer) progressive aspect in English and imperfective aspect in Serbian were used as the criteria to set up the analysis. These situations are based on Hlebec's (1990) categories of correspondences between Serbian imperfective and English progressive. The first of these situations is the Inzidenzschema, which is the prototypical way to prove if a certain language has an aspectual system. This is in so far adequate, as it provides a reliable correspondence of simple/perfective and progressive/imperfective, respectively. Secondly, the use of aspect with regards to simultaneity was observed. While in Serbian both events which take place at the same time have to be expressed imperfectively, in English the progressive is always possible, but not obligatory. The third category is duration, i.e. verbs in combination with adverbs and phrases expressing duration (for hours, the whole day, etc.) which, like simultaneity, is expressed imperfectively in Serbian, while in English both the simple and the progressive are possible. The last category taken into consideration for this part of the study is that of habituality. As opposed to the categories of Inzidenzschema, simultaneity and duration, with habituality there is a non-correspondence of Serbian imperfective aspect and English progressive aspect. Habituality, as a subtype of imperfective aspect, is expressed through either a simple verb or in combination with *used to* or *would* (the last two are only applicable to the past habitual) in English, whereas Serbian naturally uses imperfective aspect. Thus a possible negative L1 interference by the Serbian speaking students is expected.

6.6.1. Inzidenzschema

The sentences used to look into the aspectual use with Inzidenzschema were the following four:

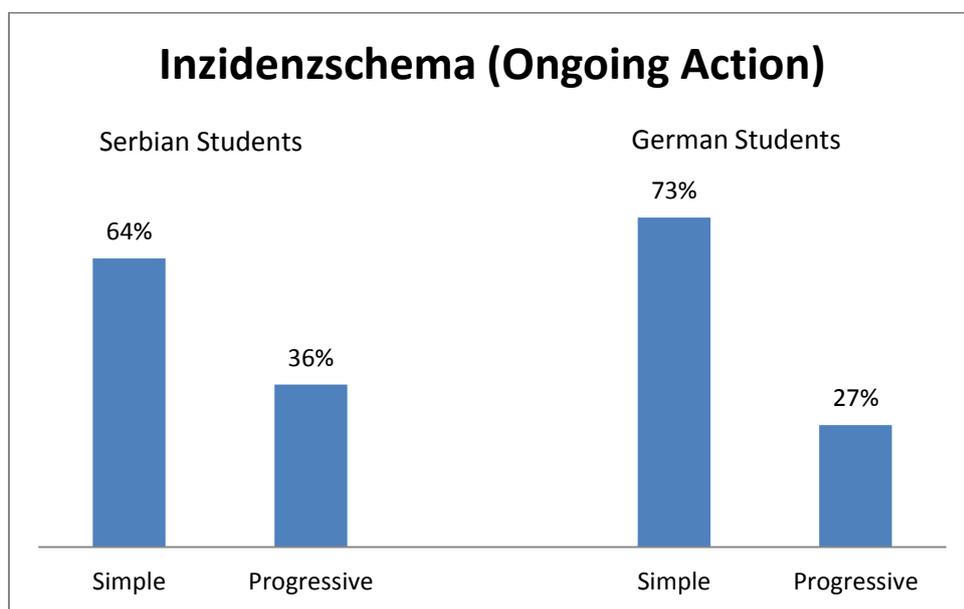
- (74) I _____ (listen) to music yesterday when, all of a sudden, my CD-player _____ (break down). (T1/E5)
- (75) Bart _____ (have) a shower when someone _____ (knock) on his bathroom door. (T1/E13)

(76) I _____ (eat) a cake, when I _____ (drop) the spoon. (T1/E17)

(77) Ich machte meine Hausaufgaben, als ich plötzlich ein lautes Geräusch hörte. (T2/E29)

As all students of both groups correctly used the simple form for the short action interrupting the ongoing action, **Figure 5** below only illustrates their use of the progressive for the frame action.

Figure 5 Aspectual choice with Inzidenzschema



In both groups the majority of the students did not correctly express the ongoing activity progressively and used simple verb forms instead (Serbian L1: 64%, German L1: 73%). Still, a slightly more frequent use of progressives to express the frame action can be observed with the Serbian L1 group. The biggest source of error proved to be the correct application of progressive forms to accomplishment verbs, which is most clearly seen in (76), where 11 out of 15 Serbian L1 and 12 out of 15 German L1 students chose the simple verb form to express the ongoing action. The most correct progressive uses for the frame action in situations of Inzidenzschema were, as expected, with the activity verb phrase *listen to music* in (74), where only three Serbian L1 and 4 German L1 students used the past simple instead. In sentence (75), where the frame action again is an activity *have a bath*, 10 out of 15

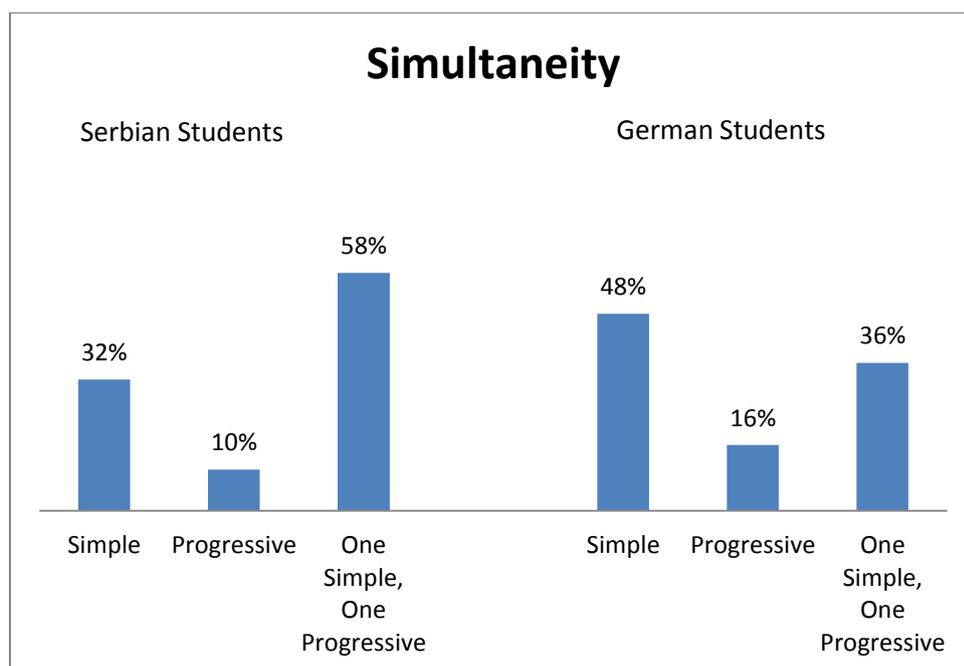
Serbian L1 learners and 11 out of 15 German L1 learners used the verb *to have* in its simple form. The reason the majority of students failed to use the progressive form here may simply be the result of a misinterpretation of the verb *to have* as a state.

6.6.2. Simultaneity

As the basis to determine the degree of L1 interference with regards to the imperfective-progressive correspondence when expressing simultaneity, the following two sentences were taken into consideration.

- (78) While Tommy _____ (sleep) last night, Gina
 _____ (study) for her French exam. (T1/E7)
- (79) Während sie ein Buch las, spielte er mit den Kindern. (T2/E21)

Figure 6 Aspectual choice with simultaneity



Although in cases of simultaneity, English grammar does not require both actions to be expressed progressively, it is always possible. As can be seen in **Figure 6**, an interesting phenomenon occurred in both groups, whereby in 58% of the cases the Serbian L1 students and 36% of the German L1 students instead of using the progressive (or simple) for both actions, opted to use the progressive for one action and the simple for the other without an obvious reason. The following sentence is a

good example as five Serbian L1 students and three German L1 students decided to leave the verb *sleep* in the simple form but expressed the verb *study* progressively.

- (80) While Tommy slept last night, Gina was studying for her French exam.
(S4, S6, S8, S10, S14, G8, G11, G12_T1/E7)

This may be explained by an interpretation of the verb *sleep* as a state instead of an activity. However, the fact that still three Serbian L1 and two German L1 students did it the other way around (81) does not allow such an explanation:

- (81) While Tommy was sleeping last night, Gina studied for her French exam. (S3, S7, S11, G4, G9_T1/E7)

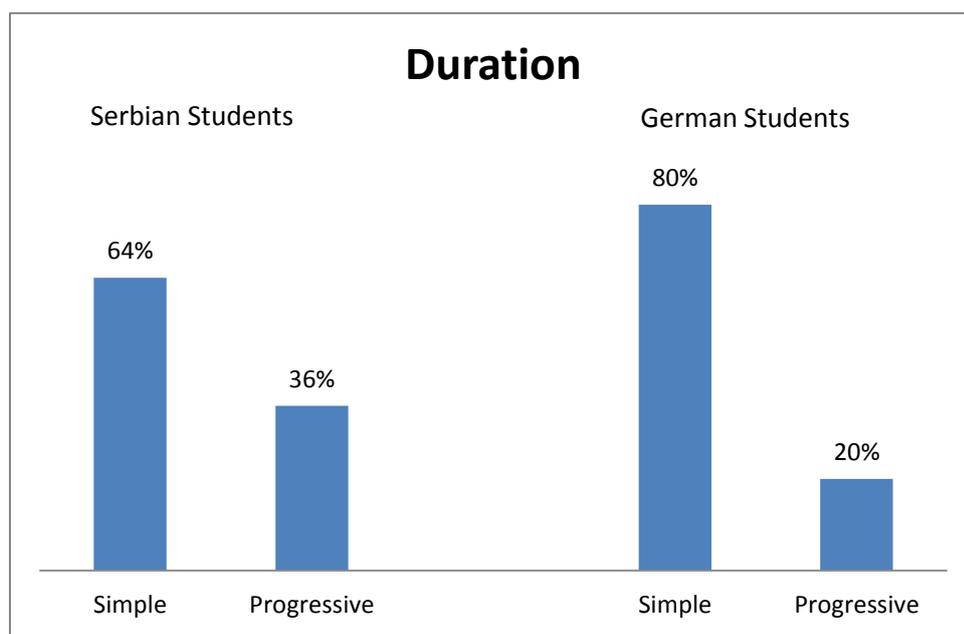
What is also worth noting is that the Serbian L1 students used progressive forms more frequently in general (in 68% of the sentences it was used either on one verb or both, as opposed to 52% in the case of the German L1 students). Thus in almost half the cases (48%) the German L1 students used simple verbs for both actions, whereas the Serbian L1 group only used simple verbs for both simultaneously ongoing actions in about a third (32%) of the sentences. Still, the German L1 students used the progressive for both simultaneously ongoing actions more often than the Serbian L1 group (16% vs. 10%).

6.6.3. Duration

Here only verbs in connection with expressions denoting duration were taken into consideration. In these situations progressive use is optional, while in Serbian the use of imperfective aspect is obligatory. The two sentences used for the evaluation are the following:

- (82) My sister and I _____ (swim) in our pool the whole day yesterday. My sister _____ (swim) a whole kilometer and was very tired afterwards. (T1/E12)
- (83) Sonya hat den ganzen Morgen die Wände gestrichen. (T2/E25)

Figure 7 Aspectual choice with duration



As can be seen in **Figure 7**, again both groups preferred the simple forms over the progressive construction. The Serbian L1 learners, however, used the progressive considerably more often than the German L1 half (36% vs. 20%). An interesting phenomenon occurred in sentence (82), where the verb *swim* is an activity in the first sentence but an accomplishment in the second. Although the activity occurs in combination with *the whole day*, the majority (10/15) of the Serbian L1 students used the past simple in this situation, thus using simple forms for both the activity and the accomplishment, although in Serbian the accomplishment would have to be expressed perfectly ('Moja sestra je otplivala (perf.) ceo kilometar i bila je jako umorna posle toga.') while for the activity imperfective aspect would have been obligatory ('Moja sestra i ja smo juče ceo dan plivali (impf.) u bazenu').

6.6.4. Habituality

In the case of habituality both present and past habituality were tested. Besides a relatively large number of instances in the essay part, the following four sentences from the first two tasks were used to determine the students' use of aspect when expressing present habituality:

(84) Now he rarely _____ (travel) but last month he
_____ (go) to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower. (T1/E2)

(85) Every Tuesday Marie _____ (get up) at 7 a.m.,

- _____ (brush) her teeth, _____ (drink) a coffee
and _____ (leave) her apartment at 7.45 a.m. (T1/E4)
- (86) My father is a numismatist. He _____ (love) coins and
regularly _____ (expand) his collection. He
_____ (start) his hobby when he was a child and
_____ (collect) for over 40 years now. (T1/E11)
- (87) Many Viennese people _____ (use) the
subway/underground every day. (T1/E18)

Figure 8 Aspectual choice with present habituality

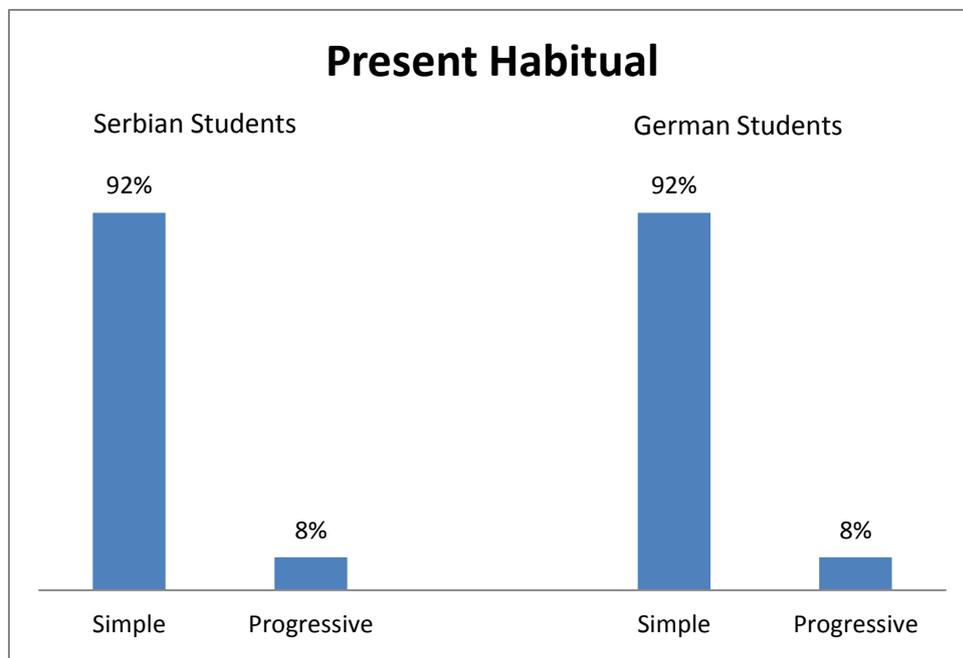


Figure 1 shows that the correct use of the present habitual did not cause either group of learners serious difficulties. Both the German L1 and the Serbian L1 students correctly used the present simple in the majority of cases (92%), with only 8% in each group using the progressive incorrectly. The misuse of the progressive mostly occurred in the essay part, as in:

- (88) At home, **I'm speaking* German with my parents. (G9, G11_T3)
- (89) *I'm learning* English at school. (G2, G7, S8, S12, S13_T3)

In the fill in exercise, however, only two students of each group used the progressive instead of a simple verb. Interestingly enough, it affected the same sentence in all cases

- (90) Many Viennese people **are using* the subway/underground every day.
(G2, G5, S9, S12_T1/E18)

Since the numbers regarding the choice of verb form to express present habituality are identical between the German and Serbian L1 students, the fact that in Serbian habituality is expressed by using an imperfective verb, seemingly did not lead to a negative L1 transfer and an overuse of progressive aspect by the Serbian L1 learners.

In order to determine the students' command of past habituality, the following sentences were used:

- (91) When Jack was a child he _____ (go) on holiday to Greece every summer. (T1/E2)
(92) Immer wenn er mich sah, fragte er mich um Rat. (T2/E26)
(93) Kim hat früher geraucht, doch jetzt hat sie aufgehört. (T2/E27)

Figure 9 Aspectual choice with past habituality

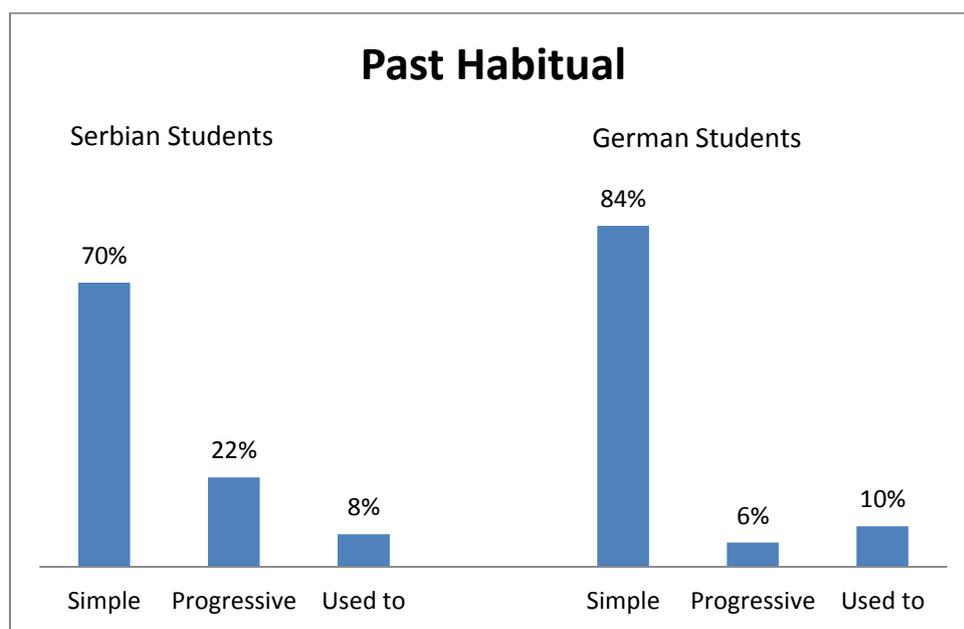


Figure 9 shows that in contrast to the students' choice of aspect to express present habituality, there is a notable difference between the two groups in the way in which they express past habituality. Obviously, a noticeable tendency of Serbian speaking students to use the progressive aspect exists compared to the German L1 group. While still the overwhelming majority of the Serbian L1 students used the simple (70%), a considerable amount (22%) incorrectly used the progressive to express past habitual aspect, whereas only 6% of the German L1 students did the same. An example includes:

- (94) When Jack was a child **he was going* to Greece every summer.
(S3, S9, S12_T1/E2)

Three Serbian L1 students erroneously used the progressive in (94), possibly in analogy to imperfective aspect in Serbian, while all of the German L1 students correctly used the simple in this example. Regarding the *used-to*-constructions, it is important to note that the only occurrences of its use could be found in the translation of (93) *Kim hat früher geraucht*. There were five instances in both groups where a *used to*-construction was used. A possible explanation, why it only occurred in this sentence could be that the students were taught to use a *used-to* construction to express German *früher*. The percentage of Serbian L1 students who used the progressive in (93) **Kim was smoking* is slightly higher than among the German L1 students. While four out of 15 Serbian L1 students opted for the progressive, only two German L1 students also used the progressive in this case. The rest either used the simple verb with or without an adverb expressing time (most notably *once*) to translate *früher* or did not translate the sentence at all.

In general, the results of the second part of the study show a slightly more frequent use of progressive forms by the Serbian L1 students in the context of Inzidenzschema (Serbian L1 36%, German L1 27%), and duration (Serbian L1 36%, German L1 20%). In cases of simultaneity, the German L1 students more often used progressive forms for both actions (16% vs. 10%) but the Serbian L1 group more frequently used the progressive altogether, i.e. either for both actions or only for one (68% vs. 52%). Regarding present habituality, both groups largely expressed it correctly using simple verb forms (92% in each group), while the most striking difference between the two groups could be found in their use of aspectual forms to express past habituality. In 22% of these cases, the Serbian L1 students incorrectly

used the progressive, whereas the percentage is as low as six percent among the German L1 students.

6.7. Discussion of Result

With regards to activity verbs the results show that in both groups the correct use of the progressive caused the investigated groups severe problems. Although both groups used the progressive clearly more often correctly than the simple form incorrectly (Serbian L1 47% : 27%, German L1 41% : 27%), the correct aspectual choice with activity verbs remains a notable source of error. Due to the similar numbers of incorrect uses of the simple form in both groups, the factor of Serbian L1 interference in the sense that imperfective aspect is transferred to progressive aspect does not seem to be of great relevance. The other case, that the progressive is erroneously used with activity verbs occurs in both groups, but concerns only a minute number of instances and is relatively evenly distributed in both groups (Serbian L1 6%, German L1 5%). As observed in other studies, avoidance of the progressive rather than its overuse, seems to be the more dominant source of error in aspectual use of activity verbs among German L1 students. Interestingly enough, this also seems to be the case within the Serbian L1 group of learners.

The prediction of the aspect hypothesis is that language learners normally do not use states erroneously with progressive aspect. This was largely confirmed by this study. In the overwhelming majority of cases (Serbian L1 93%, German L1 89%) the students used the correct simple forms. Hlebec's claim that Serbian L1 students might overuse the progressive due to a possible analogy they draw to Serbian imperfective aspect, could not be confirmed within the scope of this study, as an overuse of progressive forms among the German L1 students was even slightly higher than within the Serbian L1 half. Since this overuse of the progressive occurred only in specific contexts, above all in combination with the conjunction *while* and in the present perfect construction **has been knowing for two years* (S4, S8, G9, G11, G15_T2/E28), the rules learnt by the students concerning the use of progressive aspect with *while*, as well as to use the present perfect progressive in combination with *since* and *for*, seem to be of greater relevance than L1 interference. In all other cases the simple form was used correctly by both groups of learners.

Having a look at the use of aspect with accomplishment verbs, we find that their acquisition causes the students greater difficulty compared to activities and states. Both groups tended to avoid progressive forms to the extent that simple forms were used more often than progressive ones in cases in which the use of progressive aspect would have been obligatory. As expected, simple forms were mostly used correctly where they were appropriate, with the only occurrences of erroneous use occurring among the Serbian L1 students (6%). As was the case with activities and states, the results suggest that Serbian L1 interference does not seem to play a significant role in the acquisition of aspect with accomplishment verbs either, since in cases in which in Serbian imperfective aspect would be appropriate, the Serbian L1 group overused the simple form of verbs, as did their German L1 peers.

The results concerning achievement verbs of both groups are likewise very similar. Achievement verbs are rarely used progressively and are, according to the aspect hypothesis, the last group of verbs for which the correct use of the progressive is acquired. The results confirm these assumptions, as in all the instances in which the progressive should have been used (Serbian L1 12% and German L1 13%, respectively, of all the achievement verbs) approximately only one in six verbs was used progressively. Similar to the situations in the before discussed verb classes, the factor of Serbian L1 interference with regards to aspectual use of achievement verbs appears to not have significant influence either.

From the results of the first part of the study it can be concluded that the predicted order of the aspect hypothesis could largely be confirmed. Although all four verb classes caused the learners difficulties to some extent (albeit states only marginally), the number of errors made by both groups clearly increased in the following direction: states -> activities -> accomplishments -> achievements. With regards to L1 interference, what can be said is that the results show very similar results in both groups (i.e. mostly the same kind of errors were made by both groups) which suggests that in the case of this Serbian L1 group, L1 interference does not play a crucial role, or at least the analogy *progressivity = imperfectivity* is not applied by the learners.

In part 2 of the study, in cases of *Inzidenzschema*, high positive Serbian L1 transfer was expected, since here the analogy of *progressive = imperfective* and *simple = perfective* is applicable. For the most part, however, the results fail to reflect this

analogy. While it could be expected for the German L1 students to exhibit difficulties due to lack of aspectual differences in German, the significant number of errors committed by the Serbian L1 learners in expressing the ongoing action using appropriate progressive forms is rather surprising. Although the Serbian L1 group performed slightly better than their German L1 peers (36% vs. 27%), they still, in most cases, did not make an aspectual differentiation and mostly avoided progressive aspect. Due to the fact that the Serbian L1 group performed only marginally better, it is difficult to determine whether this is caused by positive L1 transfer or by a better application of the rules learnt in school on when to use the progressive.

The results concerning aspectual use to express simultaneity, similarly fail to provide any clear proof of Serbian L1 interference. It was expected that because of the progressive/imperfective correspondence, the Serbian L1 students would use progressive aspect for both co-occurring actions. This was, however, only true in 10% of all instances, whereas the German L1 group used progressive forms for both actions in 16% of the cases. Although the Serbian L1 students used progressive forms more often than the German L1 group altogether (68% vs. 52%), the fact that in 58% of the cases the Serbian L1 students used one verb in its progressive and one in its simple form, allows the conclusion that Serbian L1 students largely fail to make a connection between progressive and imperfective aspect.

In situations which denote duration through expressions like *all day long* (sr. 'ceo dan') or *the whole morning* (sr. 'celo jutro'), Serbian requires imperfective aspect. As is the case with Inzidenzschema and simultaneity, the Serbian L1 students used progressive forms more often than the German L1 learners (36% vs. 20%). Although in most cases simple verb forms were used by the Serbian L1 speakers, the fact that the Serbian L1 students used the progressive almost twice as frequently as the German L1 group in these situations, indicates the possibility of an equalization of progressivity and imperfectivity by some of the Serbian L1 students. Still, in most cases the Serbian L1 students used simple verb forms, thus it is difficult to establish in how far L1 transfer plays a relevant role in the application of progressive aspect by Serbian L1 students to express duration.

Lastly, the non-correspondence of English progressive and Serbian imperfective aspect was tested by examining the use of aspectual forms to express habituality in

English. Regarding present habituality, the percentage of erroneously used progressive forms is identical at 8%. Taking into account also the results of the other categories examined in this study, the reason for the small number of progressive uses seems to be a culmination of two main factors. Firstly, the correct application of simple verb forms to express habituality, i.e. correctly applied learnt grammar and – as is the case with both groups in general – the tendency to avoid progressive forms altogether.

The situation with past habitual, on the other hand, does seem to suggest negative Serbian L1 interference. While only 6% of the German L1 students used the progressive erroneously to express past habituality, as much as 22% of the Serbian L1 students opted for the progressive in these cases. Although the majority used the simple form correctly, the relatively high number of progressive uses is likely to be attributed to negative Serbian L1 interference. This relatively high frequency of progressive uses by the Serbian L1 half to express past habituality, compared to the low percentage of progressive uses to express present habituality can plausibly be explained by the fact that the first verb forms learnt at school, the present simple and present progressive, are usually taught in a certain way. Namely, students are taught to use the present simple if something happens regularly (i.e. not at the moment), e.g. *I swim*, while the present progressive is used for actions which happen at the moment of speaking, e.g. *I am swimming*. This strong aspectual differentiation in the present tense, naturally, does not exist in Serbian, since usually only an imperfective verb can be used in the present tense, thus eliminating any kind of possible L1 interference. In the past tense, however, the aspectual opposition of perfective and imperfective exists and is likely to have led certain Serbian L1 students to draw on the imperfective-progressive analogy and use progressive aspect for past habituality.

Of the categories of the second part of the study, the biggest differences between the two investigated groups can be seen with regards to duration and past habituality, where L1 interference appears to have taken place. In the case of expressing duration, the Serbian L1 students used the progressive almost twice as frequently compared to the German L1 students, while the difference was even more clearly visible with regards to past habituality, where negative L1 interference seems to have caused the Serbian L1 students to use the progressive in 22% of the cases, whereas this phenomenon was almost non-existent in the German L1 half (6%).

6.8. Flaws and Limitations

Since this study deals with Viennese students and was conducted in a Viennese school, there are a number of factors which have to be considered when looking at the results. While the avoidance of progressive forms by the German L1 students may be attributed to the lack of an aspectual system in German, L1 interference with regards to the Serbian L1 group is more difficult to prove. While both groups have different L1s, one must not neglect two important facts. Firstly, all 15 of the Serbian L1 students in this study are also proficient in German. Secondly, since the study was conducted with students of a Viennese school, the language of instruction is German. Thus, it can be assumed that the results of the Serbian L1 group were not only affected by their Serbian L1 but German interference is just as likely to have occurred to a certain degree. Another important aspect which needs to be taken into consideration is that the competence in Serbian among the students in this study (and of Serbian students in Vienna in general) varies from being their dominant L1 to being the language for small talk with relatives and friends. As learned from the exercise sheets provided in this study, some of the students were born in Austria, while others were born in Serbia, Bosnia or Croatia. Furthermore, while some stated to speak only Serbian at home with their families, one third of the students (5/15) described the language they used at home as a mixture of Serbian and German, e.g. “we mix German and Serbian” (T3_S4), “both Serbian and German” (T3_S6), etc. Thus a possible Serbian interference may not be equally developed by all students. This short scale study, therefore, has to be understood as one which covers a very specific and limited group of learners, and should give teachers who work in a German speaking environment and deal with students with Serbian (Bosnian, Croatian) as their L1 a slight idea of potential difficulties they might face when teaching the English tense-aspect system.

Thus it needs to be added that in order to show a more precise picture of how Serbian L1 students acquire the English tense-aspect system, it would be necessary to conduct a study on English aspectual acquisition in Serbia itself. This implies that the results obtained from this study deviate from potential results of a similar study if conducted in a Serbian speaking environment, where possible German interference would not play a role.

The categories used in the second part of the study are those that are most likely to cause positive (and in the case of habituality – negative) L1 interference of Serbian speakers learning the English aspectual system and were chosen for that reason. Still, the sentences used in the first two exercises and the essays the students provided, do not cover the complete scope of situation in which potential Serbian L1 interference might occur. Furthermore, due to their peculiar nature, the secondary uses of the English progressive aspect were disregarded in this study, since they are not subject to the aspect hypothesis, nor is there an equivalent for them in the Serbian aspectual system.

Lastly, this study is only concerned with written language, thus the important aspect of spontaneous speech in second language acquisition is not considered and would possibly have given different results. With all these limitations taken into consideration, this study should be understood as a tendency of aspectual use within the two investigated groups and provide a basis for further analysis in this field.

6.9. The Study's Significance for Teaching

After having established the differences in aspectual choice between fifth year German and Serbian L1 learners of English, it is possible to point to the most important difficulties teachers of English in a German speaking environment will encounter when teaching students with Serbian as their mother tongue.

States, contrary to what was expected, do not cause Serbian L1 students any problems and do not require any special explanation except that they are usually not used progressively. In general there is a slight tendency by Serbian L1 students to use progressive forms more often than students with a German L1. This seems to coincide with a preference to use it when the verb carries a sense of duration. It is thus necessary to point out that the primary function of progressiveness is not to express a long, but rather an ongoing action.

The most important source of error, however, is the incorrect application of progressive forms to express past habituality. The reason for this, it can be assumed, lies in Serbian L1 interference. What is important in this regard is to make the Serbian L1 students aware of the fact that the same way the present progressive expresses an ongoing present action (in its basic meaning), the past progressive

does the same in a past context. Similarly, in situations which occur regularly, the simple form is used, regardless of whether this habitual situation takes place in the present or the past.

7. Conclusion

As Austria, and especially Vienna, has become very heterogeneous, with very diverse demographics, it is important to recognize the different needs students with another L1 than German have. Since Serbian is one of the most widely spoken languages in Vienna, studies on Serbian L1 speakers seem useful in the context of English language teaching in a German speaking environment.

This thesis aimed at comparing two different groups of learners – those with German and those with Serbian as their L1 – with regards to their use of aspectual forms in English. Serbian, like English, possesses an aspectual system in its verbal morphology but, unlike in English, the aspectual opposition is that between perfective and imperfective, and not between progressive and non-progressive. German, on the other hand, is generally viewed as aspectless.

Before it was possible to compare these two groups, however, it was necessary to look at the aspectual systems of English and Serbian, but also discuss the ways in which German renders aspectual differences. It was established that Serbian, as a typical language with an imperfective/perfective opposition, expresses both progressivity and habituality using imperfective aspect. Thus, it was expected to see positive Serbian L1 transfer in situations in which progressivity had to be expressed, and a possible overuse of progressive constructions, i.e. negative Serbian L1 transfer, when expressing habitual situations. For the German L1 students, due to a lack of fully grammaticalized imperfective or progressive aspect, an avoidance of progressive forms in general was expected.

In order to test these predictions a small scale qualitative study with 30 participants (15 with German as their L1, 15 with Serbian as their L1) was conducted and evaluated via error analysis. In order to establish whether a learner's L1 is the dominant factor in the acquisition of aspect, the study was divided into two parts. The first part of the study attempted to test the aspect hypothesis on two groups of learners – those with German as their L1 and those with Serbian as their L1 and German as their L2, as well as to observe in how far a possible L1 interference influences the predictions of the aspect hypothesis. According to the aspect hypothesis, when learning the aspectual system of a language, the order of acquisition is dependent on a verb's lexical aspect. In the case of English, which has

a progressive/non-progressive distinction, the progressive is acquired first with activity verbs. Then accomplishment verbs follow and, finally, the correct usage of the progressive is acquired with achievement verbs. State verbs are usually expected to not be incorrectly used in the progressive. The second part specifically looked at categories which require progressive aspect in English and imperfective aspect in Serbian and the results were compared within the two groups of learners. These categories were the Inzidenzschema, simultaneity and duration. As a category where negative Serbian L1 interference was expected, habituality was included, since habituality is part of imperfective aspect in Serbian, whereas in English it is usually expressed by a verb's simple form.

The results of the study showed that both groups show significant difficulties in using grammatical aspect adequately. The aspect hypothesis was largely proven appropriate, i.e. students of both groups used the progressive with activity verbs more adequately than with accomplishments and achievements and did not use them erroneously on state verbs. The German L1 students, as expected, tended to avoid progressive forms even in its prototypical use, i.e. expressing ongoing actions. Surprisingly, a very similar pattern could be seen among the Serbian L1 students. They, likewise, overused the simple verb forms and rarely used progressive forms, even in contexts where the imperfective would be the correct form in Serbian. Still, in terms of total occurrences, the Serbian L1 groups used progressive forms slightly more often than the German L1 group. In general the differences between the two investigated groups were much smaller than the similarities. Much of the predicted positive L1 interference for the Serbian speaking students was too sporadic and could not be proven clearly enough. The one exception was the obvious negative Serbian L1 interference with regards to past habituality, where Serbian speaking students used progressive aspect almost four times as often as did the German L1 students. L1 interference in the context of Inzidenzschema and simultaneity, on the other hand, were not as clearly visible, since the differences in the results were rather insignificant.

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Abstract

Past research indicates that a learner's L1 has an influence on the acquisition of aspect in the L2. Thus, a learner whose L1 makes aspectual differentiation will have fewer difficulties acquiring the aspectual system of the L2 than learners with an L1 lacking an aspectual system. In order to establish in how far a student's L1 influences their use of aspect in the L2, a small scale qualitative study was conducted in which two groups of 15 intermediate learners of English from a Viennese high school were compared to each other. The first group were German L1 students, i.e. speakers of a language which does not possess an aspectual system, the other group were students with Serbian as their L1. Serbian, like English, has an aspectual system, but it differs from that of English in that its aspectual opposition is between perfective and imperfective, not between progressive and non-progressive (or simple). Due to the similarities between progressive and imperfective aspect, it was expected that the Serbian L1 learners would draw an analogy between these two, which, in the case of expressing progressivity, would lead to positive L1 interference, while negative L1 interference was expected when expressing habitual aspect, since this is usually expressed by the verb's simple form in English. The results indicate that there is L1 interference to a certain degree, since, although the percentages of correct aspectual use between the two groups do not differ substantially from each other, the Serbian L1 group used progressive forms altogether more often than the German L1 students. This is most clearly seen in the expression of past habituality where the Serbian L1 students used progressive constructions almost four times as often as the German L1 group.

Deutsche Zusammenfassung

Bisherige Studien weisen darauf hin, dass die Muttersprache einer Sprachschülerin/eines Sprachschülers Einfluss auf den Erwerb des Aspekts in der Zielsprache hat. Das bedeutet, dass wenn die Muttersprache einer/eines Sprachlernenden eine aspektuelle Unterscheidung des Verbs aufweist, sich diese/dieser leichter tun wird das Aspektsystem der Zielsprache zu erlernen, als jemand, dessen Muttersprache über kein Aspektsystem verfügt. Um herauszufinden, inwiefern die Muttersprache einer/eines Lernenden die Verwendung von Aspektformen beeinflusst, wurde eine kleine qualitative Studie durchgeführt, in der zwei Gruppen von jeweils 15 fortgeschrittenen (Mittelstufe) Englischlernenden eines Wiener Gymnasiums miteinander verglichen wurden. Bei der ersten Gruppe handelt es sich um SchülerInnen mit Deutsch als Muttersprache, also SprecherInnen einer Sprache, die kein Aspektsystem kennt. Die andere Gruppe besteht aus SchülerInnen mit Serbisch als Muttersprache. Das Serbische verfügt, ähnlich wie das Englische, über ein Aspektsystem, unterscheidet sich aber von jenem des Englischen dadurch, dass die Aspektopposition zwischen perfektiv und imperfektiv unterscheidet, und nicht zwischen progressiv und nicht-progressiv. Auf Grund der Ähnlichkeiten zwischen dem progressiven und imperfektiven Aspekt ist zu erwarten, dass Schüler mit serbischer Muttersprache eine Analogie zwischen diesen beiden Aspekten herstellen, was zu positivem Einfluss der Muttersprache führt, wenn Progressivität ausgedrückt werden soll, und zu negativem, im Zusammenhang mit Habitualität, da diese im Englischen normalerweise mit der einfachen Verbform ausgedrückt wird. Die Resultate deuten darauf hin, dass muttersprachlicher Einfluss zu einem gewissen Grad eine Rolle spielt, denn obwohl sich die korrekte Verwendung des Aspekts in beiden Gruppen verhältnismäßig nur geringfügig voneinander unterscheidet, verwendeten die SchülerInnen mit serbischer Muttersprache insgesamt häufiger progressive Formen als jene mit Deutsch als Muttersprache. Das ist besonders klar in Fällen von vergangener Habitualität zu erkennen, in denen die serbischsprachigen SchülerInnen fast viermal häufiger progressive Formen verwendeten.

Exercise Sheets

1. I _____ (work) on my English presentation for two weeks now and there is still lots of work to do.
2. When Jack was a child he _____ (go) on holiday to Greece every summer. Now he rarely _____ (travel) but last month he _____ (go) to Paris to see the Eiffel Tower.
3. Ben and his friends _____ (play) football yesterday. While _____ (play), Ben _____ (fall down) and _____ (twist) his ankle.
4. Every Tuesday Marie _____ (get up) at 7 a.m., _____ (brush) her teeth, _____ (drink) a coffee and _____ (leave) her apartment at 7.45 a.m.
5. I _____ (listen) to music yesterday when, all of a sudden, my CD-player _____ (break down).
6. We _____ (have) an appointment for 7 p.m. with our boss last Monday. Unfortunately, our flight was delayed so we _____ (arrive) at 8. By the time we _____ (arrive), our boss _____ (wait) for an entire hour.
7. While Tommy _____ (sleep) last night, Gina _____ (study) for her French exam.
8. While I _____ (hate) reading the newspaper, I _____ (enjoy) good novels.
9. Ken always looked like he _____ (die) when he did push-ups at the gym.
10. He _____ (cut) the grass for hours now. He must be really tired.

11. My father is a numismatist. He _____ (love) coins and regularly _____ (expand) his collection. He _____ (start) his hobby when he was a child and _____ (collect) for over 40 years now.
12. My sister and I _____ (swim) in our pool the whole morning yesterday. My sister _____ (swim) a whole kilometer and was very tired afterwards.
13. Bart _____ (have) a shower when someone _____ (knock) on his bathroom door.
14. My parents _____ (visit) me three times this year.
15. Is your computer still broken? No, Bill _____ (already repair) it. He _____ (repair) my computers for years now.
16. Your _____ (not come) to class lately. Is everything ok?
17. I _____ (eat) a cake, when I _____ (drop) the spoon.
18. Many Viennese people _____ (use) the subway/underground every day.
19. She _____ (recognize) his voice when she _____ (hear) him on the radio last night.
20. John is a slow reader. He _____ (read) *The Old Man and the Sea* for weeks now. Nevertheless, he _____ (enjoy) reading and _____ (read) many books in his life.

21. Während sie ein Buch las, spielte er mit den Kindern.

22. Er schreibt schon seit Monaten an seinem Roman.

23. Seine Mannschaft hat dieses Jahr jedes Spiel gewonnen.

24. Ich stand auf, ging zur Tür, öffnete sie und lief nach Hause.

25. Sonya hat den ganzen Morgen die Wände gestrichen.

26. Immer wenn er mich sah, fragte er mich um Rat.

27. Kim hat früher geraucht, doch jetzt hat sie aufgehört.

28. Vanessa kennt ihre beste Freundin schon seit zwei Jahren.

29. Ich machte meine Hausaufgaben, als ich plötzlich ein lautes Geräusch hörte.

30. Nachdem ich meine Hausaufgaben gemacht hatte, ging ich in die Schule.

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