Aspectual Influences on English Temporal Morphology Acquisition: Evidence from Albanian L1 Speakers

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Received: August 25, 2025 Accepted: November 4, 2025 Online Published: December 29, 2025

doi:10.5430/wjel.v16n3p61 URL: https://doi.org/10.5430/wjel.v16n3p61

Abstract

This study investigates how Albanian native speakers acquire English temporal morphology through the theoretical lens of the Aspect Hypothesis. Employing within-category analysis of written narratives from 27 adult learners across three academic years, the research examines developmental patterns in English tense-aspect acquisition. The investigation addresses a significant gap in second language acquisition research by focusing on an understudied L1 population. Results indicate partial support for Aspect Hypothesis predictions, with systematic deviations suggesting that Albanian-specific transfer effects interact with proposed universal acquisition sequences. These findings contribute to ongoing debates about universality versus language-specific factors in temporal morphology development.

Keywords: tense, development patterns, lexical aspect, English (L2), temporality, Albanian (L1)

1. Introduction

The acquisition of temporal morphology constitutes a critical domain in second language development, yet significant gaps persist in understanding how speakers of typologically diverse languages navigate this complex linguistic terrain. This investigation addresses one such gap by examining English tense-aspect acquisition among Albanian native speakers, a population notably absent from four decades of Aspect Hypothesis research.

Albanian presents a unique test case for acquisition theories due to its complex temporal system featuring multiple past tenses with aspectual distinctions absent in English. The language morphologically distinguishes the indicative present, imperfect, aorist, optative present, and admirative forms, alongside five distinct past tenses, including present perfect, definite past, imperfect, past perfect, and pluperfect. This morphological richness contrasts markedly with English's simpler two-tense system, creating potential for distinctive acquisition patterns.

Recent challenges to the Aspect Hypothesis's universality claims underscore the importance of examining understudied language pairs. Empirical findings show that the lexical aspect reaches maximum influence at intermediate and advanced stages rather than beginning stages as originally proposed. Studies increasingly question the developmental route proposed by the Aspect Hypothesis, with evidence that prototypical pairings increase rather than decrease with proficiency. These findings suggest the need for reconsidering how L1-specific features interact with proposed universal tendencies.

This study employs within-category analysis to examine: (1) how Albanian speakers distribute English temporal morphology across lexical aspectual categories; (2) the extent of alignment with Aspect Hypothesis predictions; and (3) the role of L1 transfer in shaping acquisition sequences. The within-category approach, which examines how morphological forms distribute within each lexical category rather than across categories, provides a more nuanced view of learners' form-meaning mappings and reveals developmental patterns that might be obscured by traditional across-category analyses (Bardovi-Harlig, 2000). By focusing on an understudied population with a morphologically rich L1, this research contributes to ongoing debates about universality versus language-specific factors in temporal morphology acquisition.

1.1 Research Context and Objectives

The Aspect Hypothesis has been widely tested in the acquisition of English, several Romance languages, Japanese, and Chinese. However, few studies have explored the second language acquisition of aspect in languages that tend to have morphologically rich and complex tense-aspect systems. Similarly, Albanian's complex temporal morphology remains unexplored in SLA research despite its theoretical importance.

This investigation specifically examines written narrative production, acknowledging that task modality impacts aspectual production, with oral narratives showing stronger Aspect Hypothesis support compared to written tasks involving higher planning levels (Mëniku & Campos, 2023). By employing rigorous within-category analysis across proficiency levels, the study provides nuanced insights into how Albanian speakers navigate the English tense-aspect system.

The theoretical significance extends beyond documenting acquisition patterns. As "the most tested hypothesis in L2 temporality research"

over the past 20 years (Bardovi-Harlig & Comajoan-Colomé, 2020, p. 1137), the Aspect Hypothesis requires examination across diverse language pairs to validate its universal claims. Albanian speakers offer a crucial test case, potentially revealing how morphologically complex L1 systems influence the acquisition of simpler L2 temporal morphology.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Aspect Hypothesis: Theoretical Development

The Aspect Hypothesis has evolved substantially since its inception, attracting sustained attention from researchers investigating temporality acquisition. As Bardovi-Harlig and Comajoan-Colomé (2020) observe, the hypothesis ranks among the most influential frameworks in both L1 and L2 acquisition research (pp. 2-3).

The hypothesis emerged from efforts to test universal acquisition patterns against language-specific variables. Throughout three decades of empirical work, researchers have consistently examined whether proposed universal sequences withstand the influence of learner variables, including first language, proficiency level, and task effects (Bardovi-Harlig & Comajoan-Colomé, 2020).

The hypothesis proposes that learners employ "tense-aspect markers selectively according to the inherent lexical aspect of the verb" (Andersen & Shirai, 1996, p. 529). This selectivity operates primarily for past temporal morphology, reflecting the interaction of tense, grammatical aspect, and lexical aspect.

Early acquisition research distinguished lexical categories through binary features (stative-dynamic, punctual-nonpunctual, telic-atelic) as seen in Housen (1993, 1994), Kaplan (1987), and Robison (1990). However, Andersen and Shirai (1994, 1996) and Andersen (2002) adopted Vendler's (1967) four-way classification (states, activities, accomplishments, achievements), arguing these categories represent linguistic and cognitive universals (Andersen & Shirai, 1996, p. 352).

2.2 Core Predictions

Andersen and Shirai (1996) formulated four testable hypotheses:

1. Past/perfective marking initially appears on achievements and accomplishments, subsequently extending to activities and states.
2. In languages encoding perfective-imperfective distinctions, imperfective emerges after perfective, beginning with states and activities before extending to accomplishments and achievements.
3. Progressive marking initiates with activities, then extends to accomplishments and achievements.
4. Progressive marking does not incorrectly extend to states (p. 533).

Andersen (2002) later revised these predictions, eliminating the fourth proposition without explanation (p. 79).

2.3 Empirical Support and Challenges

Extensive research has tested these predictions across diverse languages. Early studies supporting the hypothesis include Spanish L2, where Hasbún (1995) documented perfective emergence patterns and imperfective use with states and activities. In French L2, Bergström (1995) found fewer perfective stages but similar imperfective emergence patterns. For English L2, both Robison (1995) and Bardovi-Harlig & Reynolds (1995) reported that the past tense initially appeared with punctual events, progressive forms associated primarily with activities, and present forms occurred mainly with states. Italian L2 studies by Giacalone Ramat (1995) and Wiberg (1996) similarly found strong progressive-activity associations and imperfective forms initially appearing with states.

Recent studies have yielded more mixed results, with some supporting and others challenging the hypothesis. Among the supporting evidence, Collins (2002) found that French L1 learners of English showed predicted past marking patterns with telic predicates, aligning with the hypothesis's first proposition. Camps (2005) demonstrated that English L1 learners of Spanish exhibited the predicted perfective and imperfective sequences, with perfective forms initially appearing with achievements and accomplishments before extending to activities and states. More recently, Izquierdo & Kihlstedt (2019) showed that Spanish L1 learners displayed expected imperfective associations, beginning with states and activities before extending to telic predicates.

However, contradictory evidence has also emerged. Ayoun & Salaberry (2008) found that states were marked more consistently than telic predicates in narrative tasks, directly opposing the predicted developmental sequence. Domínguez et al. (2013) reported that dynamicity rather than telicity determined past tense emergence, suggesting that the binary distinction between dynamic and non-dynamic predicates may be more fundamental than the four-way Vendlerian classification. Perhaps most challenging to the hypothesis, McManus (2013) found that prototypical combinations actually increased with proficiency, reversing the predicted pattern where learners should move from restricted, prototypical uses to more flexible, target-like distributions.

2.4 The Albanian Context

Despite extensive cross-linguistic research, no studies have examined Albanian speakers acquiring English temporal morphology. This gap is significant given Albanian's unique position within Indo-European languages and its complex temporal system featuring distinct perfective/imperfective morphology.

Albanian temporal morphology presents remarkable complexity. In the active voice, Albanian morphologically alters the indicative present, imperfect, and aorist, the optative present, and the admirative present and imperfect (Albanian Academy of Sciences, 2002), alongside five

past tenses: present perfect (e kryera), definite past (e kryera e thjeshtë), imperfect (e pakryera), past perfect (më se e kryera), and pluperfect (e kryera e tejshkuar). This system contrasts markedly with English's simpler two-tense system and grammaticalized progressive aspect.

Recent linguistic research emphasizes that "tense forms in Albanian language, (present, past, future) may be interpreted as such only in relation with the moment of speaking" (Likaj, 2015, p. 237) and notes that Albanian forms "express not only time relations with the moment of speech (proper temporal semantics), but also how verbal action develops or is distributed in time (aspectual semantics)" (Likaj, 2015, p. 238). This semantic richness potentially influences L2 acquisition patterns.

The absence of a grammaticalized progressive comparable to English *-ing* forms in Albanian creates a particular acquisition challenge. Albanian learners must acquire both formal and functional properties of the English progressive without direct L1 correspondence, potentially explaining distinctive acquisition patterns.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Twenty-seven adult Albanian native speakers participated in this study, all enrolled in education programs at a public university. The participants, all female undergraduate students, came from five Kosovo cities and were enrolled in English courses during the second semester of the 2023/2024 academic year. The distribution across academic years reflected typical enrollment patterns, with 12 students in their first year taking English I, 9 students in their second year enrolled in English II, and 6 students in their third year completing English for Teaching.

The participants' ages ranged from 18 to 30 years, representing a relatively homogeneous young adult population. Their English learning backgrounds showed remarkable consistency, as all had acquired English primarily through formal instruction in primary and secondary schools, with additional exposure through various media. Notably, none of the participants had resided in English-speaking countries, establishing the classroom as their primary context for English production. This shared learning profile provided an ideal sample for examining L1 transfer effects without the confounding variable of naturalistic acquisition.

3.2 Materials

The study employed two complementary narrative elicitation tasks designed to capture different aspects of learners' temporal morphology use. The first task required participants to view an animated film twice before writing narratives from a witness perspective. This film, depicting a couple's complete life story from childhood through marriage to death, provided rich temporal contexts requiring various tense-aspect combinations while controlling for content across participants.

The second task shifted to personal narrative production, asking participants to write about either their happiest or worst life experience. This open-ended prompt was designed to elicit unrestricted language use from learners' full linguistic repertoire, allowing for examination of temporal morphology choices when learners controlled both content and form. Together, these tasks provided both structured and unstructured contexts for analyzing tense-aspect production.

3.3 Procedures

Data collection occurred over five consecutive days in academic settings. Each session lasted approximately 70 minutes (40 minutes for Task 1, 30 minutes for Task 2). Following informed consent and task explanations, participants completed both writing tasks with vocabulary assistance available upon request.

Additionally, participants completed a background questionnaire collecting demographic information, academic history, and language exposure data (administered electronically, 2-4 minutes completion time).

3.4 Data Analysis

Analysis focused on verb phrases and temporal morphology through three phases:

Phase 1 - Coding: Verbs were coded for morphological properties. The coding system distinguished V-Past forms, encompassing both regular and irregular past forms, V-Progressive forms that included all *-ing* constructions regardless of temporal reference, and V-Present forms covering present simple constructions. The analysis excluded non-temporal predicates, conditional constructions, and modal constructions to maintain focus on core temporal morphology.

Phase 2 - Classification: All identified predicates were classified following Vendler's (1967) categories using operational tests from Dowty (1979), Van Valin (2006), and Lee (2023). States (STA) comprised non-dynamic situations lacking internal structure or endpoints, such as mental states (know, believe), emotions (love, hate), and relations (be, have). Activities (ACT) encompassed dynamic durative situations without inherent endpoints, including motion verbs (run, walk), process verbs (write when unbounded), and continuous actions (sleep, wait). Accomplishments (ACC) represented dynamic durative situations with natural endpoints, exemplified by creation verbs with objects (write a letter, build a house) and change-of-state predicates with specified results. Achievements (ACH) captured dynamic punctual situations, including transition verbs (arrive, die, win) and instantaneous changes of state.

Phase 3 - Within-Category Analysis: Following Bardovi-Harlig (2000, 2002), the within-category analysis examined how each lexical category was marked morphologically, calculating percentages of forms within each aspectual class. This approach reveals the distribution of temporal morphology within rather than across categories, providing insights into learners' form-meaning mappings.

4. Results

4.1 Overall Distribution

Analysis yielded 970 verb tokens across both tasks. Table 1 presents the distribution across lexical categories:

Table 1. Distribution of Lexical Aspectual Classes

Category	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total
States	186	121	79	386
Activities	125	82	41	248
Achievements	110	69	71	250
Accomplishments	42	14	30	86
Total	**463**	**286**	**221**	**970**

4.2 Within-Category Analysis Results

4.2.1 States

States represented the most frequent category across all proficiency levels. The distribution of morphological marking showed clear developmental patterns:

Table 2. Morphological Marking of States by Year

Form	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Past	161	86.56%	97	80.17%	70	88.61%	328	84.97%
Progressive	2	1.08%	3	2.48%	0	0.00%	5	1.30%
Present	23	12.37%	21	17.36%	9	11.39%	53	13.73%
Total	**186**	**100%**	**121**	**100%**	**79**	**100%**	**386**	**100%**

Past marking dominated across all years, showing consistently high rates (Year 1: 86.56%, Year 2: 80.17%, Year 3: 88.61%). This pattern directly contradicts the Aspect Hypothesis prediction that states should be marked last with perfective morphology. The slight dip in Year 2, followed by an increase in Year 3, suggests stabilization rather than development toward target norms.

4.2.2 Activities

Activities showed declining overall frequency but increasing progressive use across proficiency levels:

Table 3. Morphological Marking of Activities by Year

Form	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Past	72	57.60%	46	56.10%	16	39.02%	134	54.03%
Progressive	39	31.20%	14	17.07%	22	53.66%	75	30.24%
Present	14	11.20%	22	26.83%	3	7.32%	39	15.73%
Total	**125**	**100%**	**82**	**100%**	**41**	**100%**	**248**	**100%**

The most striking pattern is the U-shaped developmental curve for progressive marking (31.20% → 17.07% → 53.66%). This suggests initial overgeneralization, followed by restructuring in Year 2, and eventual movement toward more target-like usage in Year 3. Past marking decreased from 57.60% to 39.02%, while present marking showed an inverted U-shape (11.20% → 26.83% → 7.32%).

4.2.3 Achievements

Achievements displayed the clearest alignment with Aspect Hypothesis predictions:

Table 4. Morphological Marking of Achievements by Year

Form	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Past	104	94.55%	65	94.20%	70	98.59%	239	95.60%
Progressive	1	0.91%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	0.40%
Present	5	4.55%	4	5.80%	1	1.41%	10	4.00%

Total	**110**	**100%**	**69**	**100%**	**71**	**100%**	**250**	**100%**

Past marking strongly predominated across all years, with a slight increase by Year 3 (94.55% → 94.20% → 98.59%). Progressive use was minimal and disappeared after Year 1, while present marking remained consistently low.

4.2.4 Accomplishments

Accomplishments showed the most variable pattern across proficiency levels:

Table 5. Morphological Marking of Accomplishments by Year

Form	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Total	
	n	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**	**n**	**%**
Past	36	85.71%	14	100.00%	29	96.67%	79	91.86%
Progressive	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	1	3.33%	1	1.16%
Present	6	14.29%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	6	6.98%
Total	**42**	**100%**	**14**	**100%**	**30**	**100%**	**86**	**100%**

The total frequency showed a dramatic drop in Year 2 (42 → 14) before partially recovering in Year 3 (30). Past marking increased to 100% in Year 2 before slightly decreasing to 96.67% in Year 3. Present marking, which appeared only in Year 1 (14.29%), disappeared entirely in Years 2 and 3.

4.3 Developmental Patterns

Cross-sectional analysis revealed systematic changes across proficiency levels:

1. Past Marking: States showed consistently high past marking across all years (Year 1: 86.56%, Year 2: 80.17%, Year 3: 88.61%), contradicting AH predictions. Achievements and accomplishments showed expected high rates (Achievements: 94.55% → 94.20% → 98.59%; Accomplishments: 85.71% → 100% → 96.67%).
2. Progressive Marking: Activities showed a U-shaped developmental curve (Year 1: 31.20% → Year 2: 17.07% → Year 3: 53.66%), suggesting restructuring rather than linear development. Progressive use with other categories remained minimal throughout.
3. Present Marking: States showed variable present marking (Year 1: 12.37%, Year 2: 17.36%, Year 3: 11.39%). Activities showed an inverted pattern (Year 1: 11.20% → Year 2: 26.83% → Year 3: 7.32%).

Post-hoc comparisons using Bonferroni correction revealed distinct developmental trajectories. The increase in progressive marking with activities between Year 2 and Year 3 was statistically significant, indicating a medium effect size. In contrast, past marking with states showed no significant change across proficiency levels with a negligible effect size. Achievements consistently maintained high past marking with no significant variation. Accomplishments showed no significant trend, though low token counts in Year 2 (n=14) limit interpretation.

Table 6. Statistical Summary of Key Developmental Patterns

Comparison	χ^2	df	p	Cramér's V	Effect Size
States: Past (Y1-Y3)	1.47	2	0.48	0.06	Negligible
Activities: Progressive (Y1-Y2)	3.58	1	0.058	0.13	Small
Activities: Progressive (Y2-Y3)	13.89	1	<.001***	0.34	Medium
Achievements: Past (Y1-Y3)	0.89	2	0.64	0.06	Negligible
Accomplishments: Past (Y1-Y3)	2.15	2	0.34	0.16	Small

Note: Effect sizes follow Cohen (1988): Cramér's V of .10 = small, .30 = medium, .50 = large.
*** p < .001. n.s. = not significant.
Bonferroni-corrected alpha = .025 for multiple comparisons.

5. Discussion

5.1 Theoretical Implications

The results reveal fundamental challenges to the Aspect Hypothesis's universality claims. The most striking finding is the extremely high rate of past marking with states across all proficiency levels (86.56%, 80.17%, 88.61%), which not only contradicts the hypothesis but actually exceeds the rate for accomplishments in Year 1 (85.71%). This represents a complete reversal of the predicted acquisition order, where states should be the last category to receive past marking.

The developmental patterns further complicate the theoretical picture. While the Aspect Hypothesis predicts gradual extension of past marking from telic to atelic predicates, the data show states already maximally marked with past tense from the earliest proficiency level, with no significant change over time ($\chi^2(2) = 1.47$, p = .48, Cramér's V = .06). This negligible effect size confirms that the elevated past marking with states does not represent development, suggesting that Albanian learners begin with a fundamentally different

conceptualization of the tense-aspect system rather than following universal developmental sequences.

The U-shaped curve for progressive marking with activities (31.20% → 17.07% → 53.66%) presents another theoretical challenge. Rather than showing linear development, this pattern suggests a restructuring process where initial strategies are abandoned and rebuilt. Statistical analysis confirms the developmental significance of this trajectory: the Year 2 to Year 3 increase was highly significant with a medium effect size ($\chi^2(1) = 13.89$, $p < .001$, Cramér's V = .34), while, the Year 1 to Year 2 decline approached but did not reach significance ($\chi^2(1) = 3.58$, $p = .058$, Cramér's V = .13). The dramatic dip in Year 2 indicates a period of reorganization inconsistent with gradual extension predicted by the hypothesis.

5.2 L1 Transfer Effects

The data strongly support massive L1 transfer from Albanian's complex temporal system. With 84.97% overall past marking for states, and consistently high rates across all years, Albanian speakers appear to directly transfer their L1 conceptualization, where states can be viewed as bounded, completable events.

In Albanian, the aorist (e kryera e thjeshtë) freely combines with stative predicates. Sentences like "e dinte përgjigjen dje" (he knew-AORIST the answer yesterday) are not only grammatical but represent the default way to express past states. This contrasts sharply with English, where states resist conceptualization as bounded events.

The statistical analysis, revealing that L1 transfer accounts for 14% of variance in past marking patterns, likely underestimates the true effect. The near-categorical use of past with states (approaching 90% in Years 1 and 3) suggests almost complete transfer of L1 temporal-aspectual mappings.

The accomplishments data provide additional evidence for L1 influence. The dramatic drop in Year 2 (42 → 14 tokens) followed by recovery in Year 3 (30 tokens) may reflect uncertainty about how to map Albanian's complex aspectual distinctions onto English forms. The 100% past marking in Year 2 suggests learners retreat to the most reliable L1-based strategy when uncertain.

5.3 Developmental Considerations and Fossilization

The most compelling evidence for fossilization comes from the states data. Despite three years of formal English instruction, past marking with states shows no movement toward target-like patterns (86.56% → 80.17% → 88.61%). The slight dip in Year 2 is not maintained, with Year 3 returning to initial levels. This represents textbook fossilization, early stabilization of non-target forms resistant to change.

The U-shaped curve for progressive+activities tells a different developmental story. The initial 31.20% may represent overgeneralization of classroom-taught rules about the progressive aspect. The dramatic drop to 17.07% in Year 2 suggests recognition that these rules don't fully capture English usage, leading to avoidance. The recovery to 53.66% in Year 3 indicates gradual approximation of target norms through restructuring rather than linear development.

The contrast between fossilized state-past mappings and developing activity-progressive mappings suggests differential susceptibility to change. Forms with direct L1 equivalents (Albanian aorist → English past) fossilize early, while forms requiring new conceptual mappings (no Albanian progressive → English -ing) show protracted, non-linear development.

5.4 Implications for the Aspect Hypothesis

These findings suggest the Aspect Hypothesis requires fundamental reconsideration when applied to learners whose L1s have rich aspectual morphology. The hypothesis assumes learners begin with universal semantic-pragmatic associations (telic+perfective, atelic+imperfective) that gradually extend. However, Albanian speakers appear to begin with fully transferred L1 morphological mappings that resist change.

The extremely high past marking with states from Year 1 indicates no initial stage where aspect dominates over tense. Instead, learners transfer complete tense-aspect mappings from their L1, including associations that violate supposed universals. The persistence of these patterns suggests that L1 morphological systems can override universal semantic tendencies.

The variable patterns across lexical categories, fossilization for states, U-shaped development for activities, and target-like marking for achievements indicate that universality claims must be qualified by considering L1-L2 morphological (mis)matches. Categories with clear L1-L2 correspondences may follow different developmental paths than those requiring conceptual restructuring.

5.5 Pedagogical Implications

These findings carry critical implications for English teaching in Albanian contexts. Based on the findings, the recommended steps are as follows:

1. Use contrastive teaching: explicitly show students how the Albanian past tense with stative verbs differs from English usage, using authentic examples and their own errors as teaching materials.
2. Teach the progressive aspect comprehensively: move beyond the oversimplified rule of “use -ing for ongoing actions” to demonstrate all progressive functions, including temporary situations, changing states, and repeated actions.
3. Target fossilized patterns explicitly: address the overuse of simple past with stative verbs through consciousness-raising activities, direct correction, and focused practice.

4. Adjust assessment practices: distinguish systematic L1 transfer from random errors and provide feedback that addresses the error's systematic nature.

6. Conclusion

This study provides the first evidence of English temporal morphology acquisition among Albanian speakers, revealing fundamental challenges to the Aspect Hypothesis. Rather than partial support, our findings suggest that learners with morphologically rich L1s may follow entirely different developmental paths than those predicted by supposedly universal sequences.

The most striking finding, states marked with past tense at rates approaching 90% from the earliest proficiency level, represents not a minor deviation but a complete reversal of predicted patterns. This near-categorical marking, maintained across three years without significant change, demonstrates that Albanian speakers begin with fully formed L1-based temporal-aspectual mappings that resist modification.

These findings contribute to debates about universality in SLA by demonstrating that morphologically encoded L1 distinctions can completely override proposed semantic universals. The Aspect Hypothesis, developed primarily from studies of learners whose L1s lack rich aspectual morphology, may fundamentally mischaracterize acquisition when extended to typologically different language pairs.

6.1 Limitations

Several limitations constrain the generalizability of these findings.

The sample size declined across proficiency levels (Year 1: n=12, Year 2: n=9, Year 3: n=6), with Year 3 particularly underpowered for detecting developmental effects. This limits statistical reliability, as confidence intervals widen substantially and non-significant trends (such as accomplishments) may reflect insufficient power rather than the absence of development.

The cross-sectional design provides only snapshots of development; longitudinal tracking would better capture whether the apparent fossilization of state-past marking truly represents permanent stabilization, cohort effects from different instructional approaches, or individual variation masked by group average. The U-shaped curve for progressive+activities particularly requires longitudinal validation.

The exclusive use of written narratives likely inflated past-tense usage across all categories. Written mode typically involves higher planning demands and favors perfective marking. Oral production data might reveal different patterns, particularly for progressive forms, which peaked at only 53.66% even in Year 3.

The statistical analyses employed, while standard in Aspect Hypothesis research, have limitations given our sample size. The L1 transfer index represents an exploratory attempt to quantify cross-linguistic influence. Future research with larger samples could employ mixed-effects modeling to better account for individual variation while maintaining statistical power.

Despite these limitations, this study establishes that Albanian speakers fundamentally reorganize English tense-aspect systems based on L1 transfer, with some patterns fossilizing early while others undergo complex restructuring. State-past associations appear early and resist change, while activity-progressive associations show significant non-linear development. Future research should employ larger samples with longitudinal designs and multiple task modalities.

Acknowledgments

I wish to extend my sincere appreciation to all students and pupils who participated in this research, and to the educational staff and institutions whose cooperation made this study possible.

Authors' contributions

I conceived, designed, conducted, and wrote the study in its entirety.

Funding

This work did not receive any specific grant from funding agencies in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Competing interests

There are no competing interests.

Informed consent

Obtained.

Ethics approval

The Publication Ethics Committee of the Sciedu Press.

The journal's policies adhere to the Core Practices established by the Committee on Publication Ethics (COPE).

Provenance and peer review

Not commissioned; externally double-blind peer reviewed.

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to privacy or ethical restrictions.

Data sharing statement

No additional data are available.

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