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Production of future forms by L2 English learners

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PRODUCTION OF FUTURE FORMS BY L2 ENGLISH LEARNERS

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PRODUCTION OF FUTURE FORMS BY L2 ENGLISH LEARNERS

by

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Second language learners are faced with an unusual characteristic of English syntax which makes it difficult for them to produce native-like speech when talking about the future. English syntax provides only two tenses, present tense and past tense, but it does not provide a future tense; as a result, English speakers must express the future through other means. Several options are available to native speakers including modals, mental verbs, and progressive forms, among others. The existence of multiple options does not mean these choices are necessarily interchangeable, and native English speakers may select a particular form depending on certain criteria. English as a Second Language (ESL) learners must not only know the different forms for expressing the future, but they also need to know when it is appropriate to use them. If they use future expressions without following the same criteria as a native-speaker, then their speech may sound unnatural even if it is grammatical.

Most L2 English learners are unaware that English does not have a grammatical future tense in terms of inflectional morphology. Students learn to use *will* for the future, and the syntactic simplicity of this form makes the future seem easier for learners than the present and past tenses which involve inflected verbs and a complicated auxiliary system to accompany them. For learners who understand *will* solely as a future tense marker, it appears to be the simplest of the forms with no changes to the verb form itself required to indicate person, negation, or interrogatives. Some learners also use *be going to* which implies a little more syntactic complexity, but not as much as that of the tenses requiring do-support. Overall, from the perspective of L2 English learners, expression of the future seems to be the least of their problems. However, future expression is not as simple as they think, as illustrated by the following three cases, which this author personally observed:

(1) An ESL teacher asks a Taiwanese student about his plans over a long weekend. He responds, “I will get a job. I will go to interview.” His language, while grammatical, sounds stilted and unnatural.

(2) A Libyan student steps into the office of the coordinator of his ESL program. The coordinator, a non-native speaker herself, is with two native-English speaking ESL instructors. The Libyan student announces, “I will give you this paper.” Confused, the listeners wait for him to continue. When it becomes clear that nothing else is to follow, there is a pause while the three listeners try to understand what he means. Finally, he hands a piece of paper to the coordinator. In unison the three listeners respond with an “*oh*,” voicing their understanding.

(3) A Mexican student is with a group of students and teachers, some native and some non-native English speakers. A meeting has just concluded and the students are engaged in casual conversation. The student from Mexico stands up and says, “I will go to work.” The group stops for an instant and looks at her, waiting for her to continue. Only when she proceeds to say goodbye does it become clear that she was simply announcing her departure.

These three real-life scenarios demonstrate the different problems that may stem from using a linguistic form, in this case *will*, in a way most non-native speakers do not. In the first scenario, while there was no miscommunication because the utterance was in response to a direct question, the use of *will* made the response sound odd and unnatural. The other two scenarios actually led to a moment or two of misunderstanding which, while not serious enough to cause a major communication problem, did interfere with the communication process. Learners whose goal is to achieve L2 proficiency that is as close to native as possible need to learn that *will* is only appropriate under certain conditions. The notion that L2 English learners have this problem is not new. Bardovi-Harlig (2004) notes that L2 English learners often use future-time

expressions that are grammatically well-formed but peculiar compared to native-speaker usage. In short, non-native speakers tend to use *will* in instances where a native speaker would choose an alternative structure such as *'ll*, *gonna*, the simple present, or a progressive form.

In this thesis, I present evidence showing the different forms used by non-native speakers and the overgeneralization of *will* by many of these speakers. Specifically, I examine two aspects of non-native future expression:

- a) differences between native and non-native English speakers with respect to production of future forms;
- b) consistency of non-native speakers' production of future forms across tasks.

In Chapter 2, I begin with a review of previous work that contributes to a greater understanding of future production by both native and non-native speakers. Corpus research by Biber (1999, 2006), Berglund (1997, 2000), and Szmrecsanyi (2003) helps shed some light on actual native-speaker use of the forms employed to express future time. In addition, I examine work by Bardovi-Harlig (2002) that describes production of future forms used by second language learners. This, in conjunction with studies dealing with futurity and modality (Sarkar, 1998; Nehls, 1988, von Stechow, 2006), the development of the current English modal system (Bybee & Pagliuca, 1987; Visser, 1984; Diamond, 1974), and analyses of criteria used by native speakers and non-native speakers when choosing future forms (Papafragou, 1997; Bardovi-Harlig, 2004), provides the framework within which I evaluate the results from my study.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 deal with the details of the study. Chapter 3 describes the methodology of the study, including the design of the data collection procedures and a description of the participants. Chapter 4 summarizes the results of the study. Chapter 5

presents an analysis of the results in light of the background reviewed in chapter 3 along with conclusions, limitations of this study, and the possible direction of future research on this topic.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

To understand and identify differences in expression of future forms used by native and non-native English speakers, it is important to recognize the specific contexts in which native speakers choose to use forms that may be distinct from those produced by non-native speakers. It is also important to note alternative future forms that native-speakers use but non-native speakers often do not. This can be accomplished by examining both modality in English and the available forms of future expression. A review of modals in Modern English, particularly *will*, reveals a system that is syntactically simple but semantically complex. Furthermore, an analysis of future expression shows that because the future is used to describe events that have not yet occurred, modality is inherent in all future forms. As a result, futurity carries a complex semantic load which may be difficult for second language learners to acquire. Further exploration of future forms in corpus studies reveals other factors that may affect production of these forms such as syntactic and pragmatic considerations, and it also provides valuable data regarding language actually produced by native-speakers.

2.1 Modality and Futurity

A modal expression indicates the status of a proposition that describes an event (Palmer, 2001). Depending on the language, modality can be expressed through affixes, through words, or through both (Diamond, 1974). In English, modal auxiliaries are generally considered to be the primary linguistic expression of modality, but modality can be expressed through a variety of other devices as well. (von Stechow, 2006). Syntactically, the modal system in English is quite simple. Modals are limited to *can*, *could*, *shall*, *should*, *may*, *might*, *must*, *will*, and *would*, and they are uninflected and followed by bare infinitives. Semantically, however, the interpretation of modals becomes very complex and even at this time some aspects of the semantic nature of

modality are still being studied. The complexity that is relevant to this study lies in the fact that all modals can be used for future expression, modality is inherent in all future expression, and some expressions are more overtly modal than others.

Two basic modal categories, deontic and epistemic, are commonly described in the literature. Deontic modals are those that express obligation, permission, and related concepts. Epistemic modals deal with knowledge or the degree of certainty a speaker has regarding the proposition he is expressing. However in an effort to provide a thorough description of modal semantics, a multitude of other categories have been offered such as alethic, boulomaic, dynamic, and teleological (von Stechow 2006). The significance of the need for such a wide array of categories lies in the disproportionate number of nuanced meanings in relation to the number of modals that exist in English. The number of pure modal auxiliaries is limited compared to the types of attitudes these morphemes can express and the result is that modals have multiple meanings.

The morpheme *will* is an example of a modal that, in spite of its syntactic simplicity, presents an interesting semantic complexity, particularly because of its temporal use. Diamond (1974), who presents a somewhat simplified explanation of the semantics of *will*, offers no fewer than seven meanings of *will* (volition, assertion/identification, non-negotiable determination, predictable or characteristic behavior, fatalism, oblique suggestion, and logical or mechanical consequence) in addition to its use to denote the future.

There are many studies exploring the relationship between the futurity and modality of *will*. Although some say that they are two separate concepts, and that future *will* and modal *will* are simply homonyms, researchers such as Sarkar (1998) believe that there is an indivisible relationship between the two. Citing previous research by Jespersen (1931), Lyons (1977),

Yavaş (1982), and Palmer (1979, 1986), Sarkar argues that the future is different from the present or past because it is always uncertain and therefore modal, and emphasizes the difficulty in pinpointing the precise nature of *will*. His analysis leads him to conclude that “the semantics for *will* is not exclusively modal as argued by one camp, neither is it ambiguous between a tense and a modal as argued by the other camp, but rather each instance of *will* seems to be simultaneously a modal and a tense morpheme.” (p. 20).

Descriptions and analyses of the English future frequently focus only on *will* and *be going to* as the principal means of future expression. However, there are actually many other constructions used for future expression using both modal auxiliaries and present tense futurate expressions. As Nehls (1988) explains, all the modals can refer to the future, and certain verbs such as *hope* and *expect* refer to the future lexically, while in other cases adverbials such as *tomorrow* or *next week* provide the future interpretation of the verb. Nehls concentrates on five general means of expressing future:

- (5) *will*: John will arrive tomorrow.
- (6) *be going to*: John is going to arrive tomorrow.
- (7) present progressive: John is arriving tomorrow.
- (8) simple present: John arrives tomorrow
- (9) *will* + progressive: John will be arriving tomorrow.

Nehls states that these forms are far from being interchangeable and that the difference in meaning among the different forms stems from the degree of probability attached to the action. He presents evidence that the degree of probability expressed by these forms, from most to least probable, follows this sequence:

- (10) simple present: John arrives tomorrow.

(11) present progressive: John is arriving tomorrow.

(12) *be going to*: John is going to arrive tomorrow.

(13) *will*: John will arrive tomorrow.

(14) *will* + progressive: John will be arriving tomorrow.

He suggests, for example, that to say as in (10) *John arrives tomorrow* is to assert that his arrival is “as certain as is the present” whereas (11) *John is arriving tomorrow* “refers to a fixed programme in a more casual way”(p.300). He contends that *will* expressions are more neutral while *will* + progressive expressions are used “to make more casual predictions”(p. 300). He suggests that that is why this progressive form is commonly found in colloquial English.

In a statement that is consistent with Sarkar’s 1998 findings described above, Nehls also notes that because the future refers to events that have not yet occurred, it must be considered not factual; therefore, there are always implied modal undertones in future expressions.

The futurate forms mentioned earlier add to the semantic complexity of future expression in English. Futurate forms in English are simple present and present progressive constructions which can be used to express future for planned events, but which are less acceptable if used to express events which cannot be pre-determined. Copley (2008) offers the following examples to illustrate this concept.

(15) The Red Sox play the Yankees tomorrow.

(16) # The Red Sox defeat the Yankees tomorrow.

While example (15) is grammatical, example (16) is far less acceptable because it denotes an action that cannot be planned. Copley notes that while planning is an important factor for the acceptability of futurate meanings, there are instances when this explanation is insufficient. It does not account for the differences between (17) and (18), for example.

(17) There is a plan for the Red Sox to play the Yankees tomorrow, but they won't/might not.

(18) #The Red Sox play the Yankees tomorrow, but they won't/might not.

Ultimately, Copley proposes further conditions in addition to the existence of a plan for futurate expressions to be acceptable, including the existence of a director of events who is both able and committed to ensuring they will occur if they are planned.

Copley's study, along with those described previously, provides strong evidence that the future itself by its very nature incorporates modality and therefore a speaker must adhere to a number of conditions when selecting a form to express the future. This adds a semantic complexity to future expression that may affect second language learners' ability to select appropriate future forms for a given context.

A different perspective on the development of future forms is presented in the study by Bybee and Pagliuca (1987) mentioned earlier. In this study, the authors review the sources of future morphemes across languages, and they conclude that, while it may appear that the number of meanings denoted by future morphemes is vast, they can be reduced to three basic source meanings which are common across languages. These sources are verbs denoting desire, movement and obligation. For example, the authors identify 18 languages containing future morphemes derived from a morpheme expressing desire including Swahili, Tagalog, Rumanian, Mandarin, English, and Serbo-Croatian among others. Verbs of movement, either toward the speaker (come) or, more commonly, away from the speaker (go) account for future morphemes in over 20 languages identified by the authors including Sonay, Logbara, Arabic, English, Quechua, Cuna and Duala to name a few. (p. 111). These sources tend to be common to all language families with the exception of obligation which is only found in Germanic languages

(p.111). Their analyses lead them to conclude that modal interpretations of future expression are retentions from the original source of the form.

2.2 History of modals and future expression

A look at the historical development of *will* and the early expressions of future in English reveals the basis for the complexities found in its current usage. Visser (1978) reports that in early Old English, the future was expressed through the present tense. *Willan*, the Old English precursor to *will*, and two co-existing verbs which emerged from the same root, *willian* and *willnian*, were simply verbs expressing present volition and the latter two never did develop auxiliary properties. These *will* forms could be followed by an infinitive with or without *to*, by a *that*-clause, or even by a noun complement. When followed by an infinitive, they expressed a present desire to perform the action signified by the verb rather than future intention. Examples of these usages are:

(19) O good lord god, what haue I *willed to haue* in this erthe.
Oh good Lord God, what have I *wanted to have* on this earth.

(20) Beowulf is min nama, **wille** ic *asecgan* suna Healfdenes, maerum þeodne min ærende
Beowulf is my name. I **wish to tell** my errand to Healfdene's son, the great lord.

An attested example of *will* with a noun complement is:

(21) Tostenc ðioðe ða *zefeht* **willað**
Scatter the nations that *in wars* **delight** (*delight in wars*)

An attested example with a *that*-clause is:

(22) Deme 3e nu swa swa 3e **willon** þæt eow sy eft 3edemed
Judge now as you **desire that** you may be judged again

During the period of Old English, doomsday prophesies were a common theme and therefore myriad examples of future expression are attested from that time. In almost all cases the present tense was used for future expression in both independent and dependent clauses, in

questions, for the imperative with second person singular pronouns, and with a specific group of present conjugations of the precursor to *be*. In late old English, *sceal* (*shall*) and *will* began to lose their original meaning and were occasionally seen in future expressions, but these seem to have been reserved for Latin constructions only. In Old English one can even find a precursor to the futurate present progressive (be + verb + ing) of the type found in an expression like “I’m catching a train in fifty minutes” in expressions using the structure *bið* + verb + *ende*.

In Middle English the use of present tense constructions to express futurity began to give way to *will* + infinitive forms, and competition between the two forms as a means of expressing the future is seen throughout this time and in Early Modern English, with examples of both forms found up to the early 1600’s. During this period, for the first time, *will* was sometimes used to express future intent without any notion of volition. However, the use of *will* for the future was limited. *Will* + *be* was almost never used and for the future of *be* the use of present tense constructions persisted. Over time the use of *will* for this purpose increased and the use of simple present tense decreased until *will* forms for future expression began to dominate in Modern English.

The progressive disappearance of the use of the present tense to express the future is revealing when one looks at what remains. Originally, the present tense was used in both independent and dependent clauses. Over time, its use in independent clauses decreased, yet its presence in dependent clauses persists to this day in expressions such as:

(23) After I lose some weight, I will quit smoking.

Visser maintains that the retention of the volitional nature of *will* allowed the present tense to persist as a means of expressing the future in order to distinguish between simply expressing a confidence that something is going to occur and actually desiring its occurrence. His review of

modern examples of present tense used for future expression in independent clauses suggests that in order to use the present tense, there must be, “a note of impersonal certainty as to the realization of the event or state in prospect... especially when the future event is regarded as something normally going to happen in due course” (1978, p. 678), or, he continues, as Erades put it, “as naturally and normally resulting from the mere lapse of time (1948, p. 6).” He adds that the futurate present is used for actions that are planned, scheduled or pre-arranged, and he provides evidence for that distinction in this sentence from Aldous Huxley (1923):

(24). “I *go* to Paris first,” said Gumbriel. “After that, I don’t know, I *shall go* wherever I think people *will* buy pneumatic trousers.”

Overall the history and development of modals and other forms of future expression in English provides some insight into the complexities involved in the selection of a particular form for future expression. Additional data provided by corpus studies reveal that there may be other factors that contribute to speakers’ selections of future forms including processing constraints and pragmatic considerations.

2.3 Corpus studies

Correlations between clause types and future forms identified in multiple corpora indicate that syntactic complexity may also govern native speaker selection of a future form when the semantics allow for more than one possibility. In his study of the British National Corpus (BNC), the Santa Barbara Corpus of Spoken American English (CSAE), and the Corpus of Spoken Professional American English (CSPA), Szmrecsanyi (2003) found a strong correlation between syntactic complexity and speakers’ selection of *will*, *be going to* and their variants to denote the future. Speakers tend to use the syntactically and morphologically heavy *be going to/gonna* in longer, more complex clauses such as dependent clauses and the *if*-subclause of *if*-clauses as in this example offered by Szmrecsanyi.

(25) And if he's *gonna* walk to Tenby they could be starting when he's in Tenby. (DS KCN 3375)

The inverse is also true; speakers use the morphologically simple *will* or the even simpler *'ll* form in independent clauses which tend to be shorter. Szemrecsanyi offers the following examples.

In (26), *gonna*, a variant of *be going to*, is used in a dependent relative clause:

(26) You need somebody who's ***gonna*** work with him every day, and with an individual programme and you just can't offer that in a class.

In (27), *will* is used in the independent clause in a statement containing more than one clause.

(27) Do they look nice? Mm, they're alright, they ***will*** do when they're, when they grow big.

Szemrecsanyi suggests that speakers choose these language forms based on cognitive economy and processing constraints because the strong characteristics of *be going to* allow speakers planning time for complex expressions and also make the clause easier for listeners to process. If this is true, this may have strong implications for second language English speakers who have pressing cognitive processing needs and may resort to other devices to select future forms.

A final look at corpus data provides some interesting information about the rivalry of future expressions among different groups of native speakers using different media for different purposes (Berglund, 1997). Berglund examined differences both between written and spoken English and among regional varieties including British versus American English. In addition, Berglund subdivided the corpora into two hypercategories: Informative Language, which included nine types/genres of language production and Imaginative Language, which included six types/genres¹. Berglund found some minor differences between British and American future

¹ Genres include: Informative Language--A. Press: reportage B. Press: editorial C. Press: reviews D. Religion E. Skills, trades/hobbies F. Pop. lore G. Belles lettres, biography, essays H. Miscellaneous J. Learned and scientific writings. Imaginative Language-- K. General fiction L. Mystery and detective fiction M. Science fiction N. Adventure and western fiction P. Romance and love story R. Humour

expressions, for instance a greater frequency of the use of the modal *shall* in the British corpora, yet, for the most part, there were no significant differences between the British and the American corpora. Second, Berglund identified a wide variety of choices among specific genres, but no obvious pattern in these differences emerged. The only significant differences revealed in this study were that instances of future expression were twice as frequent in the spoken corpora as the written corpora and that the proportion of *will* to other forms was twice as high in the written as in the spoken. Berglund speculates that future expression may be a more natural feature of spoken language than of written. He also mentions that there are future expressions that were not considered in this study and that perhaps these may be more common in spoken English than in written English. These forms include simple present, present progressive and various modals that may all be used to express the future.

In a second study, Berglund (2000) expanded on these findings by reviewing additional British corpora, adding to the original corpora a second, newer, written corpus and a second, newer, spoken corpus which he subdivided into two corpora. The first consisted of more formal, context-governed speech (CG) and the second consisted of informal, spontaneous speech (DS). This study produced results similar to those found in the previous study, with some additional information. Once again, there were more instances of future expression in spoken than in written language, and again the proportion of *will* to other forms was greater in the written corpora than in the spoken corpora, perhaps because the processing advantage provided by the longer *be going to* forms, as suggested by Szemrecsanyi (2003), is not necessary in writing. The proportion of *will* to other future forms varied considerably among the spoken corpora. Not unexpectedly, *will* was more common in formal speech and *'ll* was more common in informal speech. Instances of *gonna* were considerably more frequent in more recent spoken corpora than

previous corpora but not in written expression, suggesting a change over time in spoken future expression only.

Finally, Berglund (2000) also reviews the co-occurrences of future forms and personal pronouns. *Will* is used with personal pronouns more often in spoken English than in written English, but in all media, *will* is the future form least used with personal pronouns in spite of being the most frequent future expression overall. Of all the future forms, the one most commonly used with personal pronouns is *'ll*—93-96% . This fact may be of considerable importance in examining the difference between native and non-native production in that non-native speakers may be unlikely to use the phonologically weak contracted form.

2.4 Acquisition of Modals

A look at the order of acquisition of modals in children's first language acquisition may provide some insight into the behavior of second language learners as well. Traditional views indicate that deontic modals are acquired before epistemic modals, and this assumption has in fact been the basis for the suggestion that modals are polysemous. Papafragou (1997) argues, however, that the order of acquisition is not clear-cut. There is counterevidence which seems to indicate that children do understand epistemic modality. She offers another non-linguistic explanation for children's failure to use modals to express epistemic concepts. According to Papafragou, to use epistemic modals the speaker must be able to "reflect on the content of one's own beliefs, to take into account the reliability of those beliefs (i.e. the relative strength with which they are entertained), and to perform deductive operations on them" (p. 15). She proposes that the child's inability to conceive of these types of abstract judgments prevents the child from using language for epistemic propositions. Therefore, the order of production stems from the psychological development of the child, whose perception of the world must pass through

cognitive stages. In other words, a child cannot use language to express concepts that he has not yet developed. If this is true, this should not be an issue for adult learners and the order of acquisition for an adult may be guided by other factors.

2.5 Second language English learners

For second language English learners, an order of acquisition of future forms has been described (Bardovi-Harlig, 2002). Research has shown that future expression comes early but is initially limited to *will*, followed by *be going to* at the subsequent stage. In a longitudinal study, Bardovi-Harlig tracked the language production of 16 L2 English learners of diverse language backgrounds by collecting tokens of language produced in an ESL classroom. The data collected consisted primarily of written production, with some oral production elicited in interviews and audio-taped journals. Bardovi-Harlig found that the learners tended to produce future forms according to the pattern described above. Also, when *be going to* first emerged, it tended to be formulaic in the sense described by Ellis (1997); learners did not produce the form creatively until later. An interesting finding in this study was that instructional input did not seem to affect learner production since *be going to* was introduced much earlier than *will*. However, this study could not account for additional input learners were exposed to outside the classroom environment which may or may not have offered more instances of *will* than *be going to*. Additionally, although learners were introduced to *be going to* before *will*, there is no indication that instruction was provided that was specifically designed to promote the use of alternative future forms instead of *will*.

Later analyses of the same data revealed that the proportions of *will* to *be going to* among learners in an oral sample was much higher (9:1) than among native-speakers (2.5:1) (Bardovi-Harlig, 2004). In this study, instances of learner production of other future forms besides *will*

and *be going to* were also counted, but they were not compared to native speakers' since native-speaker corpus studies do not provide data for other future forms. Learners did produce other future forms; however, the number of instances was considerably lower than of both *will* and *be going to*.

Bardovi-Harlig's (2002, 2004) studies support the notion that L2 English learners do not express the future in the same way that native English speakers do, particularly in written production. This may be because the multiple factors that play a role in the choices made by native speakers described in the studies at the beginning of this chapter are not always considered by non-native speakers. First, the duality of English modals which express a multitude of moods in addition to futurity (Diamond, 1974; von Fintel, 2006; Sakaar, 1998) adds a semantic complexity to many of the available future forms that may be difficult for second-language learners to master. A second previously-mentioned factor that may lead to differences in native and non-native production is the variety of other forms that are available to and used by native speakers for future expression, all determined by specific conditions (Nehls, 1988; Copley, 2008). Learners may avoid dealing with these complexities by choosing one or two simple forms and applying them to all future situations, ignoring the semantic and pragmatic constraints that may exist in a particular context. Finally, the processing constraints that appear to dictate some of the choices made by native speakers (Szemrecsanyi, 2003) may differ from those of L2 learners, who probably have different processing limitations from those who have full acquisition of the language.

2.6 The present study

In light of the information provided by the studies described above, this study will explore two research questions.

1) Do L2 English learners use language forms to express the future that are different from those used by native speakers?

2) Are the future language forms produced by L2 English learners consistent across tasks?

Based on the findings of these studies, the following observations are expected:

- Native speakers' may use a wider variety of forms of future expression than non-native speakers.
- Non-native speakers' may overproduce *will* and or use it inappropriately.
- Non-native speakers' may either fail to use futurate forms, or use them inappropriately, such as using them to express an uncertain or uncontrolled event, as in: *it rains tomorrow*.
- Non-native speakers may produce future forms differently from native speakers in relation to personal pronouns.
- Modal use among non-native adult speakers may include both deontic and epistemic modals.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Two types of data, authentic² and elicited, were collected through three distinct procedures. The authentic data were collected through classroom observation via audio-recording, and the elicited data were collected through an interview and a discourse completion test. Each of these research procedures is frequently used in SLA research, and each carries with it certain advantages which are desirable for the present study, while addressing some issues of concern for researchers in the field of second language studies.

Authentic data has proven useful in second language research, particularly when pragmatics may play a role in production. In studying interlanguage pragmatics, Bardovi-Harlig (2005) makes the case for using a particular type of natural language, institutional discourse, which still offers the advantages of natural language data while also providing comparable, replicable data. In addition, Bardovi-Harlig (2005) has used authentic data and a data collection method similar to the one used in this study when studying future forms among L2 learners.

As shown in Ellis (2008), the use of experimentally elicited data is effective in cases where it is necessary to produce evidence of both learner knowledge and production of an L2. He states that, “experimentally elicited data can be used to examine interlanguage development (i.e. how learners’ implicit knowledge develops) and to make statements about learners’ grammatical proficiency (p. 4).” Citing Corder (1976), he adds that elicited data is particularly useful in cases where the researcher wishes the participants “to produce data incorporating particular features the linguist is interested in at the moment.”(p. 69). In the present study, the aim is to look at the informants’ production of future forms in general, and *will* in particular. To

² In the context of this study, the term authentic is used to describe language produced in a classroom environment. This includes both language production that was completely spontaneous as in unplanned conversations, and language used in presentations where the topic was known ahead of time. It does not include any classroom language that was read or memorized. Bardovi-Harlig (2005) used this term to describe data from a similar study.

this end, topics intended to guide the learners toward future expression were provided when collecting the authentic data; nevertheless, there was no guarantee that the speakers would talk about the future or produce future forms. The elicited production format, on the other hand, presented the participants with direct questions about the future, channeling their thoughts toward the desired forms. In addition, the elicited production items used in this study were divided into two parts: open-questions and a discourse completion test. Open questions direct the participants to express the future, but modality (i.e. the speaker's perception of the possibility, probability, or desirability of the future event) was not controlled which allowed for a degree of variation in the possible responses. In the discourse completion test, modality was defined by the task and the speaker was obligated to limit the responses to the appropriate forms.

The inclusion of both authentic and elicited data addresses a possible disadvantage of using just one type or the other. An interview, for example, may lead speakers to use “careful speech” that may differ from the language used in natural conversation. (Labov, 1972; p. 79). A second, possibly related concern is that among language learners there can be variation in language production across tasks. Geeslin (2006) presents evidence that L2 learners produce different language forms depending on the type of task used for elicitation. In her study, she provides a thorough review of research on variation across tasks including findings from Tarone & Parish (1988), Skehan & Foster (1997) and McDonough & Mackey (2000) all of which pointed to evidence of a task effect on production across a wide variety of task types. In her own study, Geeslin found variation in production across two types of tasks, a guided interview and a picture description task.

In the present study, these matters have been addressed through the method selection suggested by Barron (2003). Citing Bardovi-Harlig (1999b), Barron proposes that, “we need to

get away from the best-method mentality, and return to the notion of customizing the research design to fit the question (p. 238).” Barron then suggests the use of multiple methods in order to reduce any task-bias that may occur. However, she also warns against choosing a variety of methods simply for variety’s sake. It is imperative that the methods fit the research questions—a goal which has been accomplished in the present study. The elicited production portion of the study addresses the first research question: are there differences in production of future forms between native and non-native speakers of English? The elicited data coupled with the authentic data address the second research question: are there differences in production of future forms among non-native speakers’ across tasks?

Specifically, the data collection and analysis for this study was divided into three parts: (a) classroom observation via audio-recording (authentic data) (b) open- interview questions (semi-structured elicited data) (c) discourse completion tests (structured elicited data).

3.1 Participants

The participants were drawn from different programs within the University of Texas at El Paso where the study was carried out. The first group of participants were ESL students. These participants will hereafter be referred to as non-native speakers or NNS. The second group of participants were first language English speakers. These participants will hereafter be referred to as native speakers or NS.

3.1.1 Non-native speakers (NNS)

The first group consisted of non-native speakers attending ESL courses at the English Language Institute (ELI) of the University of Texas at El Paso, a non-credit ESL program offering intensive ESL courses for international students. Twenty-six NNS participants between the ages of 18 and 50 were interviewed. One participant was under 20, 15 participants were

between 20 and 29, 6 participants were between 30 and 39, 3 were between 30 and 39, and 1 was between 50 and 59. Of these participants, the native languages were: Spanish (13), Arabic (7), Japanese (2) Chinese (3) and Gujarati (1). Male participants were from Mexico, Colombia, Libya, Kuwait, Jordan, Taiwan and India. Female participants were from Mexico, Colombia, Taiwan and Japan. See Table 1.

Table 1. NNS Participants According to L1, Country and Gender

Gender	L1 and Country					Total
	Spanish (Mexico, Colombia)	Arabic (Libya, Kuwait, Jordan)	Chinese (Taiwan)	Japanese (Japan)	Gujarati (India)	
Male	7	7	1	0	1	16
Female	6	0	2	2	0	10
	13	7	3	2	1	26

Out of the 26 NNS participants, 5 were also recorded in class on a daily basis. These participants included 3 female participants from Mexico, 1 female participant from Taiwan, and 1 male participant from Kuwait.

All NNS participants were of intermediate to advanced proficiency in spoken English and most were enrolled in three English classes during the day with a different instructor for each class. Five of the participants were enrolled in an additional afternoon conversation class taught by the researcher of the current study. Their proficiency level was determined either by an in-house TOEFL PBT-style placement test or successful completion of a lower level in the program. Each participant completed a data sheet providing background information regarding exposure to the target language before enrollment in this program. This information included the amount of

previous English instruction each participant had received and the length of time each participant had been in the country before entering the ELI program they were enrolled in at the time of the study.

3.1.2 Native English Speakers (NS)

NS participants were students enrolled in regular undergraduate or graduate programs at the university. Twenty-seven NS adults between the ages of 18 and 50 were interviewed. Four participants were under 20, 18 participants were between 20 and 29, 4 participants were between 30 and 39, and 1 participant was between 40 and 49. There were 13 male and 14 female respondents. Twenty-three were originally from El Paso, 2 were from the Houston, Texas, area, and two were from the Midwestern United States. Eighteen participants characterized themselves as Hispanic, and 9, as Non-Hispanic. All native speakers were English dominant and had acquired English as a first language, although ten speakers did report that they were English-Spanish bilingual. In El Paso where this study was conducted, bilingualism is typical and it is difficult to find individuals who do not speak at least some Spanish. Three participants reported some familiarity with a third language (Russian, French, and Portuguese). The remaining 17 participants characterized themselves as being primarily monolingual with some familiarity with Spanish. See Table 2.

Table 2. NS Participants According to Ethnicity, Languages Spoken, Region of Origin, and Gender

	Ethnicity		Language		Region of Origin		
	Hispanic	Non-Hispanic	Bilingual Eng/Span	Monolingual English	El Paso	Houston Area	Midwest
Gender							
Male	8	5	3	10	11	1	1
Female	10	4	7	7	12	1	1

3.2. Classroom Observation

The classroom observation format used in this study was adapted from a procedure used by Bardovi-Harlig (2000). In her study, the researcher investigated future expression among adult ESL English learners by collecting data from students enrolled in an intensive English program. An examination of the language produced by students throughout the course revealed important data about the acquisition of future expression and the different uses of certain formulaic expressions by individual students enrolled in the class. A review of the data collected in this manner allowed the researcher to form conclusions about non-native production of future forms.

Collecting language produced in a classroom has several advantages. Unlike an elicited production task, the variety of classroom activities inherent in a second language classroom provides multiple contexts for learners to produce language, such as persuasive speaking, group discussions, debates, informal conversations, requests for information and clarification, and paired-discussions, and role-plays. Furthermore, the language produced in this format is authentic, and it allows the researcher to collect a sizeable sample of future expression produced spontaneously by the speakers.

The goal of this study is somewhat different from that of Bardovi-Harlig (2000), however, and therefore some aspects of the research design are different. Although the focus of both studies is on future expressions used by non-native speakers of English, the present study is concerned only with spoken discourse and not written English. Bardovi-Harlig collected language samples in both written and spoken English, but the majority of the samples were written. This distinction is important because in a study using corpus data, Douglas Biber (2006) analyzed both written and spoken language in a university environment, and he found that at a

university level, the language used in speaking is considerably different from that used in writing. Among the differences he described were a greater number of verbs used in speaking and more nouns in writing, and a greater tendency to express stance in speaking than in writing. He concludes:

“Probably the most surprising finding of the study is the fundamental importance of the spoken versus written mode. The study was designed to include a wide range of the registers found in American universities, sampled across different situational parameters: different purposes and communicative goals, different settings, individual addressees versus large audiences, status differences among participants, degrees of interactivity, etc...it turns out that the distinction between speech and writing is by far the most important factor in determining the overall patterns of linguistic variation across university registers.” (p. 213)

In addition, the spoken data in Bardovi-Harlig’s study were gathered primarily from conversational interviews and discussions about silent films. On the other hand, the current study dealt with spoken data only, and this more limited scope allowed for a greater variety of contexts in which to gather spoken data. Despite these differences, the general format was the same in that it provided a framework for the collection of natural language samples from non-native English speakers.

3.2.1 Procedures

In this portion of the study, spontaneous speech produced by 5 NNS participants attending an intermediate conversation class was audio-recorded. (See Table 3.) A compact Sony ICD-P520 digital recorder was used to collect the audio data. The small size of the device made it fairly unobtrusive, allowing students to speak naturally without focusing on the fact that they were being recorded. The instructor of this conversation class was the researcher conducting this study. The duration of the course was eight weeks and the class met for six hours each week. The class was recorded in its entirety every day, with exceptions made only on

Table 3. NNS Participants Recorded in a Conversation Class

Participant	Gender	L1
C1	Male	Arabic
C2	Female	Chinese
C3	Female	Spanish
C4	Female	Spanish
C5	Female	Spanish

days when the class was held outside of the classroom for field trips or other activities which made audio-taping impractical. As a result, students were recorded for a total of 22 days and 33 hours. The recordings included language produced in the following contexts:

- a. informal conversations among students
- b. informal conversations among students and the instructor
- c. group discussion activities based on a theme provided by either the instructor or another student
- d. debates on a topic provided by the instructor
- e. short extemporaneous presentations (reading and/or memorizing were not allowed)
- f. role-play activities
- g. impromptu presentations

Production included language produced in response to topics provided by the instructor and also language produced by the speakers naturally with no outside guidance. In instances when a topic was provided, it was up to the students to direct the conversation, therefore allowing them to produce language that was as natural as possible. In addition, the speakers often initiated the discourse themselves rather than responding to a question, which resulted in a

wider variety of subject forms than those used in the responses to the elicited production. Recording began before the beginning of each class, and data collection included students' arrival to the class, including any conversation that occurred as the students settled into the class. Recording continued until after the last student left the classroom. From these recordings, excerpts that included future forms, along with the necessary context, were transcribed and counted. It is possible that participants referred to the future more often than what is reported here, but in order for an utterance to be included it had to meet the following criteria. First, for forms that can be used for notions other than to express the future, it had to be completely clear from the context of the conversation that the intention of the speaker was to express the future. Ungrammatical forms were evaluated individually. If the form was clear in spite of the ungrammaticality, it was placed in the corresponding category. An example of this is:

(28) *If you *want go* to the green, maybe you *go* to the east side...

In the first clause in (28), the missing *to* did not affect the context of the phrase, nor did it cause any confusion as to what the speaker was trying to express. Therefore, this utterance was categorized as a mental verb and the ungrammaticality of the clause was disregarded. The verb *go* in the second clause is also ungrammatical because the speaker was making a recommendation to another student, not predicting what he may do. The verb was placed into the present tense category, but was considered to be an example of an inappropriate use of this form for the future. In a few isolated cases, forms were ungrammatical to the point where there was no relation between the form and the context. An example of this is:

(29) So, I came before the class?

In this case the student was asking if he needed to come before class to speak to the instructor the following day. The use of the past tense was completely inappropriate and there was no way of

knowing whether it was a slip of the tongue or if the speaker intended to use the past tense. Odd cases such as these were not considered. Finally, verbs without the –s for third person singular subjects were generally classified as present tense and not bare infinitives because of the tendency among even advanced learners to omit the –s in third person singular present tense due to the natural late acquisition of this form. As an extra precaution, it was noted whether or not the speaker tended to drop the –s in when using the present tense in contexts other than for future expression as well before determining that the form was in the present and not a bare infinitive.

If there was more than one way to interpret an utterance and there was no way to determine which the correct interpretation was, the utterance was not included in the tally. Also, when speakers were presenting a topic, only speech that was neither memorized nor read was included. Any utterances that failed to meet these conditions were excluded from consideration.

The results were collected and coded for forms, function, and time-frame. The categories selected for form are those identified by researchers in previous studies as discussed in the Chapter 2. The forms were grouped into the following categories: *will*, *'ll*, *going to/gonna*, mental verbs, modals, present tense, and progressive. Mental verbs can be defined as verbs that describe “mental states or activities,”(Biber et al., 2002) and they included *think*, *guess*, *hope*, *need*, *have to*, and *want*. In the corpus studies dealing with native-speaker data (Berglund, 1997; Berglund, 2000), it was deemed necessary to exclude some future forms such as present and progressive forms because it was impossible to determine whether they were being used to express the present or the future. As this was not a limitation of this study, these forms were included. *Going to* and *gonna* were included in a single category because, as indicated by Berglund (1997), there is no evidence that one form and not the other is used in a particular context.

In the case of *will* and *'ll*, however, it appears that for native speakers, the two forms have different functions and therefore they should be kept in separate categories. Categories for function were mainly divided according to those described by Bybee and Pagliuca (1987) with a few modifications. The categories considered in their study included: prediction, desire, intention, obligation, necessity, imminence, habitual, general truth, characteristic behavior, command, polite request, and supposition. Additional categories were added to account for possible expressions of direction, possibility, probability and ability. The function of *prediction* was interpreted primarily as a temporal expression of neutral futurity rather than modality as described in Sarkar (1998) and Bybee and Pagliuca (p. 110). However, it is understood that there is modality in all future statements and this naturally includes prediction. The same applies to the intention category which, like prediction, functions primarily as a future marker despite its inherent modality.

Finally, responses were categorized according to the time-frame they referred to, if any. The classroom setting allowed for the production of future expressions in reference to different time-frames among the participants. Responses were coded for short-, medium-, and long-term references in addition to an unspecified category. Short-term references ranged from immediately after to within a few days of the utterance. Examples of the short-term would be, *Monday, can I pay* and *I'm going to walk tomorrow*. Medium-term references ranged from over a week to several months. Examples of the medium-term would be, *I think that Miss Mexico will win* and *she want to lose twenty pounds*. Long-term references ranged from over six months to several years. An example of the long-term would be, *the children, what are they going to do in the future*.

3.3 Elicited Production

There were two elicited production tasks used in this study, each based on designs commonly used in second language research. This portion of the study included all NS and NNS participants. The first elicited production task was an interview consisting of open-ended prompts following the categorization scheme proposed by Mackey and Gass (2005). All the participants were asked the exact same questions designed to elicit certain language forms, in the same order. The interview items were open, allowing participants to respond with different answers, with a wide variety of forms, but there was a degree of control not found in the classroom observation portion of the study. The time-frame was established by the questions, and all the questions dealt with either plans or expectations.

Respondents were told that they were participating in a study that would provide information that could be used to improve instruction through a better understanding of how non-native speakers learn. Then they were told they would be answering some questions about the role of education in their lives. The use of a specific theme, education, focused the participants' attention to the content of their answers rather than the language forms. In addition the theme related naturally to the purpose of the study as described to them, a better understanding of how non-native speakers learn. There was no mention of language forms or future-expression at any point during the study.

The same categories for forms used to classify the daily language production were used in the elicited production portion, with the addition of two new categories—the non-finite verb category, and *Other*. The interview format made it necessary to include the first category given the tendency of native speakers to respond to direct questions with a non-finite verb under some circumstances, as will be seen in the data presented here. Second, the *Other* category was included because both NS participants and NNS participants produced some responses that did

not contain a future form and therefore could not be categorized as such. Responses in this category include phrases without a verb as in (30) and (31):

(30) Q: Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

A: *With a degree.*

(31) Q: What kind of final exam do you expect from this instructor?

A: *Just a written paper.*

In some cases respondents answered a question with a different temporal reference and the verb in these responses cannot be considered as a future expression. Example (32) illustrates this:

(32) Q: What about later tonight?

A: *Tonight, no **I just usually study** the night before the exam.*

In example (32), the response is in present tense and is being used to express a habit which cannot be considered a future expression in this context.

In some cases multiple forms were produced in one response. In some cases, the speaker began a phrase with one form, and then changed the form and completed the thought using something different. Example (33) illustrates.

(33) My plans are...I have two plans.

In this case, because the initial thought was not completed, only the final utterance was considered. In other cases multiple forms were used in a response as seen in example (34):

(34) I think in 5 years I hope work in some company.

In this case, there is no pause or other indication that the speaker did not intend to use both forms, and they can be interpreted as separate clauses. In cases such as these, both forms were counted as individual instances.

The last part of the elicited production portion of the study was a discourse completion test (DCT) in the form of a production questionnaire such as that described in Barron (2003). In her study, Barron elicited specific speech acts by providing informants with written role-plays of everyday situations and requiring the informants to complete the dialogues. The present study uses this same method by providing short written dialogues for the participants to complete orally. Unlike the role-plays in Barron’s study, however, the dialogues in this study were designed to elicit specific language forms rather than speech acts, and to control modality. Responses were coded according to the same forms as those used in the interview portion of the study. The DCT format limited the number of possible utterances in each response and no adjustments had to be made for multiple responses because there were none. All responses were included.

Fourteen items were employed as a means of eliciting production of future-time forms. Table 4 presents items 1-10, which were used during the interview portion of the elicited production tasks.

Table 4. Interview Items

Item	Function
1. Where did you go to high school?	Filler
2. What was your favorite subject in high school?	Filler
3. In terms of your education, where do you see yourself in 5 years?	Elicitation of future, long-term (prompt: <i>see</i>)
4. Tell me about your plans after this class finishes.	Elicitation of future, medium-term (prompt: <i>plans</i> -noun form)
5. Different people have different study habits. When do you usually study?	Filler
6. What about later tonight?	Elicitation of future, short-term (no prompt)

7. Describe this class in terms of difficulty.	Filler
8. What kind of final exam do you expect from this instructor?	Elicitation of future, medium-term (prompt: <i>expect</i>)
9. What are your expectations for the next class you take?	Elicitation of future, medium-term (prompt: <i>expectations</i>)
10. What are your ultimate education goals?	Elicitation of future, long-term (prompt: <i>goals</i>)

These items were intended to elicit speech that was as natural as possible. Six of them, #3, #4, #6, #8, #9, and #10, were designed to elicit future expressions. The remaining four, #1, #2, #5 and #7, were filler items designed to elicit present or past expressions. The items designed to elicit future expressions did not contain models of *will*, *'ll*, *be going to*, *gonna*, present progressive or future progressive. Instead, the items were structured around verbs, nouns, or adverbials that expressed the future semantically, i.e. words such as *plan* (#4), *expect* (#8), and *expectations* (#9) or an expression such as *see yourself in...*(#3). These words could serve as a prompt for the speaker to use these same verbs or a verb formed from the modeled nouns, or they could be disregarded and a different form to express the future could be chosen.

The last four elicited production items made up the Discourse Completion Test, which was presented in written form but responded to orally. The dialogues were designed to elicit either a general future form or a form specifically expressing intention/volition or prediction. (See Table 5.) In the discourse completion tasks, item 1 was designed to elicit *'ll* to express intention and volition, and item 2 was designed to elicit *will*, as a prediction. Items 3 and 4 were designed to elicit future forms such as those produced in the open interviews.

Table 5. Discourse Completion Test Items

Dialogue	Function
1. <i>Two people are sitting at the dinner table.</i> A: No one helps me around the house! B: I want to help. I _____ dishes.	Elicitation of <i>'ll</i>
2. <i>You and a fortune teller are speaking.</i> A: Tell me the name of the next president. B: The next president _____.	Elicitation of <i>will</i>
3. A: What's your plan for tonight? B: _____ dinner for my friends.	Elicitation of future
4. A: Tell me about your exercise plans. B: _____ tomorrow.	Elicitation of future

3.3.1 Procedures

Twenty-six NNS participants were interviewed individually and recorded. Participants were told they were going to answer a few questions about the role of education in their lives. Items 1 through 10 were asked in the exact order presented above in Table 4. In the case of non-native speakers, when participants were unable to understand the question, additional words or phrases were supplied for clarification, or the question was paraphrased without using *will, 'll, be going to, gonna*, present progressive, or future progressive. This did not occur frequently.

The discourse completion test was presented after the first 10 interview questions. In this task, participants were told that they would be participating in a role-play activity. They were informed that the researcher was going to show them some dialogues and that the researcher would play the role of "A" and that they would play the role of "B". They were instructed to complete the dialogue as they would in a real conversation. They were shown each dialogue and

were allowed to read along as the researcher read aloud the role of “A.” They were then required to read the role of “B” aloud, supplying the missing information.

The total duration of the interviews including both the open questions and the DCT portion was four to ten minutes.

The elicited production set was initially piloted with different participants from those in the actual study to ensure that the items elicited the target responses. During the pilot run both native and non-native participants occasionally mis-read the dialogue in DCT 3, substituting *for my friends* with *with my friends* and thus using an inappropriate verb such as *go* or *have* instead of a verb such as *make*, *cook* or *prepare*. However, this occurrence was not frequent, and in most cases the participants corrected themselves. Therefore, it was not deemed necessary to modify this dialogue.

Chapter 4. Analysis and Discussion of Results

4.1 Production of future forms by NNS participants during conversation class³

4.1.1 Futurity and Modality

As you may recall from Chapter 2, futurity and modality are not completely separate notions, and some degree of modality is inherent in all future expression. Nevertheless, researchers recognize that in some cases temporal expression is the primary meaning of a form within a certain context whereas in others modality is expressed more overtly. Both are expressed with the forms examined in this study, and the distribution is displayed in Table 6.

Table 6. Expressions produced by NNS participants in a classroom according to function

Function	Forms						Total
	<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>Going to/ gonna</i>	Mental Verbs	Modals	Present Tense	
intention	5	1	12			2	20
prediction	20	2	23	6		21	72
volition/ desire	1		1	19	1		22
necessity/ obligation				14	2		16
possibility							
ability	1				10		11
polite request					2		2
if-clause				1		10	11
command			1				1
generic statement						1	1
Total	27	3	37	40	15	31	156

The notions most commonly expressed with future forms in the classroom environment were prediction, followed by volition/desire and then intention. *Will* and *going to* along with the

³ It is interesting to note that the future forms used by the instructor in the classroom were also recorded although the data is not included in this study. Future expression was frequent because of the need to provide direction for the students, and the instructor used *gonna* almost exclusively throughout the recordings.

present tense were preferred to express the future and to express intentions. Example (35) illustrates how *will* is used for prediction.

(35) *Tomorrow you **will** have a lot of homework...*

Two students were discussing a presentation they had to give in their conversation class. This response followed the other student's comments on the heavy workload she had in all of her classes.

Example (36) illustrates how *will* is used to express intention.

(36) *I **will** show you about how can it be good for us.*

This utterance was produced by a student who was informing the class about a topic she was planning to bring the following week for a persuasive presentation. Her topic was vegetarianism.

While some modality is implicit in the speaker's statement, given that intention is a form of volition, the degree of modality is much lower than in example (37), drawn from the DCT portion of this study:

(37) *I want to help. **I'll** do the dishes.*

In (37), the context shows that the speaker is expressing a desire to help through this action, whereas in (36) the context is one of a plan rather than a desire.

In a few cases modality was added to statements of prediction through various devices such as an adverb or through the type of verb. Example (38) illustrates:

A student responded to a question about how he would react to a friend's betrayal:

(38) *Maybe I **will** get upset for a while.*

This statement is a prediction, but the use of *maybe* adds a strong degree of modality that was missing in (35) and (36).

Going to is used in a similar fashion to *will* as demonstrated in (39).

(39) *My mother is going to come. Oh great!*

In this case, a student was acting out her reaction to her husband's announcement that his mother was to visit. This student used the form *going to* simply to announce a future event.

The more overt sense of modality found in expressions of volition and desire was expressed almost exclusively by mental verbs. Examples (40) and (41) illustrate how *want* is used in this sense.

(40) I *want* to introduce or make a conscience for stop this problem.

(41) I really *want* that they feel the music.

Mental verbs were also used in multiple instances to express necessity and obligation, as shown in example (42).

(42) I *need* to make a list of the parts...

A type of expression frequently produced by the speakers from this group was the conditional. In these cases, the present tense was used in the *if*-clause of the sentence and either *will* or the present tense was used in the result clause. Examples (43) and (44) illustrate:

(43) Like if *you change* the type of music I *will think* of like another memory...

(44) If you *want* go to the green maybe you *go* to the east side...

When presented with a topic which should have led to references to the long term future, speakers tended to avoid this by reverting to the conditional. On one occasion, for example, the participants were presented with the debate topic: *Will the world be a better or worse place 50 years from now?* While it is not unusual for hypothetical expressions to be used to discuss the long-term future, in this case the entire conversation reverted to a discussion of a hypothetical future with no instances of any straightforward assertions or predictions about the state of the world in 50 years. In other words, the student talked about what would happen if the ozone layer

were completely destroyed or the earth's water supply ran out, rather than stating that they believed it was going to happen. Example (45) illustrates.

(45) If it isn't water, the people couldn't live.

The present tense was also sometimes used by this group as a future-tense marker as shown in Example (46) and Example (47).

(46) ...tomorrow *is* the final test.

(47) Monday *is* Columbus Day and there *is* class?

Among these speakers, *is* was the present tense form most commonly used to express the future (63%), in addition to some other verbs, such as the one illustrated in Example (48).

(48) I *start* [tomorrow].

Overall, with the exception of a few instances of mental verbs, the most frequently selected forms for prediction and intention were *will*, *going to* and the present tense. Specifically, 25 were *will*, 35 were *going to*, and 23 were present tense. Altogether, the total number of instances of these forms and intention was 83, or 91% of all instances expressing prediction and intention. The only apparent distinction made between the forms was the use of the present tense for conditional expressions.

4.1.2 Time-frames

The time-frames expressed by the 5 NNS speakers through the production of the 6 most frequently produced language forms are displayed in Table 7. Although participants were allowed, and in some instances encouraged, to discuss the medium- or long-term future, the short-term future was referred to the most frequently by far. In some cases when the long-term would have been appropriate, speakers chose instead to revert to conditional forms and spoke

hypothetically, eliminating the time-frame altogether. While these responses were not incorrect, they fell outside the scope of the study. These responses will be discussed later in this chapter.

Table 7. Future time-frames referred to by 5 NNS participants

Time-Frame	Forms						Total
	<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>Going to/ gonna</i>	Mental Verbs	Modals	Present Tense	
short-term	11	1	27	33	13	24	110
medium-term	1		3	3			7
long-term			3	1			4
no specific term	15	2	4	3	2	10	36
Total	27	3	37	40	15	34	156

Speakers also produced some language referring to the future in general without specifying a specific time-frame as in Example (49).

(49) Cloning animals will help farmer....

In this case, it is not possible to determine whether the speaker was thinking in the medium- or long-term. In fact, even the short-time could be a possible interpretation if the speaker believes the event is imminent.

4.1.3 Subject type

In natural speech production, NNS participants used first, second, and third person subjects in their speech. Table 8 displays the types of subject co-occurring with the target forms produced by these speakers. First person subjects were produced far more frequently, and second and third person subjects appeared less often, with approximately the same frequency. Among NNS participants, there does not appear to be a relationship between the subject and the selected future form either in terms of person or noun/pronoun form.

Table 8. Production according to subject type

subject type	Forms			Mental Verbs	Modals	Present Tense	Total
	<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>Going to/ gonna</i>				
1st person	11	2	24	29	8	9	83
2nd person	3	1	5	6	6	8	29
3rd person-noun	9		8	2	1	7	27
3rd sing-pronoun				3		9	12
Total	23	3	37	40	15	0	151

The results from the data collected in the classroom lead to the following observations:

- As expected, it appears that these non-native speakers used *will* and *going to* primarily as a tense marker. This also appears to be true for present tense forms outside of conditional expressions.
- As expected, there is an absence of futurate forms as in *the Red Sox play/are playing tomorrow*.
- Unexpectedly, there is a complete absence of production of epistemic modals by this group. Only deontic modals were produced.
- Mental verbs were used quite frequently to express both deontic and epistemic modality.
- Subject type did not seem to have any bearing on the forms selected by these participants.

The data collected through classroom observation provided us with some information as to the production of future forms by non-native speakers. For a greater understanding of the differences between native and non-native speakers' future expressions, the additional data collected in the interview portion of the study will provide a more complete picture.

4.2 Results of Interview

4.2.1 Overall frequencies: Items 3,4,6,8,9,and 10

Counts and percentages of utterances of forms in each category were calculated for NS and NNS participants. In total, NS participants produced 247 utterances and NNS participants produced 275 utterances. Table 9 displays the percentages of the forms produced by the NS and the NNS groups. The forms produced most frequently by the NS group were non-finite verbs (21%) and *'ll* (16%), and the form produced the least frequently was *will* (3%). The NNS group, on the other hand, used mental verbs more than any other form (23%), followed by *will* (19%). The forms produced with least frequency by the NNS group were *'ll* (3%) and progressive (3%). Utterances with *gonna/going to* were only slightly more frequent among the NS group (11%) than the NNS group (9%). Progressive forms were more frequent among the NS group (8%) than the NNS group (3%) though neither group produced progressive forms frequently. Present tense forms were more frequent among the NNS group (17%) than the NS group (12%) and both groups produced equal percentages of forms in the Other category (13%).

4.2.2 Differences in frequencies by NS and NNS groups

Figure 1 displays the percentages of the forms produced the most and least frequently by both groups, and the differences in percentage between the two groups for these forms. As shown in Figure 1, the greatest difference in production between the two groups was in the *will* and *'ll* categories. The NNS group produced *will* far more frequently than the NS group and the NS group produced *'ll* more frequently than the NNS group. The difference in the production of mental verbs is worth mentioning as well. The NNS group used mental verbs more than any other form in a total of 64 total utterances, or 23%. Since mental verbs account for only 10% of the NS responses, the difference between the two groups is noteworthy. The difference in production of nonfinite and progressive forms by the NS and the NNS groups is not as salient.

Table 9. Percentages of Responses According to Form for All Participants

		Forms									
Total Participants		<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>gonna going to</i>	Prog	Mental Verbs	Modals	Nonfinite	Present Verbs	Other	TOTAL
NS	n=27	3%	16%	11%	8%	10%	7%	21%	12%	13%	100%
NNS	n=26	19%	3%	9%	3%	23%	4%	13%	17%	13%	100%

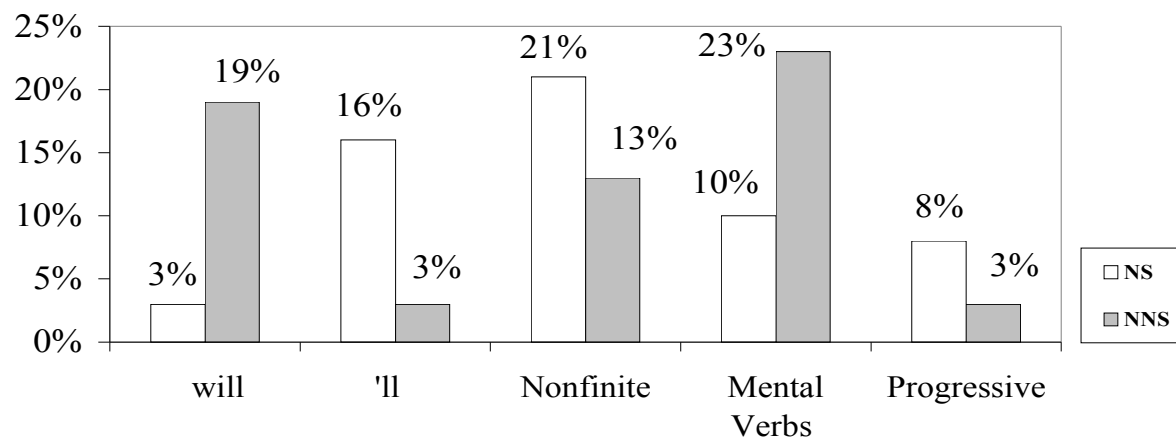


Figure 1: Difference in percentage between NS and NNS for most and least frequently produced forms

Although these differences are interesting, it is important to look not only at frequencies, but also at the context in which the two groups produced each form. In this regard, Billmyer and Varghese (2006: 526) note the “importance of keeping situational findings independent [because] combining them can efface the effects of situational variability.”

4.2.3 Differences in production according to item

4.2.3.1 Items 3 and 10: Nonfinite verb forms

For the sake of clarity, items 3 and 10 are repeated here:

Item 3: In terms of your education, where do you see yourself in 5 years?

Item 10: What are your ultimate education goals?

An examination of the distribution of the responses in the nonfinite category produced by native speakers provides some insight into how they select the forms they use. Although native-speakers used nonfinite verbs more than any other form, the majority of these utterances, 43 out of 51 (84%), were responses to items 3, 4 and 10. A review of the results for items 3 and 10 will be presented here. Item 4 will be covered later in the chapter. As can be seen in Table 10, for each item a specific form from within the nonfinite category was produced more frequently than the rest.

Table 10. Responses from Non-finite verb category

Item	NS		NNS	
	Item 3: In terms of your education, where do you see yourself in 5 years?	Bare Infinitive Participle	8% 92%	Bare Infinitive Participle
Item 10: What are your ultimate education goals?	Bare Infinitive Infinitive Participle 5%	16% 79% 5%	Bare Infinitive Infinitive Participle	11% 14% 0%

Items 3 and 10 both refer to the distant future and it appears that the structure of these items prompted NS participants to use a specific form. For the most part, members of the NS

group did not include the prompt in their answers, yet the verb forms selected for their answers were the forms that would have to be used had they formed complete sentences using the prompt.

Example (50) is a case in point.

(50) I3⁴: In terms of your education, **where do you see yourself** in 5 years?

A1: Still *doing* research probably.

A2: Hopefully, *teaching* at a middle school here in El Paso.

Adding the phrases produced in the respondents' answers to the structure of the original items results in the following well-formed English sentences as seen in (51) and (52):

(51) **In five years I see myself** *doing* research.

(52) **In five years I see myself** *teaching* at a middle school here in El Paso.

Since the NS group used the structure from the original item to form their responses, this explains not only the frequent production of participles in response to this item but also the absence of other forms. The frequent use of infinitives in response to item 10 as shown in example (53) is another instance of this response type.

(53) I10: What **are your ultimate** education **goals**?

A1: It's just *to be* a teacher, *to influence*, *to impact*.

A2: *To have* a degree in Criminal Justice.

Adding the infinitive form used in these responses to the structure in the question results in the sentence seen in (54) and (55):

(54) **My ultimate goal is** *to be* a teacher, *to influence*, *to impact*.

(55) **My ultimate goal is** *to have* a degree in Criminal Justice.

⁴ Throughout the study *I + number* refers to the interview item. Therefore, I3 refers to Item 3, I10 refers to Item 10 and so on. *A+number* refers to an answer given in response to the item. The number following *A* is used to distinguish multiple answers to the same item.

For NNS participants on the other hand, the structure of the question did not appear to affect their responses. NNS participants used mental verbs in their responses to item 3 more than any other type, as illustrated in Example (56).

(56) I3: In terms of your education, *where do you see yourself* in 5 years?

A1: *I think* in 5 years *I hope* work in some company.

A2: *I hope I finish* my doctorate and *I hope* when I finish the classes *I want to finish* also my disser, dissertation.

Twelve of the NNS participants used the phrase *5 years* in their responses. For NNS participants, it appears that the time phrase *in 5 years* served to guide production, but the structure of the question did not. NNS responses to item 10 provide further evidence, as shown in Example (57).

(57) I10: What **are your ultimate** education **goals**?

A1: Well *I hope take* the master of engineering.

A2: *I want to study* my master degree.

There were some instances of NNS respondents producing forms consistent with those of the NS group for items 3 and 10. Five NNS respondents answered item 10 with an infinitive and 7 respondents answered item 3 with a participle. Nonetheless, the majority of the responses from the NNS group were similar to those in Examples (56-57).

4.2.3.2 Items 4, 6, 8, and 9: *will, 'll, going to*

Once again, for clarity, the items to be discussed in this section are repeated here:

Item 4: Tell me about your **plans** *after this class finishes*.

Item 6: What about later tonight?

Item 8: What kind of final exam do you **expect** from this instructor?

Item 9: What are your **expectations** *for the next class you take*?

The forms produced in response to these items by both groups are displayed in table 11.

Table 11. Percentages of responses for items 4,6,8,and 9.

	<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>gonna going to</i>	Prog	Mental Verbs	Modals	Nonfinite	Present	Other	Total
Item 4										
NNS	33%	4%	12%	6%	16%	0%	16%	14%	0%	100%
NS	5%	12%	10%	21%	5%	3%	19%	19%	5%	100%
Item 6										
NNS	17%	6%	13%	6%	6%	4%	4%	27%	17%	100%
NS	3%	39%	5%	0%	3%	0%	0%	21%	29%	100%
Item 8										
NNS	10%	0%	12%	0%	29%	10%	12%	14%	14%	100%
NS	5%	19%	30%	3%	5%	5%	5%	5%	22%	100%
Item 9										
NNS	30%	4%	10%	2%	20%	2%	8%	16%	8%	100%
NS	2%	12%	16%	5%	23%	16%	14%	5%	7%	100%

Among NS participants, item 4 did not seem to prompt any particular form, and responses were scattered across the categories, mainly among *ll*, *going/gonna*, progressive, infinitive/gerund, and present tense. Notably infrequent from this list is *will*, the preferred category for many NNS participants for most questions. The NS group also produced few responses from the modal category. The variety of responses indicates that this question allows for multiple forms of future expression, yet it appears that *will* is not one of the options. It should also be noted that mental verbs, which were used by the NNS group fairly frequently, were not a frequent choice among native speakers despite the use of *plan* as a verb by three NS participants.

In response to item 9, *what are your expectations for the next class you take*, 23% of the responses from the NS group were from the mental verb category. Responses containing mental verbs were more frequent for this question than for any of the other questions. In view of the

overall infrequency of mental verbs in responses from the NS group, it is likely that the higher production in response to this question is due to the use of the mental verb *expect* prompted by the noun *expectations* in the question. Five participants each used *expect* once in their responses to question 5, and only 1 other instance of *expect* was produced in response to any of the other questions except question 4 which included the verb *expect* as a prompt. Mental verbs aside, NS responses to question 5 were distributed across the *going to/gonna*, modal, and nonfinite categories with only 1 instance of *will* produced. It is worth noting that this is the only question besides 1 and 6 that did not yield many instances of *'ll*, possibly because speakers responded to the prompt instead. Example (58) presents one interesting response from an NS participant who produced both forms:

(58) I9: What are your *expectations* for the next class you take?

A1: *I'll expect* that *I'll* probably learn a lot.

In this case, the speaker was prompted to use *expect* in his response, but at the same time was inclined to use the *'ll* form. As a result, a “double future” was produced. A more typical response is seen in (59):

(59) I9: What are your *expectations* for the next class you take?

A1: *I'm gonna try*, maybe, um, knock off most of my minor...

Items 4 and 9 yielded the most instances of *will* in the NNS group, 33% and 30% respectively. Both items referred to the medium-term future and were structured similarly, with a noun prompt (i.e., plans, expectations, respectively) in addition to another phrase prompting for the future. In both cases, respondents could have used the noun in their responses either by converting it into a verb or keeping it as a noun. None of the NNS group used *plan* as a verb in

their responses to item 4. Only two speakers used the word *plan* in their response, maintaining the noun form and adding present tense *be* + infinitive, as shown in Example (60).

(60) I4: Tell me about your **plans** *after this class finishes*.

A1: My *plan* is to attend classes.

A2: My *plans* are...I have two *plans*. One is to keep working...

For the most part, the NNS group answered with *will* (33%), adding either the time phrase from the original question or something else altogether as shown in Example (61).

(61) I4: Tell me about your **plans** *after this class finishes*.

A1: ...if I don't take the TOEFL, I *will take* another course.

A2: I *will find* a job in Juarez, yeah, because...

Question 5 yielded similar results, as illustrated in Example (62).

(62) I9: What are your **expectations** *for the next class you take?*

A1: The class I *will take will connect* with my future job.

A2: I *will take* the other listening and the other writing and *maybe I will take* the TOEFL again.

Among the NNS group, one difference in the responses for items 4 and 9 is that, unlike *plan* in question 4, *expectations* in question 9 prompted some speakers to use the verb *expect* in their responses. Four speakers (15%) answered with *expect* and two (8%) answered using *expectations*. Overall, questions 4 and 9 yielded similar results for the NNS group. (See Table 11).

Item 6, a question referring to the extreme short-term, was structured as a follow-up question to a previous filler question and it provided no verb or noun that could influence respondents' verb forms. Both the filler and follow-up questions are provided in (63a) and (63b):

(63) a. Filler question: Different people have different study habits. When do you usually study?

b. Follow-up question 6: What about later tonight?

The format may have had some impact on the number of non-verb answers for both groups. This would account for the higher number of responses in the *Other* category for this item since non-verb answers were placed in this category along with certain other forms. This increase in responses for the Other category is shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Total Responses from *Other* Category.

	<i>Total</i>	<i>Item 3</i>	<i>Item 4</i>	<i>Item 6</i>	<i>Item 8</i>	<i>Item 9</i>	<i>Item 10</i>
NS n=27	33	8	3	11	8	3	0
NNS n=26	19	3	0	8	6	4	3

Besides the *Other* category, none of the verb forms produced by the participants were prompted by a verb or noun from within the question. Table 13 shows the distribution of responses for both the NS and NNS group. The majority of the responses from the NS group were instances of *ll* (15 instances or 39%). Aside from the *Other* category, the only category with a substantial number of instances was the present tense (8 responses). Responses from the NNS group were distributed a little more evenly across the categories, with the highest concentration found in the present tense and *will* categories.

Table 13. Percentages of Responses According to Form: Item 6

	<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>gonna going to</i>	Prog	Mental Verbs	Modals	Non-finite	Present	Other	Total
NS n=27	3%	39%	5%	0%	3%	0%	0%	21%	29%	100%

NNS											
n=26	17%	6%	13%	6%	6%	4%	4%	27%	17%	100%	

Only 3 instances of mental verbs were produced by the NNS group in response to item 6, making it the only item of the 6 that did not result in frequent mental-verb production by the NNS group. Item 8, *what kind of final exam do you expect from this instructor*, asked participants about the medium-term future. The question included a mental verb, *expect*. This made it the one question that was structured around a form from one of the future-form categories. An additional distinction of item 8 was that it was possible to respond in the first person with a mental verb, or in the third person singular using *the exam* as the subject. The result was different for the two groups. Examples (64-65) illustrate typical NS and NNS responses.

(64) I8 What kind of final exam do you expect from this instructor?

NNS: *I expect for from her eh an essays...*

(65) I8: What kind of final exam do you expect from this instructor?

NS: *It's gonna be a multiple choice for sure...*

Nine of the NNS speakers responded with a mental verb. Of those participants, 7 each used *expect* specifically in one utterance each. In the NS group, however, very few participants seemed to be influenced by the verb prompt. There were three utterances from three different participants containing the verb *expect*--one from the mental verb category (*I expect it's...*), one from the progressive category, (*I'll probably be expecting...*) and one from the modal category (*I would expect...*). Rather than answer in the first person, most used the personal pronoun *it* as the subject referring to the exam. This led to an interesting change from the other questions. Eleven

participants answered using *gonna* as in (65), and 7 participants, used *'ll*. Only six respondents answered in the first person.

4.2.4 Differences in production according to form

4.2.4.1 Modals, Present tense and Progressive

Across the interview items, the use of modals for future expression was not particularly frequent in either the NS or the NNS group. However, there were differences in the ways in which modals were used. NNS production was limited to four forms: 6 instances of *can*, four instances of *would like*, 1 instance of (*would*) *rather*, and one instance of *could*. All instances of *can* and *could* were used as deontic modals. On the other hand, NS participants used both deontic and epistemic modals, and, in more than one case, used *would* as an odd substitute for *will*, possibly as a less forceful option. One such example is presented in (66).

(66) I4: Tell me about your plans after this class finishes.

A1: Getting ready for vacation and then spring *would be* my last semester.

In (67) there is no obvious reason for using *would* rather than *will*, except perhaps to express the uncertainty about what may really happen. Another epistemic modal, produced 6 times by the NS group and not once by the NNS group, is the use of *should* in a predictive sense. Examples (68) and (69) illustrate.

(68) I9: What are your expectations for the next class you take?

A: The next class *should be* a little more difficult...

(69) I3: Where do you see yourself in 5 years?

A: Well, by then I *should be* out of school...

Both groups produced some present tense responses to all questions, and it was fairly consistent between the two groups. The same cannot be said about progressive forms which

were almost non-existent among the NNS group. Only 3 speakers used a progressive form and two of these speakers used it only once. Among the NS group, progressive forms were somewhat more frequent (17 instances). These utterances included both present progressive and future progressive, and a variety of future progressive forms were used including, *'ll be + verb + ing*, *gonna be + verb + ing*, and *modal + be + verb + ing*. However, in spite of the variety of future progressive expressions, this category only accounted for 7% of all NS production.

4.2.4.2 *Will* and *'ll*

It is clear that native-speakers tend to use *'ll* and non-native speakers do not. More importantly, it is also evident that non-native speakers use *will*, and that native speakers do not, with a few exceptions. It is therefore important to examine these exceptions to understand what conditions allow for *will* among native speakers. There were only 7 instances of *will* produced by 3 NS participants. In one case, *will* was used with a third person noun (*school*) which distinguishes it from the majority of the responses in the study, which almost exclusively contained first person pronouns. In several NS responses, *will* was used emphatically, and the word was stressed by the speaker within the sentence. Example (70) illustrates:

(70) What about later tonight?

I *will* be hittin the math books.

In (70), the speaker stressed *will* emphatically.

Example (71) illustrates a second case.

(71) Tell me about your plans after this class finishes.

I *will* start taking 5 classes in the fall.

In example (71), a distinct pause between the utterance of *will* and the verb that followed suggests that the use of the uncontracted form of *'ll* was a means of buying time while the

speaker decided which verb to use. Overall, in the few cases in which *will* was used with a first person pronoun, it appears that *will* was selected for a specific purpose, either to emphasize or to buy time, and that it is not simply interchangeable with the default form, *'ll*.

4.2.5 Summary observations--interview

The results of the open-ended interview items provide further information about the production of future expressions by non-native speakers, as well as shedding new light on the production of native speakers:

- Non-native speakers produced *will* more frequently than native speakers.
- There did not appear to be a difference between the use of the present tense among native and non-native speakers.
- The use of the progressive was almost non-existent in the language produced by the non-native speakers as expected.
- Native speakers produced progressive forms, though not extensively.
- Native speakers produced a variety of future forms with the exception of *will*.
- Native speakers did not rely on mental verbs nearly as much as non-native speakers.
- Non-native speakers used mental verbs more than any other form.
- Native speakers produced *will* in a few specific instances, either for emphasis or to buy time.
- Native speakers used the contracted *'ll* form with subject pronouns as expected.
- Modal use among non-native speakers was limited to deontic modals expressing possibility and modals expressing desire. Epistemic modals were non-existent. Modal use among native speakers was not frequent but included both deontic and epistemic modals.

- Unexpectedly, in some cases, the structure of the question seemed to lead native speakers, but not non-native speakers, to produce a specific form. This occurred in cases where the structure required non-finite forms.

To fully understand the use of *will* among native speakers, it is also necessary to know if there is a context in which native-speakers would consistently use *will* rather than *'ll*, indicating that the two forms are different in meaning. The results of the discourse completion test will help shed light on this matter.

4.3 DCT questions 1-4

The discourse completion test consisted of four dialogues, each designed to elicit a type of expression. The dialogues as presented in chapter 3 are repeated here in Table 14.

Table 14. DCT Items

Dialogue	Function
1. <i>Two people are sitting at the dinner table.</i> A: No one helps me around the house! B: I want to help. I _____ dishes.	Elicitation of <i>'ll</i>
2. <i>You are a fortune teller.</i> A: Tell me the name of the next president. B: The next president _____.	Elicitation of <i>will</i>
3. A: What's your plan for tonight? B: _____ dinner for my friends.	Elicitation of future
4. A: Tell me about your exercise plans. B: _____ tomorrow.	Elicitation of future

In DCT 1, the dialogue prompts for an offer of assistance. The response requires an expression of intention and volition which means native speakers should most likely use *'ll* to express willingness. In DCT 2, the scenario involving a fortune teller requires that the response be a

prediction, and it favors one of absolute certainty because of the power of a fortune teller to foresee the future. In contrast, DCT 3 and DCT 4 were designed to elicit future forms consistent with the future expressions produced in the open interviews. In these cases more than one form is possible, but in keeping with the native-speaker usage in the interview questions, *will* should be excluded as an option. Table 14 summarizes the results of the Discourse Completion Test.

In response to DCT 1, 59% of the responses from the NS group included *'ll* to express intention and volition. Most speakers responded as in (72):

(72) A: Nobody helps me around the house!

B: I want to help. *I'll wash the dishes.*

The remaining 41% of the responses consisted of 5 instances of modals such as *can* or *could*, 3 instances of simple present, one mental verb, and 2 instances of *will*. The mental verb was used to express volition (73):

(73) A: Nobody helps me around the house!

B: I want to help. *I wanna do the dishes.*

In (74), the present tense was used to express a general truth that had nothing to do with volition, nor did it overtly express intention other than a possible implied intention.

(74) A: Nobody helps me around the house!

B: I want to help. *I love dishes.* (Possible implied meaning: I love dishes, so I will do them.)

Although this implied meaning is possible, it is not completely clear if this was the intended meaning of the speaker.

Table 15. Percentages of Responses According to Form: Discourse Completion Test

Item	Group	<i>will</i>	<i>'ll</i>	<i>Gonna Going to</i>	Prog	Mental Verbs	Modals	Nonfinite Verbs	Pres	Pres Ungram	Other	TOTAL
DCT 1	NS	7%	59%	0%	0%	0%	19%	0%	15%	0%	0%	100%
	NNS	8%	8%	4%	0%	15%	31%	0%	8%	23%	4%	100%
DCT 2	NS	85%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	12%	0%	8%	100%
	NNS	31%	0%	12%	0%	8%	4%	0%	35%	0%	12%	100%
DCT 3	NS	7%	11%	30%	11%	4%	0%	30%	0%	0%	7%	100%
	NNS	31%	8%	27%	0%	8%	0%	15%	4%	4%	4%	100%
DCT 4	NS	4%	26%	22%	19%	15%	0%	7%	0%	0%	7%	100%
	NNS	50%	12%	23%	0%	8%	0%	8%	0%	0%	0%	100%

It is clear that *'ll*, the contracted form of *will*, is the primary means of expressing a willingness to help i.e. volition/intention among native-speakers. Again, the full form *will* is only used in isolated cases by native speakers, most likely for emphasis although this is difficult to determine in a discourse completion test because the stress patterns and intonation of the speakers are not the same as in natural speech.

By contrast, it appears that most non-native speakers did not consider *will* or *'ll* as an option to express volition. Modals and present tense expressions made up 62% of the responses of the NNS group. Modals accounted for 31%, with most instances consisting of *can*, with the exception of one *could* and one *rather (would rather)*. Modals were used to express possibility and preference, but not volition. In two instances, presented in (75) and (76), the present tense was used to express a general truth allowing the speaker to avoid offering assistance, thereby indirectly expressing a lack of volition or intention.

(75) A: Nobody helps me around the house!

B: I want to help. *But I don't know where are the dishes.*

(76) A: Nobody helps me around the house!

B: I want to help. *But I don't like to wash dishes.*

Twenty-three percent of the NNS group used the simple present tense in the response in a way that is most likely ungrammatical. Example (77) illustrates.

(77) A: Nobody helps me around the house!

B: I want to help. *I wash the dishes.*

If, as in the case of native speakers, the present tense is being used to express a fact, then its use is appropriate. However, because the primary interpretation of the dialogue is to use an expression of volition and intention, it is more likely that the NNS group used the present tense

in this sense. In that case, non-native speakers do not have the notion of *will* or *'ll* as modal expression of volition, and instead resort to the present tense which is not used in English for this purpose, and is therefore incorrect.

DCT 2 consisted of the following dialogue:

You are a fortune teller.

A: Tell me the name of the next president.

B: The next president _____.

In response to DCT 2, the NS group overwhelmingly produced *will* in their responses. Eighty-five percent of the responses contained *will*, making this the only item in the entire study where *will* was the dominant form among native speakers. This demonstrates that another use of *will* among native speakers is to express extreme certainty, which is not inconsistent with its use as an emphatic future form. The selection of this form over the contracted form may also be motivated by the use of a third person noun rather than a first person personal pronoun. This is consistent with the data from the open interview portion of the study. In either case, no other form figured prominently among the responses. This would suggest that the total certainty expressed in the response prompted NS speakers to select *will* as an epistemic modal, and not any other type of future expression.

Responses among the NNS group were split fairly evenly between *will* and the present tense at 31% and 35% respectively. Example (78) illustrates how *will* was typically used.

(78) You are a fortune teller.

A: Tell me the name of the next president.

B: The next president will be Obama.

Example (79) illustrates the most common present tense response among the NNS group:

(79) You are a fortune teller.

A: Tell me the name of the next president.

B: The next president *is Barak Obama*.

The certainty provided by the use of a fortune teller eliminated the need for mental verbs and speakers used *will* without tempering their responses as they had in the open interviews.

DCT 3 yielded the expected responses among native speakers; they produced utterances with both *'ll*, and *gonna*. Some progressive forms were produced; however this form did not dominate as expected. There were no marked differences between native and non-native responses to this item other than the use of *'ll* vs *will*, which is consistent with the data from the open interview. Finally, DCT 4 containing the future prompt *tomorrow*, elicited a variety of future expressions among the NS group while 50% of NNS participants' responses contained *will*.

4.3.1 Summary of results for DCT

The additional information provided by the DCT portion of the interview paints a clearer picture of the differences in the use of *will* between native and non-native speakers:

- Most non-native speakers in this study did not use *'ll* or *will* as a means of expressing volition the way *'ll* is used by native speakers.
- Native speakers use *will* specifically to express and emphasize certain knowledge about the event it refers to. Non-native speakers in this study used *will* even when no emphasis was meant.

4.4 Summary

The data collected in each part of this study reveal some interesting features of both native and non-native production of future forms. Key observations are as follows:

- In a classroom:
 - Non-native speakers in this study used *will* as a future-tense marker and not as a modal.

- Non-native speakers in this study did not produce futurate forms, such as *the Red Sox play tomorrow*.
- Non-native speakers in this study did not use subject type (pronoun or noun) as a consideration when selecting a future form.
- Non-native speakers in this study produced a small number of deontic modals but not epistemic modals.
- Non-native speakers in this study used mental verbs to express modality.
- In an open question interview:
 - Non-native speakers in this study produced *will* more frequently than native-speakers, and they used it to express futurity in a way not expressed by native speakers.
 - Both non-native and native speakers in this study used the present tense in a similar way, except in cases where non-native speakers used it inappropriately to express volition.
 - Non-native speakers in this study did not use progressive forms while native-speakers did.
 - Native-speakers produced a variety of future forms, with the exception of *will* which was reserved for very specific cases (emphasis and buying time).
 - Native-speakers did not rely on mental verbs as much as non-native speakers.
 - Native speakers used *will* in a few specific instances, either for emphasis or to buy time.
 - Non-native speakers in this study did not use subject type (pronoun or noun) as a consideration when selecting a future form. Native speakers were influenced by the presence of subject pronouns.
 - Non-native speakers in this study produced few deontic modals and no epistemic modals. Native speakers used modals sparingly, but they included both deontic and epistemic modals.
 - Non-native speakers in this study used mental verbs more than any other form.
 - Interestingly, native-speakers were influenced by the structure of the question when the structure prompted a non-finite form, whereas, non-native speakers in this study unexpectedly did not.

- In a Discourse Completion Test
 - Non-native speakers in this study used *will* when no emphasis was intended.
 - Non-native speakers in this study did not use *'ll* or *will* as a means of expressing intention and volition, but native speakers used *'ll* for this purpose.
 - Native speakers used *will* specifically to express and emphasize certain knowledge about the event it referred to.
 - Native speakers also used *'ll* to express intention and volition.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

A summary of the expectations and results of this study is presented in Table 15 below. The first column contains the expected outcomes as presented in Chapter 2. The second column describes the results of first part of the study dealing with authentic data collected in a L2 English classroom. The third column presents the results of the second part of the study involving native and non-native speakers' responses to open questions in an interview. The fourth column describes the results of the third part of the study dealing with the discourse completion test.

The first prediction was that the non-native speakers in this study would use *will* as a future marker without an understanding of its modality, and, as a result, they would over-produce *will* and use it inappropriately. This turned out to be true in a classroom setting and in an interview format. They produced this form far more frequently than native-speakers did, and they used it when the event did not meet native-speaker criteria for this form, such as a desire to emphasize, to buy time for processing, or to express extreme certainty. In addition, they did not use *will* or *'ll* to express intention and volition, underscoring their interpretation of *will* as a future-tense marker rather than a modal.

A second expectation was that non-native speakers in this study would either refrain from using futurate forms or use them inappropriately. This expectation was met to some extent, but not completely. The non-native speakers did not use futurate forms as they were described in Chapter 2 as expected, but they did not use them inappropriately either. Present tense forms were used frequently by both native and non-native speakers in this study, revealing no notable difference between the groups for the most part, with the exception of the ungrammatical use of

Table 16. Summary of results for each portion of the study.

Expected Outcome	Authentic	Results of the three data collection methods	
		Open-ended interview questions	Discourse Completion Test
Non-native speakers may overproduce <i>will</i> or use it inappropriately.	Non-native speakers in this study used the <i>will</i> form primarily as a future-tense marker.	Non-native speakers in this study produced <i>will</i> more frequently than native-speakers.	Non-native speakers in this study used <i>will</i> even when no emphasis was intended. Furthermore, most non-native speakers did not use <i>'ll</i> or <i>will</i> as a means of expressing intention and volition the way native speakers used <i>'ll</i> .
Non-native speakers may fail to use produce futurate forms, or use them inappropriately.	As expected, there was an absence of futurate forms as described by the researchers in Chapter 2.	There did not appear to be a difference between the use of the present tense among native and non-native speakers. However, native speakers occasionally used progressive forms, but non-native speakers did not.	
Native speakers may use a wider variety of forms of future expression than non-native speakers.		Native speakers produced a variety of future forms with the exception of <i>will</i> . Native speakers did not rely on mental verbs as much as the non-native speakers in this study.	
Non-native speakers may produce future forms differently from native speakers in relation to personal pronouns.	Subject type (pronoun or noun) did not seem to have any bearing on the forms selected by these participants.	Native speakers used the contracted <i>'ll</i> form with subject pronouns.	

<p>Modal use among non-native adult speakers may include both deontic and epistemic modals.</p>	<p>Unexpectedly, epistemic modals were absent from production by this group. Only deontic modals were produced.</p>	<p>Modal use among non-native speakers was limited to deontic modals expressing possibility and modals expressing desire. Epistemic modals were non-existent. Modal use among native speakers was not frequent, but included both deontic and epistemic modals.</p>
<p>Additional observations</p>	<p>Mental verbs were used frequently to express both deontic and epistemic modality.</p>	<p>Non-native speakers used mental verbs more than any other form.</p> <p>In some cases, the structure of the question seemed to lead native speakers to produce a specific form. This occurred in cases where the structure required non-finite forms.</p>

the present to express volition and intention. Progressive forms were absent from non-native speaker production, resulting in a minor difference in production for this form. This was true of both the natural speech and the interview responses.

A third expectation was that native speakers would be sensitive to the nuanced differences among possible future forms and that as a result they would use a variety of future forms in their speech. This occurred as expected, and this sensitivity is further evidenced by the minimal use of modals and other forms that can also express modality, such as mental verbs.

A fourth expectation was that native speakers' understanding of *will* as a modal would result in its production for specific cases. This proved to be true. Native speakers used *will* specifically to emphasize, to buy time, or to express certainty, and they otherwise avoided using this form at all.

A fifth prediction was that different processing considerations for native and non-native speakers would result in the production of different forms in relation to subject type. There was a clear relationship between the type of subject and the form chosen among native speakers, but not among non-native speakers. Native speakers used the contracted *'ll* form with subject pronouns, but non-native speakers did not. In terms of subject type, there does appear to be a difference in processing that affects production. This occurred in both the authentic and interview formats.

The final prediction was that modal use among non-native adult speakers would not be restricted to deontic modals as it is for first language child learners whose production is limited by cognitive restrictions. This was not evident in this study. In both natural speech and in response to interview questions, non-native speakers produced some deontic modals, but they did not produce any epistemic modals. This indicates that non-native speakers acquire deontic

modals first, and that epistemic modals are unavailable even to fairly advanced speakers. Therefore, although adults do not have the same cognitive restrictions, there is evidently some other factor driving the order of acquisition of modals among adult English learners. This, in turn, led to another outcome that was not predicted. Non-native speakers used mental verbs to express modality, and, as a result, they produced this form more than the others and much more than the native-speakers did.

The aim of this thesis was to answer two questions. First, do L2 English learners use language forms to express the future that are different from those used by native speakers? The answer to this question is yes, for several reasons. First, a difference in the interpretation of future forms in terms of futurity and modality lead L2 English learners to use future forms, particularly *will*, differently from native speakers. One contributing factor to this variation is most likely the duality of *will* as both a future marker and as a modal as described by Sarkar (1998) and Diamond (1974). It appears that native speakers are sensitive to the different degrees of probability inherently expressed by different future forms including *will*, as Nehls (1988) proposed. Generally, only when native speakers wish to express extreme certainty or emphasis do they use *will* rather than *'ll*. In addition, for L2 English learners, the unexpected unavailability of epistemic modals, even at an advanced level, causes them to use an unusually large number of mental verbs compared to those used by native speakers. Finally, L2 English learners' failure to consider the type of subject as an important consideration for selecting a form also leads to a difference in production by these two groups.

Second, are the future language forms produced by L2 English learners in an interview format consistent with those produced in the classroom? It is clear that the answer to this question is yes as well. The type of forms used by L2 learners was fairly consistent regardless of

the type of speech, whether in response to interview questions or within the naturally occurring speech found in a classroom environment. In both of these environments, L2 English learners used *will* excessively and inappropriately. They did not use futurate forms, and they did not relate the forms they used to the type of subject they used. Finally, they did not use modals, but they used mental verbs to express modality. Therefore, the answer to the second research question is also yes.

This is understandable in view of the complexities of a language that does not have an overt future tense and therefore requires the use of other linguistic elements to express the future. In English, modality and futurity are intertwined both semantically and syntactically leading to a complicated system of future expression that is difficult for even advanced learners to grasp fully.

While this study has provided answers to the research questions put forth here, it has also provided a direction for potential future research. First, the possibility of an L1 influence on learners' selection of future forms should be explored. Furthermore, a more controlled study of a limited number of forms, *will*, *'ll*, *going to* and mental verbs, for example, could provide evidence of the statistical significance of the differences in native and non-native production of these forms. Finally, authentic data collected from native speakers would provide a more complete view of the production of future forms among this group. All in all, a continuing examination of native and non-native English speakers' forms of future expression can contribute to a greater understanding of the concept of tense and modality as a whole.

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Appendix A

Table 17. Interview: Total Utterances from both groups

	<i>will</i>	<i>'ll</i>	<i>gonna going to</i>	Prog	Mental Verbs	Modals	Nonfinite	Present Verbs	Other	TOTAL
NS n=27	7	39	27	20	24	17	51	29	33	247
NNS n=26	52	9	24	8	64	12	36	46	24	275
	58	43	48	23	80	29	86	59	52	522

Table 18. Interview: Total Utterances from NNS group

	<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>gonna going to</i>	Prog	Mental Verbs	Modals	Nonfinite	Present Verbs	Other	TOTAL
Item 3	6	2	1	1	15	2	7	12	3	49
Item 4	17	2	6	3	8	0	8	7	0	51
Item 6	8	3	6	3	3	2	2	13	8	48
Item 8	4	0	5	0	12	4	5	6	6	42
Item 9	15	2	5	1	10	1	4	8	4	50
Item 10	2	0	1	0	16	3	10	0	3	35
TOTAL	52	9	24	8	64	12	36	46	24	275

Table 19. Interview: Total Utterances from NS Group

	<i>will</i>	<i>ll</i>	<i>gonna going to</i>	Prog	Mental Verbs	Modals	Nonfinite	Present Verbs	Other	TOTAL
Item 3	0	3	0	5	2	2	13	3	8	36
Item 4	3	7	6	12	3	2	11	11	3	58
Item 6	1	15	2	0	1	0	0	8	11	38
Item 8	2	7	11	1	2	2	2	2	8	37
Item 9	1	5	7	2	10	7	6	2	3	43
Item 10	0	2	1	0	6	4	19	3	0	35
TOTAL	7	39	27	20	24	17	51	29	33	247

Curriculum Vita

Sabrina Mossman was born in San Francisco, California. The only daughter of Albert Mossman and Guillermina Soto, she grew up in Oakland California where she lived until age 16 when she moved to Cd. Juarez, Mexico. She graduated from Loretto Academy in El Paso, Texas in the spring of 1984 and entered the University of Texas at El Paso in the fall. After completing a bachelor's degree in psychology, she began working as an ESL instructor at Centro de Lenguas at the Universidad Autonoma de Ciudad Juarez in Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua Mexico. She continued working as an instructor and academic advisor at Centro de Lenguas for 15 years and joined the English Language Institute at the University of Texas at El Paso in 2005. Over the years she has resided in both Cd. Juarez and El Paso off and on. She continues working at the ELI as an instructor and academic coordinator. In the fall of 2006, she entered the graduate school at The University of Texas at El Paso.

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