Perfect Semantics:
How Universal Are Ibero-American Present Perfects?

Brenda Laca
Université Paris 8 - UMR 7023

1. Introduction

The semantics of perfects presents a number of interrelated puzzles which have received a lot of attention in recent years. At the heart of these puzzles lies the fact that Present Perfects usually exhibit a restricted distribution when compared to other perfect forms. This distribution can be described as an array of different 'readings' and it is subject to a considerable degree of cross-linguistic and dialectal variation. Portuguese and some American Spanish varieties make a very restricted use of the Present Perfect, and they are widely held to instantiate a stage of development in which Present Perfects only exhibit universal readings (Harris 1982, Squartini & Bertinetto 2000). On the basis of original descriptive work on a Brazilian Portuguese variety and of a comparison with data on two American Spanish varieties, Mexico and Río de la Plata Spanish, this paper shows that the Portuguese and the (restricted) Spanish Present Perfects differ in some crucial respects, and calls into question the assumption that universal readings constitute a stage in the development of perfects. Rather, what the varieties we study have in common is the fact that the Present Perfect has made little or no headway in the competition against the older, simple perfect form ('simple past'). In Portuguese, this has resulted in a special Present Perfect with a clearly universal profile and a number of pluractional characteristics. In the restrictive American Spanish varieties, by contrast, the Present Perfect exhibits both universal and existential/resultative readings, but it widely lacks obligatory contexts of occurrence and is not felicitous for reference to singular past events or their results.

This paper is also an attempt to bring nearer to each other two trends of research that tend to live in mutual ignorance: formal approaches to semantics, on the one hand, and descriptive research on grammaticalization, on the other. An enhanced awareness of the extent of cross-linguistic variation and of the diachronic processes involved in this variation could undoubtedly help formal linguists determine the point at which it is advisable to give up the search for cross-linguistically uniform meanings. Conversely, the standards of explicitness associated with formal linguistics could certainly contribute to a refinement of the generalizations proposed by grammaticalization theory.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, I will recall the different readings associated with "well-behaved" Perfects, illustrating them with (Standard-) European Spanish, and I will briefly review the rival formal accounts for Perfects. In so doing, I will try to bring out as precisely as possible what a "universal reading" is and under which conditions it surfaces. In section 3, I will take up the issue of variation and of non-well behaved Perfects. I will first explore those Present Perfects that are ambiguous between a perfect and a simple past configuration, and I will show that contemporary European Spanish usage instantiates this type. Section 4 is devoted to Portuguese and to the Ibero-American varieties whose Perfects are not "well-behaved" on account of their inability to be freely inserted in existential or resultative contexts. Section 5 concludes on a speculative note as to the differences between Portuguese and Spanish.

2. The semantics of perfect

2.1. Perfect readings

"Well-behaved" Present Perfects are characterized by the fact that they only occur felicitously in certain characteristic contexts, giving rise to the prototypical array of readings exemplified by the Standard European Spanish examples below. When expressing anteriority with regard to Speech Time, they convey that the occurrence of the event described in the sentence at some undetermined interval stretching up to Speech Time characterizes the sentence subject or topic at Speech Time (1a), that the state or event-in-progress described in the sentence started at some time in the past and continues up to Speech Time (1b), that the result state of a change-of-state predicate holds at Speech Time (1c), or that the past occurrence of an event is itself recent or constitutes recent information (1d) (cf. McCawley 1971 among many others).

1. a. *Ha ido dos veces a Buenos Aires (en su vida/ este año).*   [EXISTENTIAL/
       'S/he's been twice to Buenos Aires (in her/his life/ this year')   EXPERIENTIAL]
    b. *Ha vivido solo desde la muerte de su padre.*   [UNIVERSAL]
       'He's lived alone since his father died'
    c. *No puede correr porque se ha roto una pierna.*   [RESULTATIVE]
       'S/he cannot run because s/he has broken her/his leg'
    d. *¡Se ha escapado el perro!*   ['HOT-NEWS']
       'The dog has run away!

The Present Perfect is also felicitous in contexts in which anteriority is not calculated with regard to Speech Time, but with regard to a recurrent anchor - in generic or habitual contexts -, or with regard to a future anchor (in the latter case, it may replace the Future Perfect in Spanish):

2. a. *El que ha traicionado una vez, volverá a traicionar.*   [GENERIC]
       'Whoever has betrayed once is likely to betray a second time'
    b. *En general, cuando yo llego, el jefe ya se ha marchado*.   [HABITUAL]
       'Usually, when I arrive, the boss has already left'
    c. *Para cuando llegues, seguro que ya hemos terminado el informe.*   [FUTURE PERF.]
       'By the time you arrive, we're sure to have finished the report'

These are the most typical, though certainly not all the contexts of occurrence of the best described Present Perfects. They provide the initial database on which most accounts of the semantics of perfects build. Note, however, that extant descriptions and analyses often remain silent on a crucial aspect of the distribution which is also subject to variation. Felicity conditions normally amount to necessary conditions of use for a form, but they may also be reinterpreted as sufficient conditions, in such a way that occurrence of the form in a certain type of context becomes mandatory. Unfortunately, too little attention has been devoted to this issue, which directly involves the competition of the Present Perfect with other tense forms (mainly the simple past, but also the present).[1]

2.2. Formal interpretations

The current existence of at least three families of theories for the formal interpretation of Perfects bears witness to the problematic nature of their semantics. In **(neo-) Reichenbachian theories** (see for instance Giorgi & Pianesi 1997, Demirdache & Uribe-Etxeberria 1997, 2004), perfects uniformly contribute an anteriority relation, as expressed in (3)

3. a.   E_____R   [PERFECT]
    b.   E_____R, S   [PRESENT PERFECT]

These theories propose a compositional solution which is valid for all perfect forms. The various

---

[1] For recent studies taking up this issue, see Schaden (2008) and, from a variational perspective, Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos (2008)

restrictions on the felicitous use of Present Perfects are derived from the fact that in this particular case, Reference Time coincides with the Speech Time. A number of assumptions have to be made in order to justify the meaning effects associated with the Present Perfect. Not all of them take a falsifiable form, most notably the assumption of "current relevance". The crucial problem for the theory, however, are the universal readings exemplified in (1b), since in such cases the described eventuality does not strictly precede Reference Time, but overlaps with it.

The same holds of **post-state-theories**, which identify Perfects with operators deriving post-states of the described eventuality (Kamp & Reyle 1993), as schematically represented in (4):

4. a.   I.................F_____
                event   POST-STATE

The adequacy of such theories depends on the way the post-state is defined. If it is conceived of as the target- or result-state entailed by telic eventuality descriptions, these theories fare well in only one case, the resultative readings exemplified in (1c). If, by contrast, the post-state is assumed to be some state or other contingently ensuing from the occurrence of the described eventuality, additional constraints on its relevance are needed. In their absence, the condition would be vacuously fulfilled, and thus unable to account for the restricted distribution. In fact, a number of semantic and pragmatic proposals have been advanced to constrain the nature of the post-state (Nishiyama & Koenig 2004). However, the real problem is constitued again by the universal readings exemplified in (1b): in its universal reading, (1b) says that the state of living alone extends until Speech Time, and possibly further, not that a relevant post-state of the state of living alone does.

Both anteriority theories and post-state theories have developed solutions for dealing with universal readings. The most obvious and simple solution is to take the initial transition *I*, the onset of the described situation, as the event that is actually located before Reference Time or, respectively, whose post-state is said to hold at Reference Time. This is schematically represented in (5a) and (5b):

5. a. E_____R,S
          I_____.........F
              vivir solo

    b.   POST-STATE
      event_____S__
          I_____........F
              vivir solo

Extended-Now-theories or, for short, XN-theories, are particularly adapted to the case of the Present Perfect. They provide a principled account of the difference between existential and universal readings. In XN-theories, the Present Perfect is said to introduce an interval including Speech Time ("now") as its final subinterval and expanding indefinitely into the past, as illustrated in (6).[2]

6.   --------[_____[]]---------
            PERFECT TIME SPAN   ↑
                (XN-interval)   *"now"*

For the Standard European Spanish Present Perfect, the XN-approach provides an intuitive explanation for the fact that frame adverbials including Speech Time license –or even require- a Present Perfect, whereas those excluding Speech Time do not, as exemplified by the contrasts in (7a) and (7b):
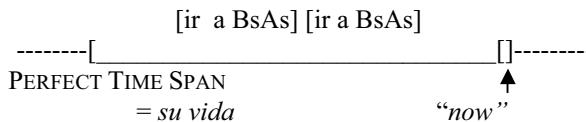
7. a. *En este siglo/# En el siglo pasado la ciencia ha experimentado grandes avances.*
         'In this century/ # In the past century, science has made a big step forward'
    b. *La Caballé ha tenido momentos mejores en esta temporada/#en la temporada anterior.*
         'Caballé has had better moments in this season/#in the past season'
           [ex. from I. Bosque]

---

[2] This approach can capture the semantics of perfects other than the Present Perfect by replacing "now" by a variable point, whose location is determined by tense.
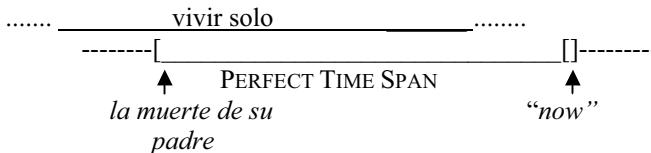
But the main interest of XN-theories lies elsewhere. When they are combined with a theory of the temporal structure of the described eventualities, they are able to capture an essential condition for the emergence of universal readings, namely that the described eventuality should be unbounded or homogeneous. There is an old intuition according to which universal readings involve states, i. e. unbounded and homogeneous situations, embedded under the Perfect, whereas existential readings involve events, i. e. bounded and therefore non-homogeneous situations (Mittwoch 1988). For Spanish, it is widely known that universal readings are much easier to get with states, with habituals and with progressives than with any other types of predicate (García Fernández 2007)[3]. The rationale for this distribution is easy enough to find, if we take into account the possibilities of instantiating an eventuality description at a given interval (see Dowty 1979, Rothstein 2004). Non-homogeneous eventuality descriptions lack the subinterval property, that is to say, they are not instantiated at their subintervals. By contrast, homogeneous eventuality descriptions are also instantiated at any of their subintervals. Thus, a homogeneous eventuality description may hold of the XN-interval if it includes it, whereas the only way for a non-homogeneous eventuality description to hold of the XN-interval is to be included in it.

Applied to our examples above, an analysis in terms of the XN-interval can be schematically represented as in (8a) and (8b):

8. a. *Ha ido dos veces a Buenos Aires (en su vida)*

<pre>
                    [ir a BsAs] [ir a BsAs]
        --------[_____[]---------
        PERFECT TIME SPAN   ▲
             = su vida   "now"
</pre>

b. *Ha vivido solo desde la muerte de su padre*

<pre>
      .... _____vivir solo_____ ....
        --------[_____[]---------
               ▲   PERFECT TIME SPAN   ▲
        la muerte de su   "now"
             padre
</pre>

Going-to-Buenos Aires is a bounded event, and its bounded nature is reinforced by the cardinal adverbial "twice". It ends up properly included in the XN-interval and gives rise to an existential reading. *Living-alone* is a state or an habitual. It is unbounded or homogeneous, and ends up properly including the XN-interval. The described situation has started no later than the death of his father, and it stretches up to Speech Time, and possibly later.
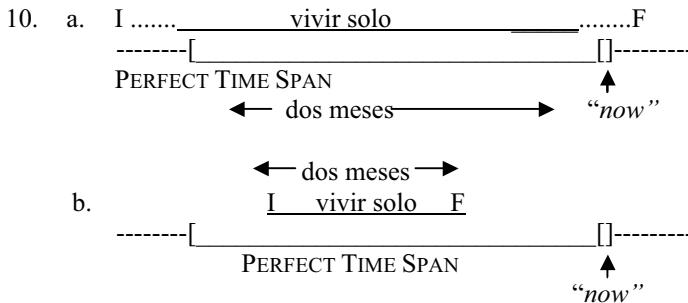
XN-analyses capture the distribution of existential and universal readings via the contrast between bounded eventualities, that end up included in the XN-interval and hold at some of its subinterval(s), and unbounded eventualities, that may end up including the XN-interval, so that they hold at all of its subintervals. They also predict that existential readings, by contrast with universal readings, are always available, since nothing prevents the instantiation of a homogeneous eventuality at a subinterval of the XN-interval. In fact, it is well known that in the case of "well-behaved" perfects, existential readings do not require any particular support, whereas universal readings only arise in the context of certain adverbials. These adverbials are either the universal quantifier *siempre* 'always', or time-span and measure adverbials whose role is to delimit the XN-interval. The typical distribution of readings for a

---

[3] Decisive evidence as to the influence of temporal structure has recently been brought to light by Iatridou, Anagnostopoulu & Izvorsky (2001/2003) and Pancheva (2003). These authors show that in languages like Modern Greek and Bulgarian, in which the participles entering into the Perfect construction bear overt aspectual morphology, perfective morphology on the participle excludes universal readings. This distribution provides clear morphological evidence for the association of universal readings with unbounded eventualities, and of existential readings with bounded eventualities.

"well-behaved" Present Perfect is illustrated in (9a-d):

9.   a. *Ha vivido solo*.   [EXISTENTIAL]
         'He has lived alone'
     b. *Siempre ha vivido solo.*   [UNIVERSAL]
         'He has always lived alone'
     c. *Ha vivido solo últimamente/ durante dos meses.*   [UNIVERSAL/ EXISTENTIAL]
         'He has lived alone lately/ for two months'
     d. *Ha vivido solo (por lo menos) desde 1998.*   [UNIVERSAL]
         'He has lived alone at least since 1998'

Note that (9c), particularly with the measure adverbial, is actually ambiguous between two readings, a universal reading in which the adverbial measures the XN-interval, and an existential reading in which the adverbial measures (and bounds) the state itself. This is depicted in (10a) and (10b).

10.   a.   I ...._____vivir solo_____.......F
        --------[_____[]---------
        PERFECT TIME SPAN   ▲
                 ◄———— dos meses————————►   *"now"*

                 ◄— dos meses —►
     b.   I____vivir solo____F
        --------[_____[]---------
              PERFECT TIME SPAN   ▲
                                "now"

XN- analyses have, however, very little to say as to the resultative readings illustrated in (1c) above, and still less to say as to the readings involving anteriority with regard to a recurrent or future reference point, as exemplified by the generic, habitual or future perfect readings illustrated in (2a-c).

      Table 1 summarizes the relative strengths of each type of theory for capturing the different typical readings of a Present Perfect. The question mark indicates that the reading in question can only be accounted for by the theory under additional assumptions. How straightforward and falsifiable these additional assumptions are depends on the individual approaches.

	existential	universal	'hot-news'	resultative	Gen-Hab-Fut
E____R	√	?	?	√	√
post-state	?	?	?	√	√
XN	√	√	?	?	?

Table 1: *Accounting for Present Perfect readings*

The comparison summarized in Table 1 is revealing in several regards. First of all, 'hot-news' readings (or equivalently, use of the Present Perfect licensed merely by proximity to Speech Time) are difficult to account for in all approaches. Secondly, universal readings are less naturally accounted for by the most popular theories of Perfects, whereas XN-theories, which seem optimally suited to deal with them, do so only at the cost of losing much simpler analyses for resultative, generic and future-perfect uses. Furthermore, even XN-theories beg the question as to why universal readings of "well-behaved" Present Perfects require specific adverbial support.

      The suspicion arises that "well-behaved" Present Perfects are associated with at least two concurrent semantic profiles. In one of these profiles, the Present Perfect asserts the current existence of the entailed result or some contingent consequence of a past event; in the other, the Present Perfect makes an assertion for an interval whose last subinterval is Speech Time. The former profile is responsible for resultative and generic, habitual or future perfect readings. The latter is responsible for universal readings. Existential readings are compatible with both profiles: in their experiential flavour, the current consequences of a past event are predicated of some topic (normally the sentential subject), in their purely existential flavour, instantiation of the eventuality is predicated of the XN-interval.

3. Cross- and intralinguistic variation of Present Perfects
3.1. "Bad perfects"

To my knowledge, ambiguity has never been hypothesized for "well-behaved" Present Perfects, though it has always loomed in the background for the treatment of "bad perfects". A case in point are Present Perfects which fail to exhibit the restricted distribution characterizing "well-behaved" ones: they may be used for reference to past events with few or no particular felicity conditions. If we take the influential Reichenbachian schema as a standard, it is well known that the diagnostic contexts from which Reichenbach's proposal derives support do not give the expected results in contemporary spoken German or French. Much effort has been devoted to develop analyses for German and French Present Perfects that press them into the Reichenbachian schema repeated for convenience as (11a). However ingenious and intrinsically interesting these efforts are, there is too much evidence indicating that this is not an advisable move. In my opinion, authors as Demirdache & Uribe-Etxeberria (2002) for French and Löbner (2002) for German are right in supposing that, in these languages, the Present Perfect is ambiguous between the configurations (11a) and (11b):

11.   a. E_____R, S [PRESENT PERFECT]
      b. E, R_____S [SIMPLE PAST]

12.   a. *L'avion a atterri (maintenant).*   [PRESENT PERFECT]
         'The plane has now landed'
      b. *L'avion a atterri (hier).*   [PAST] (Demirdache & Uribe-Etxeberria 2002)
         'The plane landed yesterday'

It is difficult to decide at which point a "bad perfect" exhibiting this ambiguity arises. Schwenter (1994) has forcefully argued that the decisive step is the acquisition and generalization of the "hot news"-function. This suggestion seems to be on the right track, since it squares well with the fact that "hot-news"-readings, as shown in Table 1 above, pose problems for the three families of theories we have discussed in the previous section.

In any case, there is some consensus as to the fact that a Present Perfect that (a) appears in temporal clauses referring to a single, non-recurrent event, (b) occurs in narrative passages, and (c) is compatible with locational time adverbials that do not include Speech Time instatiates the configuration (11b). Example (13), a quoted speech passage in contemporary written European Spanish, illustrates these three properties: the time adverbial *esta mañana* 'this morning' does not include Speech Time, there is a narrative sequence, and the first Present Perfect appears in a *when*-clause:

13. *¿Qué te decía yo? -dijo, sin preámbulos-. Esta mañana cuando **he salido** al jardín Gladys me*
    ha llamado**, como anoche. Ya estaba fuera, esperándome. **He ido** a su instalación, me **he
    ***asomado a** la ventana de su dormitorio y, ¿adivinas lo que **he visto** entre sus patas?* REAL
    ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA: Banco de datos (CREA) [en línea]. *Corpus de referencia del*
    español actual. <http://www.rae.es> [IX-2008]
    'What did I tell you ? –she said, without any introduction. This morning, when I went into the
    garden Gladys called me, as last night. She was already outside, waiting for me. I went to her
    cabin, peeked through her bedroom window and guess what I saw between her paws ?'
    [Gladys is a panther]

This can be taken as evidence that contemporary European Spanish has indeed an ambiguous perfect, one that also admits the "past" configuration in (11b), which is however constrained by some further restriction on the temporal distance between Speech Time and Reference Time.[4]

Interestingly enough, there seems to be a clear correlation between Present Perfects exhibiting the "simple past" configuration (11b) and the fate of the universal reading. Although universal readings are possible for the Present Perfect in French and German, they are highly dispreferred. In the context of

---

[4] This restriction is widely held to correspond to the "24-hour-rule" (see for instance Brugger 1998).

since-type adverbials, only a Simple Present can guarantee that the situation still holds at Speech Time. In the context of measure adverbials, the only natural reading is the existential one, corresponding to the schema in (10b) above. This is illustrated for French in 14 (a-c):

14. a. *?# Il a habité seul depuis la mort de son père.*
      'He's lived alone since his father died'
     b. *Il habite seul depuis la mort de son père.* [UNIVERSAL]
      'He's lived alone since his father died'
     c. *Il a habité seul pendant deux mois.*   [?#UNIVERSAL/ EXISTENTIAL]
      'He's lived alone for two months'

Examples (9b-d) above make clear that European Spanish does exhibit universal readings under the necessary conditions discussed above, i.e. in combination with a homogeneous eventuality description and a *since*-type adverbial. But this reading is not mandatory under these conditions, i.e. it is not at all necessary that the described eventuality stretches until Speech Time. In restrictive American varieties, by contrast, which do not admit the "recent past" uses of the Present Perfect exemplified in (13), the universal reading is the only possible option under such conditions. Thus, sentence (15a) is acceptable for Spanish speakers of any origin, but (15b) is clearly rejected by those speakers who also reject "recent past" uses of the Present Perfect:[5]

15. a. *Ha vivido solo desde que se murió su padre, y seguirá viviendo solo.*
      'He's lived alone since his father died, and he will continue living along'
     b. *%Ha vivido solo desde que se murió su padre, pero ahora vive con su novia.*
      'He's lived alone since his father died, but he's living with her girl-friend now'

[ex. from Schaden 2007]

To summarize, "bad perfects" showing a less restricted distribution that indicates their ability to function as simple (possibly only recent) pasts are apt not to give rise to universal readings under the appropriate licensing conditions for such readings. By contrast, Present Perfects that are unable to function as (recent) pasts (lacking, most notably, 'hot-news'-uses) seem to exhibit obligatorily universal readings under these conditions. European and American Spanish varieties illustrate two clearly constrasting patterns for this correlation. This leads naturally to the question as to the role of universal readings in the semantics and in the development of Present Perfects.

3.2. The evolution of Present Perfects: the 'aoristic drift'

At least since Meillet (1909), it has been known that creation of Present Perfect forms in languages possessing a simple past form usually result in situations of unstable competition, which in a number of historically attested cases have been resolved in favour of the innovation. Seen from the perspective of the new form, this process is known under the term of "aoristic-drift" of the Perfect. The new form takes over typical uses of the old "past" form, and the innovation may become eventually the default form for expressing past temporal reference. The crucial step in the aoristic drift is precisely the moment at which the new form becomes ambiguous between the temporal configurations in (11a) and (11b).

The analysis of the cross- and intralinguistic variation of Romance Present Perfects has been heavily influenced by the typology of "stages" of Romance perfects proposed by Harris (1982), which are summarized in Figure 1 below. Though meant as a typology of the synchronic profiles of Romance perfects, these stages closely parallel Alarcos Llorach's (1947) pioneer findings as to the diachronic development of the Spanish *haber* + Participle construction (see Squartini & Bertinetto 2000).

---

[5] This pattern of variation is confirmed by the following example, which I owe to Ignacio Bosque:(i) *% Es una verdadera pena que haya perdido la voz porque siempre ha cantado muy bien***.**
 'It's a pity s/he should have lost his/her voice, because s/he has always sung beautifully'
The adverbial quantifier *siempre* generally licenses a universal reading, but in the case of restrictive varieties, it furthermore renders it mandatory. As a consequence, example (i) is felt to be contradictory in such varieties, since having lost one's voice precludes that the disposition for singing well still holds at Speech Time.

```
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```
Stage I perfects: present states resulting from past actions
Stage II perfects: contexts aspectually marked as durative or repetitive
Stage III perfects: past action with present relevance
Stage IV perfects: preterital or aoristic functions
```
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------
```
Fig. 1: Stages of Romance perfects (Harris 1982)

The characterization of Stage II assimilates it to Present Perfects exhibiting only our problematic universal readings. As formulated by Squartini & Bertinetto (2000), this hypothetical stage involves a durative or iterative situation that has started in the past and continues up to the Speech Time. Portuguese, and some restrictive Spanish-American varieties (most notably Mexican Spanish, but also Rio de la Plata-Spanish), are commonly held to be the representatives of this second sort of "bad perfect". In this case, we have "bad perfects" that fail to conform to Perfect semantics not because they are ambiguous between two temporal configurations, but because they cannot be freely inserted in existential/experiential or resultative contexts.

However, extant data concerning Portuguese and the restrictive American Spanish varieties do not confirm this view. As will be shown below, the "bad perfects" clustered under the label Stage-II-perfects by Harris (1982) and by Squartini & Bertinetto (2000) differ widely. Indepth examination of one Brazilian-Portuguese variety, and the comparison of our findings with what is known for the other varieties, show that none of the examined Present Perfects exactly matches the characterization of a Stage-II perfect, and that there are radical differences between Portuguese and Spanish Present Perfects. The general picture that emerges confirms Squartini & Bertinetto's (2000) tentative suggestion that Portuguese Perfects are Perfects that lost out the competition against the older, simple perfect form, acquired a very specific semantic profile, and branched off the grammaticalization path leading from an original resultative construction to a form with past reference. The profile and the eventual fate of the restrictive American Spanish Present Perfects is much less certain.

4. Ibero-American Present Perfects
4.1. A pluractional Present Perfect: ter + PP in Brazilian Portuguese

In Cabredo-Hofherr, Laca & de Carvalho (to appear), we describe the Present Perfect in the North-Eastern Brazilian variety spoken in Natal. As shown in examples (16a-d), this Present Perfect lacks not only resultative readings, but also generic, habitual and future-perfect uses:

16. a. *Pedro está entrando pela porta de trás. #Eu ja tenho desarmado o segurança*
        'Pedro is coming in through the back door. I have already disarmed the guard'
     b. *#Ultimamente, quando eu ligo, o responsável tem saído.*
        'These days, every time I phone, the person in charge has just left'
     c. #Aqueles que tem frequentado a mesma escola são solidarios durante toda a vida.
        'Those who have attended school together develop a solidarity for life'
     d. *#Quando a Ana regressar de Groningen, já tu tens acabado a tese.*
         'When Ana gets back from Groningen, you (will) have already finished your thesis'

        In fact, universal readings are obligatory in this variety, and, by contrast with the general distribution discussed in section 2.2. above, they do not require any adverbial support. Thus, (17a) is felicitous only if uttered during the school year, and (17b) is felicitous only if there are still some movie-theaters that may disappear after Speech Time:

17.   a. *Você tem feito seus deveres de casa?*
         'Have you been doing your homework regularly?'
      b. *Esse tipo de cinema tem desaparecido na cidade a toda velocidade.*
         'Movie-theaters of the kind have been rapidly disappearing from town'

The above examples show that the described situation must necessarily hold at least up to Speech Time and possibly afterwards. However, the Natal Present Perfect is not only specialized for universal readings, but shows at least two further restrictions: it requires repetition of the basic eventuality throughout the interval stretching back from Speech Time into the past, and it puts conditions on the length of this interval, which should be above a certain threshold.

As a result, not all types of homogeneous situations stretching up to Speech Time can be felicitously expressed in the Present Perfect. Firstly, among stage-level states, there is a clear contrast between simple *yes/no*-states, as for instance "being closed" or "being at some location", and gradable states, as for instance "being drunk, angry, sick". Only the latter may appear in the Present Perfect, as shown in (18a-c):

18. a. *#Esse livro sempre tem estado na prateleira da direita.*
      'This book has always been on the righthand shelf'
    b. *#Essa loja tem estado fechada (ultimamente).*
       'This shop has been closed for some time'
    c. *Pedro tem estado muito doente nos últimos tempos.*
        'Pedro has been very ill lately'

Secondly, the contrast between (19a) and (19b) shows that the XN-interval may not be filled by the temporal trace of a single event:

19. a. *Pedro tem dormido na varanda o inverno inteiro.*
      'Pedro has been sleeping on the balcony all this winter'
    b. *#O urso tem dormido na sua caverna o inverno inteiro.*
       'The bear has been sleeping in his cave all this winter'

Given what we know about the sleeping patterns of people and about the hibernating habits of bears, (19a) is frequentative or habitual, presenting a number of sleeping occurrences separated by intervals of non-sleeping. But (19b) would normally be interpreted as a continuative, reporting a single, protracted sleeping event.

Examples (20a-b) show a parallel contrast: increase in the number of students can only be measured at discrete intervals separated by gaps (for instance, at the beginning of every school term), whereas the water level rises continuously, so that it is difficult to imagine a situation where it may be seen as discontinuously rising several times throughout a given period. The Present Perfect is felicitous in the first, but not in the second case.

20. a. *Desde os anos 80, o número de estudantes tem aumentado.*
      'The number of students has been increasing since the eighties'
    b. ?? *O nível do rio tem aumentado nos últimos anos.*
       'The water level has been rising these past years'

In our analysis, the facts concerning stage-level states and those banning single, protracted events have their source in a **discontinuity requirement** affecting the Natal Present Perfect: the XN-interval may not be a homogeneous interval of validity for the basic predicate. In the case of eventives, this requirement is fulfilled by the existence of temporal gaps separating instantiations of the basic predicate. In the case of gradable stage-level predicates, discontinuity is ensured by the fact that these predicates, by contrast with *yes/no*-predicates, do not hold in a totally homogeneous fashion throughout an interval, but may be instantiated to different degrees.

The discontinuity requirement is confirmed by the distribution of the Present Perfect with aspectual periphrases. Brazilian Portuguese exhibits four gerundial periphrases: *estar+* Gerund, which largely corresponds to a progressive (see King & Suñer 1980), *ir+* Gerund, which gives rise to an incremental temporal structure (corresponding roughly to adverbial modification by items like *gradually* or *successively*), *andar+*Gerund, which gives rise to a frequentative and/or habitual temporal structure, and *viver+* Gerund, whose continuous-habitual temporal structure is analogous to the one produced by the English progressive in combination with *always, (for)ever* (for details, see Campos 1980). As

shown by examples (21a-d), the Present Perfect is compatible only with *andar*+Gerund, which is the only periphrasis ensuring discontinuity of the basic predicate throughout an interval:[6]

21. a. **Esse menino tem estado fazendo besteira.*
  'This kid has been doing nonsense'
 b. **Esse menino tem ido melhorando*.
  'This kid has been getting better'
 c. *Esse menino tem andado fazendo besteira.*
  'This has been doing nonsense'
 d. **Esse menino tem vivido fazendo besteira.*
  'This kid has always been doing nonsense'

Over and above the requirement of discontinuity, there are clear conditions on the length of the XN-interval. Instantaneous events, like coughing or asking for somebody, involve repetition and thus, discontinuity, when they are said to hold of intervals as a whole day or a morning. Although examples (22a-b) below fulfill the discontinuity requirement, they are felt to be infelicitous on the grounds that the interval is too short:

22. a. #*Maria tem tossido muito desde ontem*.
  'Mary has been coughing a lot since yesterday'
 b. #*Ela tem perguntado por você toda a manhã.*
  'She's been asking for you the whole morning"

This fact is particularly telling, since –as far as we know- the only aspectual category that is sensitive to the length of the interval is habitual aspect.
  The discontinuity requirement is a well known property of some temporal pluractionals (Van Geenhoven 2004, Laca 2006), which are morphological markers of event pluralities distributed over successive intervals. The interaction of the Present Perfect with nominal arguments and with adverbials replicates other well-known properties of temporal pluractionals. As for nominal arguments, the plurality of events associated with the Present Perfect cannot multiply singular indefinite arguments, but it can give rise to distributive correspondences with non-cardinalized plural nominal arguments, as shown by the following contrasts:

23. a. #*Tenho comido uma maçã.*
  'I have been eating an apple'
 b. *Tenho comido maçãs*.
  'I have been eating apples'

24. a. *Muitas pessoas têm morrido no Iraque*.
  'A lot of people have been dying in Irak'
 b. #*Vinte pessoas têm morrido no Iraque.*
  #'Twenty people have been dying in Irak'

The interaction of the Present Perfect with adverbials indicating repetition also parallels the distribution with pluractionals: degree quantifiers are acceptable, but vague or precise cardinalization of the repetition is not (see Laca 2006):[7]

---

[6] Note that *andar* may also function as a copula with stage-level predicates, and conveys in this case the same sense of intermittency that characterizes its use as a modifier in the periphrastic construction. Not surprisingly, *andar* is clearly preferred to *estar* as a copula in Present Perfect contexts such as (18c) above.

[7] Note that in all these cases, as brought out by the translations, we have the same effects for the Perfect Progressive in English. In fact, the semantics of the Natal Present Perfect comes very close to an English Perfect Progressive modified by the adverb *lately*. This adverb ensures an universal reading, rules out the "short" XN-intervals that are disallowed by the Natal Present Perfect, and –probably for pragmatic reasons- also rules out continuative, single-protracted-event readings.

25. a. *Eu tenho visto muito /??muitas vezes a sua irmã ultimamente*.
     'I've been seeing your sister a lot/ ?many times lately'
  b. #Eu *tenho visto três / várias vezes a sua irmã ultimamente*.
     #'I've been seeing your sister three/ several times lately'
  c. #*Eu tenho dito milhões de vezes pra não fazer isso*.
     #'I've been telling you millions of times not to do this'

To summarize, the distribution of the Natal Present Perfect, which entirely lacks resultative or anteriority readings, shows that it is a universal perfect of a particularly restricted kind. It requires discontinuity, i.e. that that the interval stretching back from Speech Time into the past not not be "filled" by the temporal trace of a single event, and a certain length for this interval. Figure 2 schematizes its semantic profile. In it, **V** stands for the predicate of eventualities expressed by the verb:

now
|
[---------------------] **Reference Time (Perfect Time Span)**
[**V_V_V_V_V_V_V**......] **Event Time**

Fig. 2: Temporal structure and temporal relations in the Natal Pres.Perf.

Figure 2 shows that the Natal Present Perfect (a) expresses ordering relations between intervals, requiring for Reference Time to be included in Event Time and to stretch back from Speech Time into the past, on the one hand, and (b) imposes conditions on the length of Reference Time and on the internal temporal structure of Event Time, on the other. The latter condition amounts to a felicity conditions or presupposition: the Present Perfect cannot, by itself, induce iteration in the presence of singular nominal arguments. A compositional analysis does not seem viable for a form with such characteristics: the Natal Present Perfect is a sort of "grammatical idiom", a universal perfect restricted to intervals **with a particular temporal structure and of a certain length**.

4.2. Less restrictive Portuguese varieties

The question arises as to how representative the Natal Present Perfect is for the totality of Portuguese varieties. The information we have been able to collect up to now, based on the extant literature and on the judgements of consultants from different areas, is certainly fragmentary, and much descriptive work will be needed before arriving at a definitive answer. However, certain tendencies do emerge pretty clearly.

As for Brazilian Portuguese varieties, they all seem to reject the combination of the Present Perfect at least with *yes/no*-stage-level states, and in some cases with all stage-level states. Similarly, they all put conditions on the length of the XN-interval, rejecting examples like (22a-b) above.

Moreover, the Present Perfect behaves as an universal perfect in all Brazilian varieties. We have not been able to replicate Molsing's (2007) data on a possible existential use in Brazilian Portuguese. That is to say, regular repetition of the basic event must stretch at least up to Speech Time, and possibly thereafter. As a consequence, examples like (26), which are parallel to the Spanish example (15b) above, are rejected by all Brazilian consultants:

26. #*Eu tenho visitado os pais, mais não vou mais*.
    'I have been visiting my parents regularly, but I don't go there any more'

However, according to our consultants and to the data discussed in Ilari (2001), other Brazilian varieties seem to lack the discontinuity requirement for the Present Perfect, in as far as they exhibit to some extent continuative readings, as illustrated in (27):

27. *O alarme tem ficado ligado.*
    'The alarm has remained on'

Such varieties admit the Present Perfect in continuative and continuous-incremental contexts, i.e. they do not have the contrast between *Peter sleeping on the balcony* and *the bear sleeping in his cave* illustrated in (19a-b), nor the contrast between *the number of students increasing* and *the water level rising* illustrated in (20a-b). However, as suggested by Ilari (2001), even in such varieties the continuous interpretation of activities or incremental predicates may easily give way to discontinuity – according to Ilari's intuition, this happens mainly through the existence of pragmatically salient discrete intervals of verification. Interestingly enough, all our Brazilian consultants, whatever their stance to the contrasts (19a-b) and (20a-b), reject combinations of the Present Perfect with gerundial periphrases other than *andar* + Gerund, which is the only periphrasis ensuring discontinuity. This indicates that the discontinuity requirement is not totally absent in such varieties.

According to the data in Schmitt (2001) and Amaral & Howe (2004), confirmed by our consultants, the Present Perfect has a less restricted distribution in European Portuguese. This concerns first and foremost combinations with stage-level states and with *estar*+ Gerund (or *estar a* +Inf), which turn out to be acceptable in European Portuguese:

28. a. *Pedro tem estado no jardim.* (Amaral & Howe 2005)
   'Pedro has been in the garden'
   b. *Pedro tem estado comendo chocolate.* (Schmitt 2001)
    'Pedro has been eating chocolate'

Moreover, for our European consultants, the length of the XN-interval does not seem to play a role, as shown by the acceptability of examples like (29):

29. *Maria tem tossido muito desde ontem.*
    'Maria has been coughing a lot since yesterday'

However, the European Portuguese Present Perfect seems to be, like the Brazilian one, specialized for universal readings. Recall that universal readings require homogeneous/unbounded eventuality descriptions. Now, cardinalized nominal arguments (such as *twenty people*) and adverbials counting iterations (such as *twenty times*) give rise to bounded eventuality descriptions lacking the subinterval property and enforcing existential readings (see section 2.2. above). According to our consultants, European Portuguese rejects both in combination with the Present Perfect, i.e. it patterns like Brazilian Portuguese with regard to examples (24b) and (25b). Moreover, it also patterns like Brazilian Portuguese in ruling out resultative, habitual and generic readings (see examples (16a-c) above). [8]

4.3. Restrictive American Spanish varieties

Among the American Spanish varieties, it is widely acknowledged that those from Mexico and the Rio de la Plata make a particularly restricted use of the Present Perfect, which goes hand in hand with a much wider distribution for the simple past. As we will see, however, the profile of their Present Perfects differs crucially from that of the Portuguese Present Perfects

4.3.1. The Present Perfect in Mexican Spanish

Since the pioneer studies of Lope Blanch (1972) and Moreno de Alba (1978), the Mexican Present Perfect has been described as an "imperfective", "non-terminative" form. At first sight, the most typical contexts of occurrence for the Present Perfect cited by these authors correspond to universal readings, as exemplified in (30a-c):

---

[8]By contrast, future-perfect uses, as (16d) above, seem possible, or at least their possibility is mentioned in grammars. They could constitute the only instance of non-universal readings, though we have not been able to confirm their existence (they are actually rejected by our consultants).

30. a. *Esa estatua siempre ha estado allí*.
     'This statue has always been there'
  b. *Desde entonces sólo he sido una carga para ti*.
     'Since then, I've only been a burden for you'
  c. *Este mes he estudiado mucho*.
      'I have studied a lot this month'

Next to the continuative readings with states and activities, frequentative or habitual readings arise, as expected, when the basic eventuality description has a punctual or telic temporal structure:

31. a. *Desde que la conocí, la he visto casi a diario*.
      'Since I met her, I've been seeing her almost daily'
  b. *Últimamente te han visto paseando con F*.
      'They have seen you around with F. lately'

Note, however, that such readings, by contrast to the situation in Portuguese, require adverbial support. Frame adverbials specifying the length of the XN-interval, or universal quantification throughout the interval, are no less necessary for the emergence of universal readings than they are in Standard European Spanish or, for that matter, English.

   Several observations confirm that the Mexican Present Perfect cannot be assimilated to the type instantiated in Portuguese. First of all, negated events in *yet*-contexts, exemplified below, are reported to require the Present Perfect in Mexican Spanish (32a), but they rule out the Present Perfect in Portuguese (32b).

32. a. *Todavía no ha llegado*.
      'S/he hasn't arrived yet'
  b. *#Ela ainda não tem chegado*.

Although such cases are often given as examples of universal readings, they may equally well be considered to exemplify existential readings. Due to the interaction of quantifiers with negation, *for all times in an interval, it is not true that p* is equivalent to *for no time in an interval it is true that p*. Contexts such as (32) simply do not discriminate between universal and existential quantification over times.

   More importantly, as convincingly argued by Mackenzie (1995), there are a number of typical uses of the Mexican Present Perfect that do not match the profile of a universal perfect. For instance, in examples (33a-b) below, the eventuality in question is properly included in the XN-interval, so that the examples qualify as existential, not as universal perfects:

33. a. *He sido siete veces campeón*. [Moreno de Alba, *apud* Mackenzie (1995)]
      'I have been champion seven times'
  b. *Es la única exposición que he hecho*. [Lope Blanch, *apud* Mackenzie (1995)]
      'It's the only exhibition I've done'

Recall that universal readings require unbounded eventuality descriptions. As clearly seen by Mackenzie (1995), counting provides bounded eventuality descriptions, which are perfectly compatible with the Mexican Present Perfect, whereas they are categorically excluded in Portuguese.

   Moreover, the Mexican Present Perfect can also appear in generic contexts, signaling anteriority with respect to a recurrent anchor, something that is ruled out by the Portuguese Present Perfect (cf. ex. (16c) above):

34. *Aquél que ha pisado una escuela sabe perfectamente que…* (Moreno de Alba 1978)
    'All those that have ever set foot in a school know perfectly well that...

   To summarize, the Mexican Present Perfect can have, next to universal readings that require adverbial support, also the existential and anteriority readings that are ruled out in Portuguese. Whatever the restrictions on the Mexican Present Perfect, it is not a Present Perfect specialized for universal readings.

4.3.2. The Present Perfect in Rio de la Plata Spanish

Caviglia & Malcuori (1989/1994, 1987/1999), who have described the use of the Present Perfect in Montevideo on the basis of their native intuitions, classify it as an "experiential" (that is, a flavour of the existential) Present Perfect. According to their description, the Present Perfect is impossible with "once-only"-events and with highly individuated objects (i.e., specific singular objects, whether definite or indefinite). The Present Perfect is also highly dispreferred with singular events. The sort of contrast they have brought to light is exemplified in (35a) versus (35b):

35. a. *La Municipalidad ha demolido edificios históricos.*
       'Municipal authorities have torn down historical buildings'
     b. #*Mi hermano ha demolido la casa.*
       'My brother has torn down the house'

The analysis of all the occurrences of the Present Perfect in eleven 30-minute informal interviews conducted in the *Norma Culta* project seems to confirm their description. The Present Perfect in Montevideo exhibits, as expected, universal readings, as illustrated in (36a-b).

36. a. *los dos somos estudiosos, hemos seguido estudiando tanto mi esposo como yo*
       'We are both studious, we have continued studying, both my husband and I'
     b. *algunas de las obras importantes [...] que se han ido realizando en Perú en los últimos, yo diría, diez años*
       'Some of the important building projects they have been carrying out in Peru during the past, I'd say ten years'

But the Present Perfect also appears in resultative and/or existential contexts, as illustrated in (37a-c). In the examples selected for illustration, the entailed result state still holds at the time of utterance. What seems crucial, however, is that attested resultative or existential uses have overwhelmingly plural arguments, as in (37a), or non-referential arguments, as the generic subject in (37b) or the abstract *eso* 'this', referring to a fact, in (37c):

37. a. *estas policlínicas han surgido por necesidad de la gente*
       'These clinics have emerged because people needed them'
     b. *el productor está inclusive desmoralizado [...], ha bajado los brazos y no quiere pelear más*
       'Rural producers are even demoralized [...], they have given up, they don't want to fight anymore'
     c. *eso ha llevado a que la Universidad actual haya disminuido sensiblemente su nivel*
       'This has led to a considerable drop in current University standards'

We conclude that the Present Perfect in Montevideo is no more confined to universal readings than the Mexican Present Perfect is.

What both the Mexican and Rio de la Plata Present Perfect seem to have in common are two negative characteristics. Firstly, they are impossible, or at least strongly dispreferred, when reporting singular events.[9] The intuitions of Caviglia & Malcuori (1989/1994) find a parallel in the statistical data recently obtained for Mexican Spanish by Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos (2008), which clearly show that singular nominal objects and singular achievements are rare in Present Perfect contexts. Secondly, and more importantly, they both lack exclusive contexts: we have not been able to identify, neither for Mexico nor for the Rio de la Plata, obligatory contexts of occurrence of the Present Perfect. Thus, in both dialects, the simple past retains the possibility of expressing universal readings, as shown in the following example:

---

[9] Both the Mexican and the Rio de la Plata Present Perfects exhibit sporadically so-called "secondary uses" (Lope Blanch 1972), with an emphatic meaning associated to surprise (miratives), and possibly also inferential/evidential uses, in which occurrence of a causing event is inferred from an observed result state. These uses clearly involve the past occurrence of a single, bounded event. Mirative-evidential uses are difficult to document in the texts we have examined, and also difficult to elicit.

38. *Pero ya vi que....que fui más o menos agarrándole a fondo y le seguí hasta la fecha.*
    [Talking about playing the guitar] 'But I finally realized that ....that I was getting it right, and I have continued [PRET] up until now [ex. and translation from Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008]

 In the Rio de la Plata variety, the simple perfect form is acceptable even with recurrent or future anchors, i.e. in habitual, generic or future perfect contexts:

39.   a. *Cuando llega el cirujano, las enfermeras ya esterilizaron los instrumentos.*
        'When the surgeon arrives, the nurses have already sterilized the material'
    b. *Para cuando terminen de discutir, ya perdieron el ómnibus.*
        'By the time you finish your discussion, you'll have already missed the bus'

The lack of exclusive contexts shows that the Present Perfect in such varieties has not succeeded yet in 'carving out' a stable set of uses from which the older, simple perfect form is definitively ruled out. Against this background, it is not surprising that the Present Perfect should occasionally be felt to be "on the verge of extinction" (so, for instance, Kubarth (1992) reports a dramatical decrease of its use among younger speakers in Buenos Aires).

5. Towards an explanation

    Far from instantiating the same type of Present Perfect, Portuguese and the restrictive American Spanish varieties differ clearly. While the Present Perfect in Portuguese is overwhelmingly dedicated to universal readings, with some additional felicity conditions, such as discontinuity and length of the XN-interval in the Brazilian varieties, its semantic profile is much larger in the restrictive American varieties. The latter exhibit the whole array of readings of "well-behaved" Perfects, to the exclusion of "hot-news"-uses, but have not definitively dislodged the older, simple perfect from any of these uses. The question arises as to the reasons for the specificity of the Portuguese form.
    The obvious difference between the Portuguese form and the rest of the Romance Perfects lies in the auxiliary, which is a descendant from TENERE 'hold, keep, own' in Portuguese. Substitution of *ter* for *haver* is a relatively recent process, and the specialization of the Present Perfect for (more or less restricted) universal readings is also a relatively recent process (Sten 1973, Suter 1984). I would like to suggest that the key to the explanation lies in auxiliary substitution*,* but that the relationship between the lexical choice of an auxiliary and the semantic peculiarities of the Present Perfect in Portuguese is less direct than assumed, for instance, by Giorgi & Pianesi (1997). The fact is that auxiliary substitution in Portuguese went hand in hand with the creation of an alternative resultative expression, in which *ter* embeds a small clause formed by a direct object and an agreeing past participle. This construction, which replicates the semantics of the Latin source of the *habere*-Perfects in Romance, prevented the emergence of resultative readings for its non-agreeing counterpart. Since the older, simple perfect had retained its resultative readings, the semantics of the non-agreeing *ter* + PP-construction, the Present Perfect, was specialized for universal readings, or, as in the Natal variety, even further restricted to pluractional contexts.

References

Alexiadou, Artemis & al. (eds) (2003), *Perfect explorations*. Berlin: Mouton/de Gruyter.
Amaral, Patricia &Chad Howe (2004), Reexamining the Portuguese Perfect Puzzle. 8th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium, University of Minnesota (handout).
Brugger, Gerhard (1998), Temporal modification, the 24-hour rule, and the location of Reference Time, in Silva-Villar, L. & J. Gutiérrez-Rexach (eds) *Perspectives on Spanish Linguistics Vol 2*. The Ohio State University.1-23.
Cabredo Hofherr, Patricia, Laca, Brenda & de Carvalho, Sandra (to appear), When Perfect means Plural, in Cabredo Hofherr & Laca (eds) *Layers of Aspect*.
Campos, Odette de Souza (1980), *O gerúndio no português*. Rio de Janeiro. Presença.

Caviglia, Serrana & Marisa Malcuori (1989/1994), Perfecto compuesto : deíctico de la enunciación. Consecuencias del uso en Montevideo, *Actas do XIX Congreso Internacional de Linguística e Filoloxia Romanicas*. A Coruña, t, IV, 581-590.

Caviglia, Serrana & Marisa Malcuori (1987/1999), Perfecto simple y perfecto compuesto en el español de Montevideo, *Actas del VIII Congreso Internacional de la ALFAL*, Tucumán.

Dahl, Östen (ed) (2000), *Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe*. Berlin: Mouton/de Gruyter. Demirdache, H. & M. Uribe-Etxebarria (2002), La grammaire des prédicats spatio-temporels, in Laca, B. (ed) *Temps et aspect. De la morphologie à l'interprétation.* St. Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes. 125-176.

Demirdache, H. & M. Uribe-Etxebarria (2004), The syntax of time adverbs, in Guéron, J. & Lecarme, J. *The syntax of time*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press. 143-179.

Dowty, David (1979), *Word meaning and Montague grammar*. Dordrecht. Reidel.

García Fernández, Luis (2007), Características aspectuales de los predicados de estado, in Camus, B. (ed) *El tiempo y los eventos*. Cuenca. Ediciones de la Universidad Castilla-La Mancha. 95-128.

Giorgi, Anna & Pianesi, Fabio (1997), *Tense and aspect. From semantics to morphosyntax.* New-York/Oxford : Oxford University Press.

Harris, Martin B. (1982), The 'past simple' and the 'present perfect' in Romance, in Vincent, N. & M. Harris (eds), *Studies in the Romance Verb*. Londres, Croon Helm, 42-70.

Iatridou, Sabine, Agnastonopolou, Elena & Izvorski, Roumania (2003), Observations about the form and meaning of the Perfect, in Alexiadou & al. (eds). 153-204.

Ilari, Rodolfo (2001), Notas para uma semántica do passado composto em português. *Revista Letras* (Curitiba) 55: 129-152.

Kamp, Hans & Uwe Reyle (1993), *From discourse to logic,* Dordrecht : Kluwer Academic Press.

Kubarth, Hugo (1992), El uso del pretérito simple y compuesto en el español hablado de Buenos Aires, in Luna Traill, E. (ed) *Scripta Philologica in Honorem Juan M. Lope Blanch*. Mexico. UNAM. 553-566.

Laca, Brenda (2006), Indefinites, quantifiers, and pluractionals. What scope effects tell us about event pluralities, in Tasmowski, L. & Vogeleer, S. (eds). *Non-definiteness and Plurality*, Amsterdam. Benjamins.

Laca, Brenda (to appear), Acerca de los perfectos compuestos en las variedades ibero-americanas, in Sánchez-Miret, F. (ed) *Homenaje a Carmen Pensado.*

Löbner, Sebastian (2002), Is the German Perfekt a Perfect Perfect ? Kaufmann, I. & B. Stiebels (eds). *More than words. A Festschrift for Dieter Wunderlich*. Berlin. Akademie Verlag. 369-391.

Lope Blanch, Juan M. (1972), Sobre el uso del pretérito en el español de México, *Estudios sobre el español de México*. México D.F., UNAM 131-143.

Mackenzie, Ian (1995), The supposed imperfectivity of the Latin American Present Perfect. *Hispanic Linguistics* 6 /7. 29-59.

Meillet, Antoine (1909), Disparition des formes simples du prétérit, in *Linguistique historique et linguistique générale*, Paris, Champion. 1965.

Mittwoch, Anita (1988), Aspects of English aspect : on the interaction of perfect, progressive and durational phrases, *Linguistics and Philosophy* 11. 203-254.

Molsing, Karina V. (2007), The Present Perfect at the Semantics/Pragmatics Interface: American English and Brazilian Portuguese, *ZASPIL - ZAS Papers in Linguistics*: 239-250 (=*Proceedings SuB* 10).

Moreno de Alba. José. G. (1978), Valores de las formas verbales en el español de México. México D.F., UNAM.

Pancheva, Roumania, (2003), The aspectual makeup of Perfect participles and the interpretations of the Perfect. In Alexiadou & al. (eds) 277-306.

Reichenbach, Hans, (1947/1966), *Elements of symbolic logic.* New York : The Free Press & Londres : Collier-MacMillan.

Rothstein, Susan (2004), *Structuring Events*, Oxford, Blackwell.

Schaden, Gerhard (2007), *La sémantique du Parfait : étude des "temps composés" dans un choix de langues germaniques et romanes*. Doctoral Diss. Université Paris 8.

Schaden, Gerhard (2008), Present Perfects Compete, to appear in *Linguistics & Philosophy*.

Schmitt, Cristina, (2001), Cross-linguistic variation and the Present Perfect: the case of Portuguese, *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 19. 403-453.

Schwenter, Scott A. (1994), 'Hot news' and the grammaticalization of perfects, *Linguistics* 32. 995-1028.

Schwenter, Scott & Rina Torres Cacoullos (2008), Defaults and indeterminacy in temporal grammaticalization: The Perfect road to perfective. Language Variation and Change 20, 1-39.

Smith, Carlota, (1991), *The parameter of aspect,* Dordrecht, Kluwer Academic Press.

Squartini, Mario (1998), *Verbal periphrases in Romance*. Berlin: Mouton deGruyter.

Squartini, Mario & Pier Marco Bertinetto (2000), The Simple and compound past in Romance languages. In Dahl (ed). *Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe*. Berlin: Mouton/de Gruyter. 405-475..

Sten, Holger (1973), *L"emploi des temps en portugais moderne*. Copenhaguen, Munksgaard.

Suter, Alfred (1984), *Das portugiesische Pretérito Perfeito Composto*. Bern, Francke.

Van Geenhoven, Veerle (2004), *For*-adverbials, frequentative aspect, and pluractionality, *Natural Language Semantics* 12.135-190.

Selected Proceedings of the 12th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium

edited by Claudia Borgonovo,
Manuel Español-Echevarría,
and Philippe Prévost

Cascadilla Proceedings Project   Somerville, MA   2010

Web access and citation information

This entire proceedings can also be viewed on the web at www.lingref.com. Each paper has a unique document # which can be added to citations to facilitate access. The document # should not replace the full citation.

This paper can be cited as:

Laca, Brenda. 2010. Perfect Semantics: How Universal Are Ibero-American Present Perfects? In *Selected Proceedings of the 12th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, ed. Claudia Borgonovo, Manuel Español-Echevarría, and Philippe Prévost, 1-16. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project. www.lingref.com, document #2401.