

Present Perfect for Preterit in Salvadoran Narratives: The Perfective Expansion into Narrative Discourse

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1. Introduction

In Spanish, the expansion of Present Perfect (PP) into the semantic spaces of Preterit (Pret) has been the focus of a significant number of studies. A main concern in many of these studies has been the extent of PP incursion into the spaces of Pret, often measured by noticeable differences in PP usage across varieties of Spanish. In comparative studies, a greater degree of PP expansion often amounts to greater differences in dialectal usages. However, in most varieties of Spanish, PP (*he comido* ‘I have eaten’) still expresses perfect meaning and Pret (*comí* ‘I ate’) expresses perfective. An accepted meaning of perfect is that of expressing that the past situation still has certain repercussions for the interlocutors at the moment of speech. As a consequence, with the perfect, the past event maintains a temporal link with the present conversation, as in (1a-b).

Perfect: the past event has important repercussions for the present moment (Comrie 1976:52).

- (1a) durante ese tiempo que **he estado** ahí, **he obtenido** bastantes conocimientos
(Sal-2000 #7-A AR)¹
‘during that time that **I have been** there, **I have obtained** a lot of knowledge’
- (1b) sí, **he bajado** allá al río (Sal-2000 #18-A ES)
‘yes, **I have descended** there to the river’

On the other hand, in a perfective meaning, the past event loses all connection with the moment of speech; the focus is mainly on its completion, as in (2).

Perfective: the past situation was completed (Comrie 1976:18).

- (2) -Yo **llegué** y me **dijo**, XXX, me **dijo**. Vamos a chotear, me **dijo**, al muey. Vamos le **dije**, como yo ya, ya había salido de mi turno, ¿va? Y... **nos fuimos** juntos. **Salimos** a chotear con él. Cuando **llegó** él al lugar a un salón, entré me **dijo**, ya **entré**, **nos sentamos**...
(Sal-2000 #3-B JP)
‘**I arrived** and **he said**, XXX, **he said**. Let’s go walk around at the dock **I said** let’s go, since I had already, already finished my shift, right? And... **we left together**. **We went to walk** with him. When **he arrived** at that place to a bar, come in he said, then **I went in**, **we sat down**.’

¹ I bolded all past forms that were relevant to the understanding of each example. In cases where PP and Pret forms co-occurred, I underlined all PP forms that were relevant to the discussion. Personal names and unintelligible material were shown with XXX in the transcription. I used (...) to show that parts of the transcription were omitted. Finally, the information included in parenthesis is the following: (Sal-2000 #**tape-side speaker**)

In those varieties in which PP has taken over the spaces of Pret, it may acquire new usages, including that of perfective function, as in (3).

PP perfective: the past situation was also completed.

- (3) - sí ese mismo día los militares mataron a una señora compañera de nosotros que se llama XXX fijese que la muchacha, esa muchacha tenía tres hijos, ¿veá? tenía una como de ocho años, un niño como de cinco y otro de cuatro parece, ‘tonces vino la señora y le dijo mirá pasate vos a tras corral le dijo porque yo creo que a mí no me matan con los niños le dijo no creo que hagan eso vos andate con la niña más grande y ella sí- y ella **se ha pasado** el trascorral con la niña, con la niña más grande y la señora **se ha metido** debajo de la cama con las dos niñas más pequeñas y mire sólo **han llegado** a levantar la cama y allí las **han ametrallado**, cosas así terribles... (Sal-2000 #7-A AL)
- ‘- yes that same day the military **killed** a lady friend of ours that was called XXX you see the girl had, that girl had three children, right? she had one like about eight years old, a boy about five and another about four, it seems, so the lady **came** and **told her** look you cross the fence in the backyard she told her because I think that they won’t kill me with the children she told her I don’t think they’ll do that you go with the oldest girl and her yes- and **she has crossed** the fence in the backyard with the oldest girl and the lady **has gotten** under the bed with the two younger girls and look **they have come** just to lift the bed and there **they have machine-gunned them**, terrible things like that...’

The expansion of PP to the semantic spaces of Pret is part of a more general process of perfect to perfective grammaticization. Cross linguistic studies by Dahl (1985:139) and by Bybee, Perkins and Pagliuca (1994:105) have shown that perfect forms in languages from unrelated families and scattered geographically around the world often grammaticize to a perfective aspect, as shown in Figure 1. The grammaticization path begins with lexical sources such as *be*, *have*, *come* or *finish*. In the Romance languages, *be/have* + Past Participle give way to a resultative, i.e. a present state that has come about as a result of a previous action (cf. Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994; Dahl 1985), which in turns gives way to a perfect, and finally to a perfective (See Penny 2002:165-67).

‘be’ / ‘have’ → RESULTATIVE → PERFECT → PERFECTIVE / SIMPLE PAST

Figure 1. Path of development leading to simple past and perfective grams in the Romance languages (Bybee, Perkins, and Pagliuca 1994:105).

Romance languages differ in their degree of PP grammaticization. In languages like French, Northern Italian, and Rumanian, the grammaticization of PP has reached completion; these languages exemplify the furthest encroachment of PP into the spaces of Pret. On the other hand, most Spanish varieties have only reached a perfect stage in their grammaticization, a fact that has been highlighted by current research. In all Spanish varieties Pret remains a viable option in the variation, even in those Spanish varieties where PP shows signs of further stages of grammaticization. The study of past form variation in these varieties can tell us more about the possible in-between stages along the perfect to perfective grammaticization path. There is also the fact that past form variation across Spanish varieties shows notable geographical differences, allowing for ample dialectal comparisons. The implications for PP grammaticization are obvious: the analysis of PP variation in Spanish can help shed light on the way that one grammatical form takes over the spaces of another, in this particular case, the way in which PP takes over the spaces of Pret.

2. Preterit and PP in variation

In Spanish, regional differences often coincide with differences in past form usage. Contrasting PP usage in American and Peninsular varieties offers a good example, particularly because the contrast has received much attention. Studies have argued that the PP in Peninsular varieties can occur in contexts in which Mexican varieties would generally accept Pret, but not PP. In an early study, Lope

Blanch (1972) claimed that the most frequent usage in Peninsular Spanish would be to say *¡He llegado!* ‘I have arrived!’, as someone walks into a room, while *¡Ya llegué!* ‘I already arrived’ would predominate in Mexican usage. His main argument is that PP in some Peninsular varieties is more grammaticized than in Mexican varieties.

Data from Alicante, Spain show a hodiernal use of the PP form. In this Peninsular variety, Schwenter (1994) found that the expansion of PP to the contexts of Pret seemed constrained by the temporal frame in which the past event occurred. Schwenter (1994) claimed that PP was used mainly as a hodiernal perfective; that is, PP predominated in those events that occurred within the last 24 hours from the moment of speech.

Much has been said of PP grammaticization in Peninsular and Mexican Spanish. However, in the following study, I explore past form variation in a Salvadoran corpus composed of close to 40 hours of sociolinguistic interviews. The data come from San Sebastián, El Salvador, a community of 10,000 located two hours east of San Salvador. This analysis offers an empirical account of past form variation in a variety where PP shows clear signs of encroaching upon the territory of Pret. In my data, PP also occurs in narrative clauses, which are often seen as a stronghold of Pret in past form variation. Thus, the expansion of PP into the narrative spaces of Pret suggests an advanced stage of grammaticization.

3. PP with perfective meaning

In Mexican Spanish those instances of PP that seem to extend beyond a perfect interpretation apparently occur in very particular contexts with clear pragmatic stimuli. Lope Blanch (1972:141) suggests that perfective meaning occurs sometimes in exclamations in situations in which a high affective content is implied. He offers the following examples: *Pasó un carro rozándolo... ¡Qué salto ha dado!* ‘A car went by brushing against him... How he jumped!’ and *y cuando ya estaba en plena carretera, ¡me he llevado un susto!* ‘and when I was on the road, I have been really scared!’.

Many examples in the Salvadoran data show the same affective content that Lope Blanch reports for Mexican Spanish, as illustrated by *me ha asustado* ‘he has scared me’ in (4a). In (4a), we have a near-death experience in which a drunkard attacks the narrator with a machete: his narrative is charged with all kinds of emotions. Obviously, the strong affective content emerges from the type of situation experienced, as is the case in (4a) and in (4b) below. In (4b), the narrator recalls how she fled from a war-refugee camp during a rainstorm that caused the banks of the Lempa River to overflow. In (4b), in addition to the emotional stress caused by the war and the flood, there is a physical pain felt by the speaker as she walked barefooted through the shrub.

- (4a) - ...‘tonces ahí quedó tirada la tabl- el tablazo ahí, entonces me jui, arriba, allá arriba iba con el corvo así pelado iba yo, entonces me dice, me dice un señor, este, don XXX
 - sí
 - entonces me dice, y por qué trae el corvo pelado, es que un bolo aquí que **me ha asustado** le dije yo, ¿vedá? **me ha asustado** un bolo, le digo, ah de veras le dije yo, ah de veras le dije yo **me ha asustado** le digo bastante le dije, me dice el señor, este, y ¿quién es?...
 (Sal-2000 #4-A AA)
 ‘ -...then the bo- was left lying there, the big board there, then I left, I was going up there with the machete in my hand, then a man says, uhm, Mr. XXX’
 - yes
 - then he says, and why are you carrying the machete in your hand, the thing is that a drunk here **has scared me** I told him, right? a drunk **has scared me**, I told him, oh really I told him **he has scared me** I told him a lot I told him, the man says to me, uhm, and who is he?...
- (4b) no pos si (...) y yo sin zapatos me jui (...) todita me espiné llegué cómo si los puches me ‘bían dado una XXX (...) entonces le dije a una señora (...) a pos llega la cipota, cuando no me halló a mí se fue y de noche, y no pudo, llorando allí, y yo a XXX vi llegar, ¡los puches **me han rebanado!** Después...
 (Sal-2000 #12-A EI)
 ‘well yes (...) and I had no shoes I left (...) I had thorns all over I arrived how if the thorns had given me a... (...) then I told a lady (...) well then the girl arrives, when she could not

find me she left and it was night, and she could not, crying there, and I saw XXX arrive, the thorns **have cut me!** Then...’

These examples bring us back to the original question: how does the PP come to encroach upon Pret in Spanish? I propose that the relation between PP with perfective meaning and affective content can be explained by focusing on the narrative structure. In a following section, I turn to the elements of the narrative in hopes of determining the way in which PP is expanding into new contexts. To do so, I consider all instances of PP that occur in the nineteen narratives found in the 36 hours of recorded data.

3.1. Conversation vs. narrative discourse

Givón (1995:31) suggests three defining parameters that can help distinguish between conversation and narrative discourse, as seen in Figure 2. These three parameters may be understood as independent of each other, even though they also show strong dependencies among each other. If we look at the first parameter, we see that in conversation there is a constant shift between participants: interlocutors in conversation share the floor for longer periods of time. The opposite is true in narrative, where the floor is usually retained by one of the participants for longer periods of time. This takes us to the next parameter since the constant shifts between participants in conversation means that hearer feedback is higher in conversation than in narrative discourse. Finally, the coherence of the text is often disrupted in conversation, and does not necessarily involve the telling of sequential events; in narrative discourse, text coherence is necessarily continuative.

Parameter	conversation	narrative
control of perspective:	shift between participants	retained by one participant
dependence on hearer feedback:	higher	lower
text coherence:	disruptive	continuative

Figure 2. Conversation vs. narrative: defining parameters (Givón 1995:31).²

When these parameters are applied, we notice that there are stronger constraints that bind narrative discourse to a past temporal frame. In the narrated account, the events in question have been clearly completed, and all events must be clearly situated in a past temporal frame. Thus, narrative is necessarily past and must be defined temporally. As a result, an agreed upon assumption is that narrative does not regularly move forward with perfect, but rather with perfective (See Dahl 1985:113). Here, perfective usually reports a sequential account of actual or fictitious events (See Dahl 1985:112). The speaker also looks at the narrated events as delimited in time, having taken place on a particular occasion and in chronological order. Narrative time may be established through the use of adverbials that define the temporal boundaries of the event(s), even though the narrative’s temporal frame can also be established by contextual information. The constraints that bind narrative discourse to a past interpretation are not always present in conversation. In fact, conversation time may be present, past, or future, or perfect. In the case of perfect the present may be linked to the past event.

In a previous study, I found (Hernández 2004:153) that in past form variation, the Salvadoran perfect strongly tends to occur with events that are temporally indeterminate as to the past temporal frame in which they occur. In these cases, temporal distance is not clear because it cannot be connected to any particular event in the past, as in (5a-b). In these examples, the only thing that can be said is that these events occurred in the past.

- (5a) con lo que **he visto** y he estado analizando y he estado observando
(Sal-2000 #1-A RA)
‘with what **I have seen** and I have been examining and I have been observing’

² I found Givón’s defining parameters useful in my distinction of narrative and conversational discourse. However, I understand that other researchers may not see Givón’s defining parameters of conversation and narrative as universal (e.g. Wieland 1990).

- (5b) eh, ¿veá? **les han robado** sus cosas pero tienen miedo de decir- de denunciar
 (Sal-2000 #7-A AR)
 ‘uhm, right? **they have robbed** their belongings but they are scared to say- to file charges’

In (5a), it is not clear when the speaker first saw the event mentioned. In (5b), *les han robado* refers to a recurring problem in the community, even though this is not an event that occurred on a particular occasion or to a particular individual. The previous observations suggest that narrative discourse is characterized by temporal constraints which would not necessarily favor the appearance of PP in narrative. However, in the Salvadoran corpus 9% of all PP tokens occur in narrative discourse and 91% of PP tokens still occur in non-narrative conversation.

Table 1 shows past form distribution by genre. Pret is actually more prevalent in narrative, at 90%, while in conversation Pret is at 75%. PP shows the inverse proportions: in narrative discourse, the frequency of PP (10%) is lower than in conversation (25%). Even though the frequency of PP in narrative remains lower than in conversation, PP has made strides into narrative discourse. This raises an important question: how does PP enter narrative discourse which is characterized by strong temporal constraints that do not favor perfect expansion? In the present study, the analysis of past form variation in narrative discourse suggests that PP encroachment to the spaces of Preterit in narrative is not random or widespread; but rather, the expansion of PP is constrained by the characteristics of the narrative structure itself.

Table 1. Past form distribution in conversation and narrative discourse.

Narrative				Conversation			
Present Perfect		Preterit		Present Perfect		Preterit	
%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
10%	76	90%	658	25%	762	75%	2274

4. PP in the Narrative structure

The analysis of oral narratives has proven an effective way of exploring morphosyntactic variation (e.g. Labov 1972, Labov and Waletzky 1967; Silva-Corvalán 2001, 1994). In a study of Spanish in Los Angeles, Silva-Corvalán (1994:56) explored the level of linguistic simplification evidenced in bilingual narratives. Her study showed important implications for verbal variation in the narrative structure, most important, that Pret was retained in narrative discourse among bilingual speakers regardless of linguistic competence. Narrative information was also classified as necessary or additional. As we would expect, her study showed that Pret is the verb form used to code the crucial events in the time line of the narrative; additional information occurred around the time line of the narrative as auxiliary information, often expressed by Present and Imperfect. I also analyzed each Salvadoran narrative according to Labov's narrative structure (1972:363-370), which includes the following elements:

The complicating action constitutes the sequence of narrated events. It involves a retelling in the chronological order in which the events occurred.

The abstract offers a summary of the reported event. If present, it is usually found in the initial stages of the narrative.

The orientation tells the time, the place, and the persons in the event. It is usually found in the firsts clauses of the reported event.

The resolution lets us know what finally happened.

The coda announces the conclusion of the reported event. It is usually found at the end.

The evaluation states the main point of the narrative. It tells why the reported event is important, and offers a sense of direction. It can be found in the beginning, middle, or end of any narrative. It often expresses subjective notions: judgments, opinions, emotions, and viewpoints of the narrator. It is also a stylistic recourse, which may involve recapitulation, repetition, and quoting. Silva-Corvalán (1994:60) notes that the evaluation may be internal if it occurs within the series of narrated events, or external if it occurs in clauses that wander off from the chronological sequence of events.

I want to show here that Pret predominates in the complicating action, and that PP occurs primarily outside the boundaries of the complicating action, as internal and external evaluation. As noted by Howe and Schwenter (2002), for Peruvian data: “Preterit is heavily restricted to narrative contexts, where it marks foregrounded events on the main story line. By contrast, the PP is favored for marking non-sequenced situations in the past”. The Salvadoran data revealed a finer distinction in which the PP occurs primarily in the non-sequenced situations that constitute the evaluation. In (6), for example, line 1 is the orientation, setting the stage for the narrative. Line 12 is the resolution; this is where we find out what finally happens to the narrator. Line 18 constitutes the coda, closing the story with a sarcastic remark. Lines 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7 contain the complicating action of the story, and as we can see, these are all Pret or Present: *mi mamá me mandó* ‘my mother sent me’, *vine* ‘I came’, *corté el chirriotito* ‘I cut a little branch’, *le pego al caballo* ‘I hit the horse’. The rest of the story comprises the evaluation.

(6)

1. - Bueno, cuando estaba pequeño cuando estaba pequeñito [orientation]
2. **mi mamá, este, me mandó** a, a que mudara las bestias, ¿va? con un mi hermano, [comp. act.]
3. **‘tonces me mandó** a, este, a mudarlas,
4. **‘tonces yo vine yo**
5. **y corté el chirriotito,**
6. así era, era de ese color era, de ese caballo, [evaluation]
7. **‘tonces que le pego al caballo,** [comp. act.]
8. ¡que me manda la gran patada! [evaluation]
9. aquí me la cerró la gran patada, aquí así abarcaba casi el ojo, me lo hizo así,
10. la gran patada que **me ha sampado** el caballo, aquí
11. –pero ya lo había puyado
12. - y caigo llorando yo, **me ha aventado** al suelo, pues, [resolution]
13. y sale mi hermana en carrera a avisarle a mi mamá, ¿va? [evaluation]
14. ‘tonces mi mamá sa- salió en carrera a verme y yo ‘onde me,
15. me hallé que era tumbo de sangre, ¿va? me, me hice así, ¿va? hice así, ¿va?
16. con el ojo porque quizás me lo saca el animal de la gran patada po-
17. pa’ que respetara, que no le anduviera pegando
18. - eso le pasó por traviezo [coda]
(Sal-2000 #4-A AA)
1. ‘- well, when I was young when I was young
2. **my mom, uh, sent me** to, to take the cattle, right? with my brother
3. **then she sent me** to, uh, to take them
4. **so I came I**
5. **and I cut a little branch,**
6. it was like this, it was this color it was, this horse
7. **then I hit the horse**
8. it really kicked me!
9. it hit me here, right here it covered almost the whole eye, it swollen,
10. **it has really hit me** the horse, here
11. - but you had bothered it
12. - and I fall crying, **it has thrown me** to the ground, well,
13. and my sister runs fast to tell my mom, right?
14. ‘then my mom ca- came out quickly to see me and I when I,
15. I saw that it was a blood, right? I, I went like this, right? I went like this, right?

16. with my eye because the animal almost burst it with that big kick
17. so that I learn to respect, so that I stop hitting it
18. - that happened because you were mischievous'

We see, in fact, that Pret or Present (shown in bold) predominate in the complicating action, and that the PP form with perfective reading (shown in bold and underlined) occurs predominantly outside the complicating action. The complicating action, where the Pret predominates, expresses those events perceived as objective and completed. In the past form variation, these contexts are a Pret stronghold. If PP occurs in the narrative, it is usually found in these more subjective contexts. The two most emotionally charged points in (6), for example, are those in which the narrator communicates his physical pain; they are expressed with PP: *me ha sampado el caballo* 'it has really hit me the horse' and *me ha aventado al suelo* 'it has thrown me to the ground'.

(7) repeats the pattern seen in our last example: Pret predominates in the complicating action, while PP occurs outside the complicating action. It is interesting to see that all PP occurrences in (7) are internal evaluation, that is, part of the chronological series of events that make up the narrative. We note that the evaluation in example (7) also expresses subjective notions. Here the narrator's tone fluctuates dramatically in the actual recording as he goes from the complicating action to the evaluation. The events in the complicating action are reported in a paused pace and a subtle voice: *nos fuimos juntos* 'we left together', *salimos a chotear* 'we went to walk', *ya entré* 'then I went in', *nos sentamos* 'we sat down', *le sirvieron las dos cervezas* 'they served him the two beers'. However, the pace and the intensity of the narrative picks up in the evaluation, where the narrator reports the confrontation with his boss.

The use of PP in evaluative contexts also suggests a stylistic device, one in which the narrator uses the PP to repeat particular events in his story. This repetition seems to intensify the consequences that certain events have on the outcomes of the narrative. In (7), the repetition of *venir* 'to come' in *si yo he venido aquí* 'if I have come here' and *yo a pie me he venido* 'I have come on foot' seems to highlight the conditions that generate the unexpected turn of events in the narrative. Also in (7), the repetition of *invitar* 'to invite' in *yo no lo he invitado* 'I have not invited you' and *usté me ha invitado* 'you have invited me' highlights the idea that the narrator was not interested in drinking and that he should not pay the check. Also, as mentioned above, reported speech is a common linguistic element used in evaluative clauses (Silva-Corvalán 2001:199). 58% of all PP forms in evaluative contents occur in reported speech, as in *No, le dije yo, si yo **he venido aquí, le dije yo, pa' chotear, no venir a tomar, le dije yo*** 'No, I said to him, if **I have come here, I said to him**, it is to walk around, not to come drink, **I said to him**'. Reported speech seems to refer the speaker back to the actual scene. Thus, the high frequency of PP forms in reported speech suggests that psychologically the PP may be seen as a more emotionally involved form.

(7)

1. - Había un muchacho ahí que... decía él que era el jefe, ¿va? [orientation]
2. Lo habían nombrado como jefe XXX. Le tocaba turno a él también, ¿va?
3. pero, en una de esas de que yo estaba haciendo el turno que me tocaba de,
4. de siete de la mañana a las tres de la tarde.
5. **Yo llegué** [comp. act.]
6. y me dijo, XXX, me dijo. Vamos a chotear, me dijo, al muey. [abstract]
7. Vamos le dije, como yo ya, ya había salido de mi turno, ¿va? [evaluation]
8. **Y... nos fuimos juntos. Salimos a chotear** con él. **Cuando llegó él** al lugar [comp. act.]
9. a un salón, entrá me dijo, **ya entré, nos sentamos.**
10. cuando le dice, señora, le dice, [evaluation]
11. deme dos cervezas, le dijo.
12. **Le sirvieron las dos cerveza a él.** [comp. act.]
13. Y le digo yo, y para que quiere dos, dos cervezas, le digo yo. [evaluation]
14. No me dice, una es para vos, me dijo. No, le dije yo, si yo **he venido** aquí, le dije yo,
15. pa' chotear, no a venir a tomar, le dije yo.
16. o cuántas veces me **ha visto** tomando a mí.
17. No, pero yo quiero estar aquí, me dice, y... y que XXX un par de cervezas, me dijo.
18. Pues no, le dije. Uno, que a mí no me gusta la cerveza, le digo yo. Y otra cosa es,

19. le digo, le digo yo, que ‘toy en mi trabajo, le digo yo, prácticamente ‘toy en mi trabajo
20. le digo yo. Cuando estuviera libre, le dije yo, tal vez que, una
21. semana o dos semanas que tuviera libre tal vez, le digo yo, podía tomarme unas cervezas,
22. pero XXX. A pues te, te tomás una soda me dijo. Sí, le dije.
23. Eh, **pidió la soda, me la tomé.** [comp. act.]
24. Así comenzó él a estar pidiendo cerveza, y yo con la soda ahí despacio con la soda. [evaluation]
25. Él no si él rápido. Tenía llena la mesa, ¿va? ya de envases.
26. Eh, de allí a lo que él estaba tomando cerveza,
27. **yo me tomé tres sodas.** [comp. act.]
28. Fue que después que, como dos horas que estuvimos ahí. Cuando le dice él a la [evaluation]
29. señora, ya él ya estaba bastante carboncito. Cuando él le dice a la señora, seño, le dijo, este,
30. la cuenta por favor, le dijo, y la señora le dijo cuanto era, ¿va? Ah pues, le dijo,
31. ahí se las va a pagar él, le dijo. Yo quería que le cancelara la cerveza, ¿va? Mire le dije yo,
32. yo no lo **he invitado** a usted, le dije yo. E incluso, le digo,
33. usted es el que me está invitando a mí que vinieramos a pasear aquí, y la soda
34. usted **me ha invitado**, le digo yo. Pero bien, le digo yo, las sodas las voy a cancelar yo
35. porque yo **me las he tomado**, pero las cervezas no.
36. Así es que **cancelé yo, yo las sodas y... ya se levantó él y canceló las sodas él,** [comp. act.]
37. las, las, las cervezas. Bueno, me dijo de todos modos, me dijo, no me quisiste pagar la, [evaluation]
38. la cerveza, me dijo. Este, mirá, me dice, allá está, me dice, este, andá que me lleve,
39. me dijo. Ese lo tenés que pagar vos, me dijo. No le dije si yo a pie me **he venido**, a pie me voy a ir,
40. le dije yo. No ‘ta ni retirado, le dije yo. Si lo más eran como cinco cuadras, hasta taxi quería.
41. Dende esa epoca ya él ya empezó a disgustarse conmigo. [resolution]
- (Sal-2000 #3-B JP)
1. ‘ There was a young man there that... he said that he was the boss, right?
2. They had named him boss XXX, He was also in my shift, right?
3. but, in one of those times that I was in my shift from,
4. from seven in the morning to three o’clock in the afternoon.
5. **I arrived**
6. and he said, XXX, he said. Let’s go walk around at the dock
7. I said let’s go, since I had already, already finished my shift, right?
8. **And... we left together. We went to walk** with him. **When he arrived** at that place
9. to a bar, come in he said, then **I went in, we sat down.**
10. when he tells, he tells the lady
11. give me two beers he says
12. **They served him the two beers.**
13. And I tell him, and why do you ask for two, two beers, I say
14. Well, he says, one is for you, he said. No, I said to him, if **I have come here**, I said to him, it is to
15. walk around, not to come drink, I said to him.
16. or how many times **have you seen me** drinking.
17. No, but I want to be here, he says, and... and that XXX a couple of beers, he said
18. Well no, I said. One, I don’t like beer, I said. And another reason is
19. I say, I tell him, that I am on duty, I say, I’m practically on duty
20. I tell him. When I am free, I told him, that maybe, one
21. week or two weeks that I had free maybe, I tell him, I could drink some beers
22. but XXX. Oh well you, you drink a soda he told me. Yes, I told him.
23. Uh, **he asked for the soda, I drank it.**
24. That’s how he started asking for beer, and I was with the soda there slowly with the soda.
25. Not he was fast. He had a full table, right? with bottles.
26. Uh, from there in the time that he was drinking beer
27. **I drank three sodas.**
28. It was then that, about two hours later. When he tells the lady
29. he was very drunk by then. When he tells the lady, mam’, he told her, uh,
30. the bill please, he told her, and the lady told him how much it was, right? Oh well, he told her
31. he is going to pay it, he told her. I wanted him to pay the beer, right. Look I told him,
32. I have not invited you, I told him, And I even told him,

33. you are the one that was inviting me to come walk around with you, and the soda
 34. **you have invited it to me**, I tell him. But alright, I tell him, I will pay the sodas
 35. because **I have drunk them**, but not the beers.
 36. So **I paid, I paid the sodas and... then he got up and he paid the sodas**,
 37. the, the beer. Well, he told me anyway, he told me, you did not want to pay the
 38. beer for me, he told me. Uh, look, he says, there is a, he tells me, come on tell him to take me,
 39. he said. You have to pay it, he told me. I said no, **I have come** walking, I will go walking,
 40. I told him It is not even far, I told him. It was only five blocks at the most, he even wanted a taxi
 41. From there on he was constantly angry with me'

In the previous examples I argued that PP with perfective meaning occurs primarily outside the narrative's complicating action. Example (8), however, demonstrates that PP with perfective reading may also appear in the complicating action (lines 5, 8, 9, and 10).

(8)

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. - sí ese mismo día los militares | [orientation] |
| 2. mataron a una señora compañera de nosotros que | [abstract] |
| 3. se llama XXX fíjese que la muchacha, esa muchacha tenía tres hijos, ¿véa? | [orientation] |
| 4. tenía una como de ocho años, un niño como de cinco y otro de cuatro parece, | |
| 5. 'tonces vino la señora y le dijo mirá pasate vos a tras corral le dijo | [comp. act.] |
| 6. porque yo creo que a mí no me matan con los niños le dijo no creo que hagan eso | [evaluation] |
| 7. vos andate con la niña más grande y ella sí- | |
| 8. y ella se ha pasado el trascorral con la niña, con la niña más grande | [comp. act.] |
| 9. y la señora se ha metido debajo de la cama con las dos niñas más pequeñas | |
| 10. y mire sólo han llegado a levantar la cama | |
| 11. y allí las han ametrallado , | [resolution] |
| 12. cosas así terribles... | [coda] |
- (Sal-2000 #7-A AL)
- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. - yes that same day the military | |
| 2. killed a lady friend of ours that | |
| 3. was called XXX you see the girl had, that girl had three children, right? | |
| 4. she had one like about eight years old, a boy about five and another about four, it seems, | |
| 5. so the lady came and told her look you cross the fence in the backyard she told her | |
| 6. because I think that they won't kill me with the children she told her I don't think they'll do that | |
| 7. you go with the oldest girl and her yes- | |
| 8. and she has crossed the fence in the backyard with the oldest girl | |
| 9. and the lady has gotten under the bed with the two younger girls | |
| 10. and look they have come just to lift the bed | |
| 11. and there they have machine-gunned them , | |
| 12. terrible things like that...' | |

Table 2 shows the distribution of PP and Pret within the narrative structure. We see a higher occurrence of PP and Pret in the non-complicating action, even though the frequency of PP is higher than that of Pret in this part of the narrative structure. An overwhelming 91% of PP with perfective meaning occurs outside the main chain of events of the narrative. This distribution reflects major differences between the complicating action and other elements of the narrative. As mentioned before, the complicating action consists of the linear sequence of events that make up the main line of the narrative, while the other elements of the narrative structure offer additional information. From the narrator's point of view, the complicating action involves objective and completed past events; the more subjective information (e.g. judgments or opinions, which may involve more debatable, unknown, or unreliable information) is organized around events in other elements that make up the narrative.

Table 2. Past form distribution in the narrative structure.

Narrative structure	Present Perfect		Preterit	
	%	N	%	N
Complicating Action	9%	7	41%	290
Non-complicating action:				
Evaluation	79%	61	53%	374
Resolution	7%	5	1%	9
Abstract	4%	3	3%	19
Orientation	1%	1	1%	5
Coda	-	-	1%	5

Example (9) shows the different treatment given to objective and subjective information in narrative discourse. In this excerpt from a more extended narrative, the main line of the story is *me fui, llegué, me apié, lo desensillé*, which shows the chronological series of events performed by the narrator; the mother's actions are summed up by *jue a verme, me echó de ver*. The debatable information is whether the narrator drank liquor or not. In (9) *te han dado guaro* 'they gave you liquor' is not part of the initial sequence of events of the narrative, which reports on an accident that the narrator suffered as a child. Rather, *te han dado guaro* is the mother's reaction to the narrator's terrible physical state after the accident. The other debatable points include the way in which the accident occurred, and whether the narrator told his mother the truth, seen close to the end of this excerpt in *no ha sido el golpe así* and *como me has contado*.

- (9) A1: ...Entonces como le iba contando, entonces **me fui**, ¿vedá? **ya llegué** a la casa, **ya me apié** del caballo y **lo desensillé**, ¿va? y qué es lo que tienes, me dijo mi mamá, ¿va? **jue a verme**, allí **me echó de ver**, a le dije, que un bicho, le dije yo, cuando un bicho venía corriendo en la Cuesta de los Mangos- yo no le quise decir que me había aventado del camión, ¿va? en la Cuesta de los Mangos, por venir corriendo me caí, le dije yo, a ver si tus tíos **te han dado guaro** me dijo ella, ¿va? a ver si tus tíos **te han dado guaro**, me dijo, no dije yo, yo guaro **no he probado** le dije yo, ¿va? como estaba cipote, ¿va?

A2: sí

A1: entonces, yo guaro **no he probado** le dije, vas a ver, me dijo... (...) me dijo, este, levántate, me dijo, mamá y de qué, le dije yo, ¿veá? dije yo bueno, ¿y de qué? mirá este- que **no ha sido** el golpe así, me dijo, como **me has contado** vos me dijo, **no ha sido** el golpe así, como **me has contado** vos, entonces no le dije yo, fijese que mi...

(Sal-2000 #4-A AA)

'A1: ...so like I was telling you, then **I left**, right? then **I arrived** home, then **I dismounted** the horse, and **I unsaddled**, right? and what is wrong, my mother said, right? **she came** to see me, there **she saw me**, oh I told her that a boy, I told her, when a boy was coming in Mangos Hill, I did not want to tell her that I had jumped from the bus, right? in Mangos Hill because I was running I fell, I told her, let me see if your uncles **gave you** liquor she said, right? let me see if your uncles **gave you** liquor, she said, I, **I did not drink** liquor I told her, right? when I was a boy, right?

A2: yes

A1: so, I did not drink liquor I told her, you'll see she said... (...) she said, uhm, get up, she said, mother and why, said to her, right? I said well, and why? Look uhm- the bruise **was not** like that, she said, like **you told me** she said, the bruise **was not** like that, like **you told me**, so I told her, you see my...'

Looking back at Table 2, the data reveal that only 9% of all PP perfective occurrences have encroached upon the spaces of Pret in the complicating action. It is not surprising to find such a low

frequency of PP tokens in the complicating action because within the narrative structure this is the element that has the strongest temporal constraints.

5. Conclusion

My analysis showed the contexts in which PP with perfective meaning seems to enter narrative discourse. The relatively high percentage of PP outside the (non-evaluation) complicating action suggests that the PP enters the narrative elements that surround the complicating action first, and from here it begins its expansion to the complicating action itself. Non-complicating elements are usually evaluative in nature and are not affected by the strong past temporal constraints that seem to rule the complicating action. The information dealt with in these evaluative contexts is of a more subjective nature than that in the complicating action. In past form variation, the complicating action is certainly the last stronghold of Pret. However, even this low amount of PP in the complicating action makes clear the solid push of PP to the spaces of Pret. The fact that PP has managed to advance into the complicating action suggests that PP is on a firm march that could undoubtedly mean complete encroachment on the semantic spaces of Pret in the variety of Spanish studied.

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