

Simultaneity and “increased present” in the European Spanish perfect*

Susana Azpiazu

Freie Universität Berlin
susana.azpiazu@fu-berlin.de



Received: December 12, 2017

Accepted: April 17, 2018

Abstract

This paper deals with the concept of “simultaneity” in relation to the Spanish Present Perfect based on the descriptions made by Rojo (1974) and Rojo & Veiga (1999), and seeks to link it to other similar concepts proposed by other scholars, such as Alarcos’ *presente ampliado* (“Increased Present” (IP)), McCoard’s Extended Now (XN), and Iatridou et al.’s Perfect Time Span (PTS). Although not all these terms refer to the same concept, as their limits depend on the respective languages they account for, they all share the notion that there is some kind of temporal coincidence between the event and the speech act that informs the Perfect. We posit that the way this temporal coincidence is conceived may explain the temporal and aspectual differences between the Perfect in languages such as Spanish, Portuguese and English.

Keywords: compound perfect; simultaneity; increased present; perfect time span; Spanish; English; Portuguese

Resum. *Simultaneïtat i “present estès” en el perfet de l’espanyol europeu*

En aquest treball ens ocupem del concepte de simultaneïtat associat amb el perfet en castellà a partir de la descripció de Rojo (1974) o de Rojo & Veiga (1999), i cerquem com relacionar-lo amb d’altres conceptes semblants com ara el “present ampliat” d’Alarcos, “l’ara estès” de McCoard o el “lapse temporal de perfet” d’Iatridou et alii. Tot i que no tots aquests conceptes es refereixen exactament al mateix, donat que els seus límits vénen imposats per les llengües per a les quals són ideats, tots abarquen la idea que el perfet només és possible si hi ha algun tipus de coincidència temporal amb el moment de la parla. Defensem que el mode en el qual es concep aquesta coincidència pot explicar les diferències temporals i aspectuals del perfet en unes llengües com ara el castellà, el portuguès o l’anglès.

Paraules clau: perfet compost; simultaneïtat; present ampliat; lapse temporal del perfet; castellà; anglès; portuguès

* This work is part of the research project *Pretérito perfecto simple y pretérito perfecto compuesto: Historiografía, grammatización y estado actual de la oposición en el español europeo* (FFI2013-45914-P) [‘Simple Perfect and Compound Perfect: Historiography, *grammatisation* and current state of the opposition in European Spanish’], funded by Spain’s Ministry of the Economy, Industry and Competitiveness (MINECO), and led by the author and Prof. J. J. Gómez Asencio.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction 2. Simultaneity in the Perfect 3. Time lapse models	4. Simultaneity and the PTS across languages 5. Conclusions References
---	--

1. Introduction

The variations between the (simple) Preterite¹ and the (compound) Perfect in nearly all European languages can be described as the difference between, on the one hand, the reference to an event prior to the present situation and unrelated to it (1), and on the other, the reference to a prior event related or “relevant” to the present situation, also called “Anterior” (Bybee 1985, Bybee et al. 1994, Thieroff 2000) (2).

(1) I arrived in Berlin yesterday.

(2) I have always lived here.

Since Reichenbach (1947), the Anterior meaning has been coded as E-S,R (the event is prior to the speech act, which is simultaneous to the reference time), and remains so in the literature. In the Spanish tradition, the Perfect has been coded by Rojo (1974) and Rojo & Veiga (1999) as (OoV)-V, which means it refers to a past event (-V) that is simultaneous (oV) to the origin (O), which is normally, but not always, the moment of speech. Both codes are similar and refer to the same fact: in contrast to the Preterite, which is an absolute tense, the Perfect or Anterior is a relative tense in which two temporal situations, the event in the past (E / -V) and the moment of speech (S / O), are related by *some kind* of simultaneity (, / o) (in (2), the fact that the speaker is still living there at the moment of the utterance).

The issue therefore involves the precise definition of this relationship (R) between both temporal situations in the Perfect and its grammatical nature: is it a temporal category, such as S and E, or does it describe some aspectual circumstance between E and S? Both Reichenbach’s and Rojo’s approaches have treated it as a temporal category, but there is no consensus in the specific literature on the subject. Since Comrie (1976) and Klein (1992), the Perfect has been considered an aspectual category whose semantic functions have been described as “resultative”,

1. “Preterite”, “Perfect”/“Anterior” and also “Present”, with an initial capital, refer to the functional (semantic) categories to be found under different forms in the SAE-languages of Europe. The terms in brackets (“simple” and “compound”) refer to the forms that are mostly the corresponding formal appearance of “Preterite” and “Perfect” in these languages, but they do not always correspond to what we find in natural languages. For instance, the Preterite also appears as a compound form in Basque and Catalan.

“continuative”, “experiential” or “hot news” (Comrie 1976: 56-61). Scholars have used these labels to cover all the semantic nuances provided by the Perfect across languages. More recently, new attempts have been made to reduce the number of aspectual labels by also taking into account the lexical meaning provided by the verbs themselves, whereby it is posited that there are just two Perfect aspectual meanings: experiential (the past event is completed, regardless of whether it occurred just once or several times) and universal or continuative (the past event is not completed, it continues through to the moment of speech and beyond), which corresponds to the basic classification of the verb phrases regarding their *Aktionsart*: telic (the event is completed, see (3)) vs. atelic (the event is not completed, (4)) (Iatridou et al. 2003).

(3) I wrote the letter (in a month / *for a month²)

(4) I stayed at home (*in two hours / for two hours)

If this is so, there is no sense in searching for an “aspectual” meaning of the Perfect: the aspectual meanings posited by Comrie are not to be found in the Perfect, but instead in the lexical meaning of the verbal constructions.

Even if this assumption could be nuanced for languages like Portuguese, where aspect and not *Aktionsart* seems to play a more important role in the choice of the Perfect instead of the Preterite (no semelfactive interpretation can be made of an event if it appears in the *pretérito composto*, so it always has an iterative or durative meaning), it seems to apply to Spanish, both in its European and Atlantic varieties. As many scholars have shown recently (Azpiazu 2012 and in press; Veiga 2014; Kempas 2017), aspect does not appear to be the right way of solving the problems of the Perfect’s semantics in Spanish, where Comrie’s Perfect values depend so clearly on the lexical and co-textual constellation of the sentence (*Aktionsart* and the presence/absence of certain temporal markers). More specifically, the temporal distance to S in European Spanish does seem to be relevant for the Perfect, which leads us to consider a more comprehensive explanation of the Perfect in this language for unifying the aspectual and temporal features of the form on all occasions. The temporal perspective, as proposed by Rojo (1974) and Rojo & Veiga (1999), seems to be the right descriptive framework for the Spanish Perfect (Azpiazu in press). More precisely, we contend it is a temporal feature of the Perfect, the simultaneity vector inextricably attached to the anteriority (or “past”) meaning, being the key for understanding the function of the Perfect in contrast to the Preterite, as well as for describing the different cross-linguistic uses of the form.

This paper addresses the interaction between Rojo’s vector model and the theories of the existence of a time lapse focusing on the Perfect, called “pre-

2. This is a common test for distinguishing between telic and atelic events: if an event is telic, an adverbial such as “in x time” (‘within x time’) can be applied to it. If it is atelic, it can be accompanied by a duration adverbial without limits such as “for x time”.

sente ampliado” by Alarcos (1947), “extended now” (XN) by McCoard (1978), or “Perfect Time Span” (PTS) by Iatridou et al. (2003) and Pancheva & von Stechow (2004). Following some general thoughts on the notion of “simultaneity” in the grammatical tense system (section 2), we will review the different conceptualisations in the literature regarding the time span attached to the Perfect (section 3) and propose a coherent explanation for the different role simultaneity plays within these time span conceptualisations across languages such as English, Portuguese and European Spanish (section 4). We will conclude by affirming that “simultaneity” and the time span attached to it cannot be homogeneously defined for all languages, but it is always a necessary element for a cross-linguistic explanation of the Perfect’s functional possibilities and semantic restrictions.

2. Simultaneity in the Perfect

As explained above, Rojo (1974: 104) describes the Spanish Perfect as a tense expressing the anteriority of an event within “what is simultaneous to the origin”. Simultaneity is not a discrete grammatical category, which means it does not have real-time boundaries either on the left (beginning) or on the right (end). It does not begin and it does not end: as far as the speaker does not have a discrete image of their own awareness, they cannot determine the beginning or the end of their present world. Narrating events in the Preterite precisely means recalling the past, as in (1), but with the Perfect we are relating this past to the present. i.e., giving the past some kind of coherent interpretation from the present point of view (in (2), the speaker relates the fact they used to live somewhere with the affirmation that they still live at that same place). When the speaker puts their past memories within a present time frame, they are seeking in some way to relate them to their own actual awareness. This is why the use of the Perfect tense has traditionally been considered a form of discourse subjectivation (e.g., Jacob 1996; Lindstedt 2000; Detges 2000).

If simultaneity lacks time boundaries, any tense based on a simultaneous vector (like the Perfect) must also have a certain measure of boundlessness, or time indeterminacy. Indeed, in languages such as Portuguese or English, an event in the Perfect tense is not anchored in a definite past - it is just an event that happened at an unspecific moment before the present speech act (McCoard 1978: chapter 3). As a result, the Perfect in these languages cannot appear beside specific time adverbials (such as *at six*, *yesterday*, etc.). This is not the case in European Spanish or, to a different extent, Catalan³, where specific time adverbials can accompany the Perfect tense, which is due to the different intentional properties of the simultaneity component, and therefore of the conception of the time span involving the Perfect across languages.

3. In Catalan, the Perfect can coincide with definite hodiernal adverbials (*avui* ‘today’ – *aquest matí* ‘this morning’) or definite prehodiernal adverbials with a clear link to the present via the demonstrative *aquest* (*aquest estiu* ‘this summer’).

3. Time lapse models

The existence of a time span related to the Perfect has largely been discussed in the literature through different theoretical perspectives and with different names. In the Spanish tradition, the concept has been widely known since Alarcos (1947), who called it the *presente ampliado* “increased or lengthened Present”. Although it has very often been used to explain the Perfect, there does not appear to be any consensus over what this term should actually explain. The *New Grammar of the Spanish Language* (NGLE, in its Spanish acronym) describes an “extended present” (*presente extendido*), but this term refers to a special feature of the Present tense that does not fulfil all the expressive possibilities of Alarcos’s *presente ampliado*.⁴ As for other languages, a different term has been proposed that apparently coincides with this concept: XN (McCoard 1978) or PTS (Iatridou et al. 2003; Pancheva & Von Stechow 2004). Indeed, these terms do not seem to refer to anything very different to Alarcos’s *presente ampliado*, and add nothing that was not already included in the Spanish term.

3.1. Alarcos’s “Increased Present” (IP)

In his 1947 work, Alarcos does not define the IP very precisely, although it becomes the key component of his explanation of the Perfect/Preterite opposition in Spanish:

El presente es una fracción de tiempo abstracta, y el presente gramatical, como es sabido, está constituido no por un punto, sino por una línea formada por la proyección de varios sucesivos presentes abstractos. Esta línea ideal del presente gramatical entra, por tanto, en el campo del pasado (y, por otra parte, puede prolongarse también en el futuro): cuando digo *veo un perro*, la acción de ‘ver’ ha comenzado en un punto inmediato, pero ya pasado, y se continúa mientras hablo; pero una vez alejado del perro, diré *he visto un perro hace unos momentos*, porque la acción se ha producido en el mismo período de tiempo en que hablo, pero no coincidiendo con el acto de hablar (o escribir). Así, el perfecto compuesto nos da la idea de un presente ampliado hacia el pasado: la línea ideal del presente gramatical se prolonga hacia los hechos pasados. Por el contrario, la forma simple nos indica una acción producida en un punto o línea excluidos del que llamamos ‘presente ampliado’. (28-29). [‘The present is an abstract period of time and, as we know, the grammatical present does not involve a point, but instead a line formed by the projection of several successive abstract presents. This perfect line of the grammatical present runs into the past (and, in turn, it can also extend into the future): when I say *I see a dog*, the “see” action has begun in an immediate temporal point in the past, and it

4. In §23.7h the NGLÉ introduces the term “*ahora extendido*”, which reminds us of McCoard’s (1978) XN. It is defined as a lapse that contains the moment of speech and begins at a non-specific past moment, but submits the reader to section 23.5d, where the present tense is described. However, in that section “*presente extendido*” does not refer to a temporal lapse, but rather to a very specific type of Present use with atelic verbs, and explicitly linked to the moment of speech. The reference to a “*presente*” or “*ahora extendido*” in the NGLÉ is confusing, as it is not clear whether it refers to a time interval (in the first case) or to a special use of the Present form (in the second case). Note that the “*presente extendido*” in the second case does not coincide with Alarcos’ “*presente ampliado*”, which is a characteristic of both atelic and telic predicates.

continues as I speak. Once the dog has moved away, however, in Spanish I can say *he visto un perro hace unos momentos* [*I have just seen a dog*], as the action happened in the same time lapse in which I am talking, although it did not coincide with the act of speaking (or writing). The compound perfect thus gives us a present that extends into the past: the perfect line of the grammatical present runs back to past events. By contrast, the simple form indicates an action that occurred at a point or on a line excluded from what we refer to as the “increased present”.’]

There was nothing new about connecting the Perfect and Present, as was apparent in Spanish grammars before Alarcos (see Azpiazu & Quijada 2016: 22-23), although except for Bello (1847) and his famous term “*ante-presente*”, nobody had explicitly identified this connection. Alarcos was the first one to convert it into a suitable theoretical concept for explaining all the uses of the Perfect in (European) Spanish.

In many of the later canonical descriptions of the Spanish Perfect (e.g., Hernández 1984; Seco 1972; Porto Dapena 1989), there is a clear debt to Alarcos’s description, although the term “*presente ampliado*” is never used there. In fact, Alarcos did not provide a very concrete definition of the term, maybe because it is not a strictly verbal element, but instead a cognitive temporal conception, simply describing it as a time lapse that runs from a past point to the “now” of the speaker or writer (Alarcos 1947: 32).

Alarcos’s IP is therefore a time span (a “period”) of unspecific dimensions that begins at some time in the past and ends at the moment of the speech act. It has two basic features: a) as it is not a verbal element, it is not necessarily determined by the presence of any linguistic unit (i.e., temporal adverbials) beyond the verbal form itself, and b) except for sundry fixed uses in some Spanish varieties, its left boundary depends on the speaker’s subjective understanding of this time span. The speaker is the one that ultimately decides how long this “present” should be according to “subjective factors” (Alarcos 1947: 33).

Consequently, any rationale for the existence of this IP can only be circular: the subjective notion of IP can only be deduced from the presence of the Perfect in discourse. The “*presente ampliado*” makes both *Mi abuela murió la semana pasada* and *Mi abuela ha muerto la semana pasada* acceptable utterances in European Spanish. If the IP is a temporal conception, and not a morphosyntactic feature, it should not be connected either to the presence of adverbials expressing temporal proximity or a possible time connection to the speech act. It is not the presence of adverbial elements such as *ahora* (‘now’), *hoy* (‘today’) or *este mes* (‘this month’), for instance, but the speaker’s choice of the compound, and not the simple past form, that determines the existence of an IP meaning in the utterance.

On the other hand, as the IP has no measurable dimensions, it has the advantage of easily including any other references to the Perfect’s aspectual or temporal features (such as “indeterminacy” and “current relevance” linked to the form in the literature. Comrie’s (1976) terms “continuative”, “experiential”, “resultative” and “hot news” for the Perfect across languages could be explained as different ways of expressing the event’s temporal link to the moment of speech. As for Spanish, this idea is firmly established in handbooks for Spanish as a foreign language (see, for example, Borrego Nieto 2013: 29), but not so in more specialized scientific works

on the semantic features of the European Spanish Perfect (e.g., Schwenter 1994), where the Perfect is connected to adverbials or situations unambiguously linked to the speech act, whereby the presence of the compound form in contexts referring to preodiurnal situations is considered a deviation from the norm. Such works simply emphasize a small detail of Alarcos’s IP theory, but do not really consider the term’s semantic consequences, which largely surpass the narrow limits of any specific time span. In fact, a close study of these “abnormal” Perfect uses shows they are far from being that rare and, by contrast, they can mostly be explained from the perspective of the IP (see Azpiazu & Kempas 2017).

3.2. “Extended now” (XN)

Alarcos’s IP has a very similar correlate in McCoard’s later XN term (1978), which was the one successfully disseminated in the English-speaking tradition (e.g., Dowty 1979; von Stechow 1999):

(...) the perfect as the marker of prior events which are nevertheless included within the overall period of the present, the extended now, while the preterite marks events assigned to a past which is concluded and separate from the extended present (McCoard 1978: 123).

McCoard refers back to grammarians such as Pickbourn (1789) and Bryan (1936) as two forerunners of the XN theory, which he seems to accept as the right way to explain the Perfect in English (McCoard 1978: 151). Specifically, Bryan’s explanation of the “limits of time” seems to be very close to Alarcos’s IP:

A period which began in the past and extends up to or into the present. The *terminus a quo* of this period of time may be made any point – however near or however remote – preceding the present; the *terminus ad quem* is always the present moment of speaking or writing. That is, from the point of view of the present the speaker looks back upon some continuous stretch of the past and within this he places the action or state. This period of past time may be momentary, as in “The messenger has just arrived”; or it may be of considerable extent as in “The old house has been left untenanted for many years”; or it may include all past time, as in Shakespeare’s “Men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love”. (Bryan 1936: 366, quoted by McCoard 1978: 126)

Like the IP, the XN term is also the speaker’s subjective temporal conceptualisation. There are, nonetheless, significant differences between McCoard’s and Alarcos’s terms: the Spanish IP is a broad time interval that can include any kind of event, i.e., events that are or can be temporally located at specific moments; the English XN includes only unspecific events, ones that regardless of their telicity or atelicity occur only in iterative or unspecific moments (even if they occur very close to the moment of speech, with adverbs like *just now* or *recently*; McCoard 1978: sections 4.4 and 4.5). The inability of English Perfect constructions to be modified by locating time adverbials such as *this morning*, *at six*, has been referred to as the

Present Perfect Puzzle since Klein (1992), who also tried to solve this “puzzle” by the so-called “p-definiteness constraint”.⁵ This constraint involves maintaining all the events included in the Perfect XN in an indefinite temporal status. This is not the case for the Spanish Perfect, whose time span (IP) lacks the p-definiteness constraint. We will further explain the differences between both time spans related to the Perfect across different languages in section 4.

3.3. Perfect Time Span (PTS)

Von Stechow (1999), Iatridou et al. (2003), Pancheva & Von Stechow (2004), Xiqués (2015) develop the XN theory as the PTS theory, whereby the use of the Perfect implies a time interval whose left boundary is the speech act moment (which is also the reference time), as can be inferred by the present tense in the auxiliary verb. This model aims to improve upon the limits of Reichenbach’s theory (1947), where relations between temporal moments are seen as points on the time line, and not as intervals. Also in order to correct the XN theory, which does not consider that the time span has different cross-linguistic properties (as seen above between English definitiveness constraints and Spanish’s lack of such constraints), Pancheva & von Stechow (2004) propose the “weak PTS theory”. In this new version, the reference time (utterance time) and the PTS are different time intervals, so they do not necessarily overlap: the PTS may also precede or partially overlap with the reference time, or it may entirely precede it. This is also the version of the PTS theory considered more suitable for the German Perfect, and also the one adopted by Xiqués (2015 and in press) to account for the Catalan Perfect, which has no significant semantic differences with the European Spanish Perfect, except for a higher systematicity in the use of the hodiernal Perfect.

Contending that the cross-linguistic differences in the Perfect depend on the way two different time intervals, the PTS and the reference time, are related implies accepting that in some languages, such as German or French, the PTS may fully precede the reference time. In that case, the simple and the compound form do not compete, as the Perfect may be modified by past time adverbials such as *yesterday* (*gestern*, *hier*):

- (5) a. Gestern bist du nicht gekommen
 Yesterday be.2SG YOU.SG NEG COME.PTCP
 ‘You didn’t come yesterday’ (German)
- b. Tu n’est pas venu hier
 You NEG-BE.3SG NEG COME.PTCP yesterday
 ‘You didn’t come yesterday’ (French)

5. Klein (1992: 546) defines the “p-definiteness constraint” as follows: “in an utterance, the expression of TT [topic time] and the expression of TSit [time of the situation] cannot both be independently p-definite”. In his theory, the present tense is always p-definite, so he contends that the present-tense morpheme included in the present form (*has*) excludes the possibility of a further p-definite reference, and that is why a sentence like **Chris has left at six* is not possible in English.

The existence of such examples in German or French is a logical extension of a similar phenomenon described for Spanish and Catalan, with the Perfect and a definite temporal adverbial expressing a hodiernal or prehodiernal situation with an explicit link to the present, as in:

- (6) a. Esta mañana no te he visto
 DEM.F. morning NEG you.ACC have.1SG see.PTCP
 ‘I did not see you this morning’ (Spanish)
- b. Aquest Nadal he estat a Mèxic (Xiqués 2015: 56)
 DEM.M Christmas have.1SG be.PTCP in Mexico
 ‘I was in Mexico at Christmas’ (Catalan)

Nevertheless, these examples do not presume the existence of two different time intervals: the PTS is still the reference time, but it is broadly conceived. As noted above, the PTS need not have exactly the same extension in all languages, although it is always a time interval starting at the reference time or utterance time, and extending toward an indefinite anterior moment that does not always need to have its left boundary determined. The differences are in its intrinsic semantic features and its functional properties: in languages such as English, the PTS has the same features as the present tense; it is conceived as an indefinite time span without clear boundaries either to the left or to the right, and so it is incompatible with any kind of definite time reference. It is more a Present than a Perfect time span. On the other hand, in languages such as Spanish, Catalan, German and French, the PTS is a broader time interval linked to the utterance time, although also able to include time references specifically located in the past. The PTS here can, albeit not always, designate a present situation; it can also refer to a past situation *included in a present interval*. In Spanish and Catalan, this is not often the case when the past situation is explicitly detached from the utterance time, with adverbials like *ayer*, *el otro día*, etc., as it is in German and French, but some European Spanish varieties follow a growing trend in this direction (Azpiazu 2012, 2014, 2015).

The following section aims to provide a more precise definition of this paper’s conceptualisation of the Spanish PTS or IP, and explain the extent to which it is different to the PTS in languages like Portuguese, and maybe also English.

4. Simultaneity and the PTS across languages

4.1. Returning to our temporal conception of the Perfect borrowed from Rojo (1974), we will now seek to explain previous affirmations by looking at the role simultaneity plays in the cross-linguistic semantic intension of the PTS. A previous work (Azpiazu in press) deals with the notion of “simultaneity” in some Romance Perfects, contending that this notion is the key for understanding the different extension of the PTS across languages.

As described above (section 1), in Rojo’s model (1974), and also developed in Rojo & Veiga (1999), the Perfect is represented as (OoV)-V. This means it expresses the anteriority of an event within its simultaneity to the origin (Rojo

1974: 104). On the other hand, the Preterite is simply O-V, that is, the simple expression of an earlier event. The difference between both forms clearly involves the presence of the simultaneity vector or element in the Perfect. All the special features of the Perfect across languages (each one of its morphosyntactic and semantic constraints), and therefore the intension and extension of the time interval called IP, XN or PTS, can be explained cross-linguistically by means of the interaction between both the anteriority and the simultaneity vectors.

4.2. In Portuguese, simultaneity in the Perfect means the persistence by continuity (7) or repetition (8) of a situation with a past origin. Hence, the Perfect is a special kind of present tense, one that has a limit in the past and can extend into the future (as the iterative or continuous situation does not necessarily stop at the moment of speech).

(7) *Ele tem estado doente*
 3SG.M have.3SG be.PTCP ill
 ‘He has been ill’

(8) *O professor tem chegado tarde*
 DEF.M teacher have.3SG arrive.PTCP late
 ‘The teacher has arrived late’

Azpiazu (in press: section 4) has proposed the following description for the Portuguese *pretérito composto*: “The Perfect (1) [that is, Portuguese Perfect] establishes the equivalence of the primary vector of anteriority of a succession of events – or of a continuative event – to a temporal lapse simultaneous to the origin”. We also propose the following diagram (9) to explain it:

(9)



The dot and arrow indicate the origin and direction of simultaneity. Past events, whether telic or atelic, coincide in their origin and in their development or repetition with the simultaneity vector (in grey); so until O, both vectors designate a persistent situation, and not a past event. Simultaneity may (but not necessarily) start before the first TE (as Iatridou et al. -2003- affirm), and it allows extending beyond O into the future (which is why both the box and the arrow extend beyond O). The whole semantic framework of the Portuguese Perfect is represented by the box lines.

The English Perfect behaves in a similar way, with the only difference being that the Perfect can also appear in this language with unique telic events in the past that are nevertheless not time specific, as they could never be modified by

6. TE = Time of event (E in Reichenbachian terms, V in Rojo’s terms). O = Origin (S in Reichenbachian terms).

locating time adverbials. The usual interpretation here is the resultative one: a past event causes a new situation that runs up to the moment of speech:

(10) I have discovered your plans (and now I know them)

This telic, resultative interpretation applies also to many varieties of the American Spanish Perfect (11):⁷

(11) yo me he dado cuenta que yo (...) sí puedo entrar a una
 I SG RFL. I SG have. I SG realize. PTCP that I SG yes can. I SG enter to a
 universidad y estudiar (Bogotá. Female, 40 years old⁸)
 university and study
 ‘I have realized that I can go to University and study’

In these cases, there is no “equivalence” between both vectors, anteriority and simultaneity, as in Portuguese, but an addition of simultaneity after anteriority (see Azpiazu in press: section 5.1 on American Spanish):

(12)

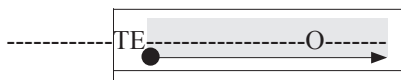


Diagram (12) depicts the relationship between the two vectors in the resultative reading: in contrast to (9), the dimensions of anteriority do not coincide here with simultaneity, but instead they both follow on in succession. It should be noted in this case that the box that groups both these vectors does not coincide with the simultaneity vector (in grey). This means that both these vectors are linked, but they are not comparable at all moments of the Perfect’s time lapse, as was the case in (9). Once again, the PTS may extend beyond O. Regarding the origin and orientation of the vector of simultaneity, the event begins to come to an end and moves into the future, toward the right.

In both the Portuguese and English (also American Spanish) cases, the Perfect denotes an actual situation with origin in the past and persistence in the present, whereby the notion of simultaneity prevails over anteriority. As simultaneity has a very weak deictic value, the Perfect in these languages is easily related to aspectuality rather than to temporality.

7. Azpiazu (in press: section 5.1) provides a slightly different version of the interaction between both temporal vectors, anteriority and simultaneity, in resultative contexts, being referred to as Perfect 2. For the purposes of this work, both Perfects (9) for Portuguese and (12) for American Spanish or English) share the same feature, which is their reference to a present and not past situation.
8. Extracted from the Corpus of the Standard Norm of the main Latin American cities (Samper Padilla 1998).

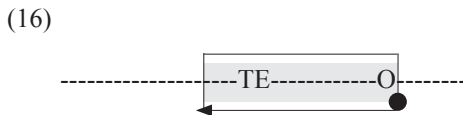
4.3. The situation is quite different in the European Spanish Perfect, where the past event can be unique and reachable at any specific moment in time within the simultaneity span. This moment can either be explicitly elicited (by temporal adverbials such as *hoy* ‘today’ or *esta semana* ‘this week’) (13) and (14), or not (15), but it always falls within the scope of an increased Present conception, Alarcos’s IP:

(13) *Hoy me he levantado de mal humor*
 Today RFL.1SG have.1SG wake-up.PTCP of bad mood
 ‘I got up in a bad mood today’

(14) *He vuelto de España esta semana*
 have.1SG return.PTCP from Spain this week
 ‘I returned from Spain earlier this week’

(15) *¿Ha llegado Juan?*
 Have-3SG arrive-PTCP John
 ‘Has John arrived?’

The simultaneity vector is not exactly coincident with anterior events, but it refers to a timeframe in which those past events occur. The limits of the anteriority and simultaneity vectors are not the same, as they are in Portuguese; simultaneity in the Spanish Perfect is a time span at a higher level that encompasses anteriority. We depict it as:



The diagram is similar to (9) and different from (12), in which TE is again included within the grey time span (simultaneous to O), although there are also significant differences between (16) and (9): on the one hand, the event is not reiterated until O in (16), but instead it is unique, and its temporal boundaries (beginning and end) are established in the past. On the other hand, the simultaneous time span does not extend beyond O. This is related to a third difference that is subtle yet important: simultaneity in the Portuguese Perfect began at some moment in the past, and moved chronologically to the right, toward O. Here, simultaneity is established *from* O and moves to the left, into the past. This change of direction is just symbolic and indicates that simultaneity is now a more subjective notion, linked to the speaker’s opinion of what should be considered simultaneous to the speech act. As happened before, the simultaneity time span does not end either at the point in time at which the event occurs in the past, but instead could eventually extend beyond this point. Finally, in contrast to (9) but like (12), the European Spanish Perfect’s framework does not always fit into the time span’s precise boundaries, thereby indicating there is no exact temporal coincidence between both vectors, but

instead the inclusion of one vector within another. The Perfect here is not therefore a “special” kind of present tense, but a combination of two tenses, past and present, in an interdependent relationship (Azpiazu in press: section 5.2; see also Veiga 2013, 2014 for a closer description of the interdependence between both temporal vectors in the Spanish Perfect).

4.4. Two important remarks need to be made:

- a) In this theoretical model, the PTS or IP conception has been replaced by “simultaneity”. Indeed, we prefer this way of approaching the temporal issue of Perfect temporality, as simultaneity does not suggest a bounded time span, as the PTS does, and IP may sometimes do. It simply evokes the coincidence between a temporally measurable entity (an event, a time span) and the origin of the time measurement. The limits here are non-significant.
- b) The opposition presented above has three different ways of relating both anteriority and simultaneity: equivalence (9), addition (12) and inclusion (16). However, we should note that they represent three different stages of an evolutionary relationship. The path from (9) to (16) is more inclusive than discrete. This means that the Spanish Perfect, which is said to be more developed than its Portuguese equivalent (Harris 1982; Squartini & Bertinetto 2000) can also have the Portuguese Perfect’s features, but not vice versa. This is the property called “retention” or “persistence” by Schwenter & Torres-Cacoullós (2008), following Bybee et al. (1994) and Hopper (1991). On the other hand, it also means there was presumably a time when the Spanish Perfect looked similar to today’s Portuguese Perfect, or at least shared more functional properties with it.

4.5. Although it cannot be affirmed that the Spanish Perfect has ever looked exactly like today’s Portuguese Perfect, the diachronic study of the form allows us to describe an older stage of the Spanish Perfect with many of the current properties of the Portuguese Perfect. Thus, except for the resultative reading linked to the appearance of a unique past event, which is now excluded from the Portuguese Perfect (Wigger 2004), and did exist in Old Spanish, the historical approaches to the Perfect in Classical Spanish (16th-17th century) have a similar form to the Portuguese Perfect, closely linked to iteration and temporal indeterminacy, and only rarely accompanied by a specific temporal adverbial. Temporal irrelevancy and temporal indeterminacy therefore became the characteristic features of the compound form compared to the simple one (Azpiazu 2017).

There are major differences between irrelevant and indeterminate temporal references in connection to the Perfect. When a Perfect reference is irrelevant, it is not of particular importance to know “when” an event took place. For instance, the Perfect in (7) *Ele tem estado doente* ‘He has been ill’ is temporally irrelevant, for one would probably not ask *quando tem estado doente?* ‘when has he been ill?’ but rather *o que tem tido?* ‘what has he had?’ When it is indeterminate, no “when” information is provided in the sentence, but it is known that the event occurred in the past, and the interlocutor can always query it. In (10) *I have discovered your*

plans there is no temporal information, but the hearer could easily demand it: *When did you discover them?* Irrelevant temporal reference is linked to iterative or durative situations; indeterminate temporal reference is linked to telic or perfective events (Coppole 2009: 84-85; Azpiazu 2017: section 3). Studies on the Spanish Perfect's evolution show that the form has shifted from irrelevancy to indeterminacy across the centuries, increasingly becoming a perfective form.

According to Schwenter & Torres-Cacoullos (2008), indeterminacy becomes the area of expansion of the Spanish Perfect, whereby it could be used for different past references, regardless of the event's current relevance or temporal distance. It therefore seems likely that until the 19th century temporal indeterminacy was the Spanish Perfect's most salient feature, and subsequently the time interval linked to it. Accordingly, the "increased present" was then, as it is now, very much the expression of a situation simultaneous to the origin, while contrary to the Portuguese (and English) Perfect, it already had the ability to locate unique anterior events at specific points of time, without any resultative reading and with no temporal modification at all. The "increased present" notion was thus rather like "indifference to temporal precision". Yet the fact that the events in the European Spanish Perfect were often "temporally available", and increasingly more often located over time, reveals a clear tendency toward the model of vector interaction explained in section 4.3, being an explicitly located past event, or not, but always perfective.

If this is so, the Spanish IP coincides with the "simultaneity" vector reported by Rojo (1999) and Rojo & Veiga (1999) (section 4.4 a): it is a time span with no clear boundaries to the left or to the right, but overlapping the moment of speech, in which *any location* of a past event is possible, whether it is durative, iterative or punctual, next or distant to that speech act. This means some speakers might consider hodiernality a very normal consequence of the properties of the Spanish Perfect IP, but it also means there are no actual semantic obstacles for placing even a prehodiernal event (with or without explicit temporal location) within this time span. This explanation includes even those cases "outside standard usage" in different varieties of the Spanish Perfect, as in prehodiernal aoristic contexts like (17) (see DeMello 1994; Serrano 1994; Escobar 1997; Kempas 2006, 2008; Azpiazu 2014, 2015):

- (17) *Ayer he ido a estudiar a la biblioteca*
 Yesterday have.1SG go.PTCP to learn-INF to the library
 'Yesterday I went to study at the library'

5. Conclusions

The literature reports the existence of a time span linked to the semantics of the Perfect, but its precise properties need to be described for each language. To some extent, the conception of a time span linked to the Perfect function is circular: it supposedly explains the Perfect's function, but it does not exist apart from the Perfect; that is, we know of its existence through the presence of the compound form, and it is non-existent with the simple one. On the other hand, beyond aspec-

tual considerations that do not always convincingly explain the differences between Perfect and Preterite (Azpiazu 2012; Kempas 2017), there does not seem to be a better way for distinguishing both forms than by assuming the continuous presence of this time lapse attached to the Perfect. The replacement of the “time span” conception, which to some extent entails the idea of “boundaries”, by the “simultaneity” conception seems more appropriate, and more accurately reveals the close relationship between the Perfect and Present already established in the Perfect’s morphology.

The cross-linguistic differences between Perfects are also due to the different intension of simultaneity and its diverse relationship with anteriority. Some languages, like Portuguese and English, pose a “Present Perfect Puzzle”: the event’s temporal features of simultaneity linked to this time lapse must coincide with those of anteriority, i.e., the Perfect tense is an extended Present tense that focuses on the actual situation arising after (or during) the occurrence of one or several homogeneous previous events.⁹ In European Spanish, it can also refer to a boundless lapse of time that encompasses any past event. In this case, there is no need for semantic compatibility between the past event and the simultaneity linked to the time span, as “simultaneity” here does not refer to a feature of the event itself, but to the entire time span including the previous event. The PTS or IP is not therefore a lapse of time with objective features (although it could also be), but a temporal interval relevant to the speaker to the extent that it can be linked to the here and now of the speech act; in sum, a subjective time lapse where any past event can be located without severe semantic contradictions.¹⁰ This explains why there is no “Present Perfect Puzzle” in the European Spanish Perfect, unlike Portuguese or English, as well as the increasingly unimportant role adverbials seem to play for the presence of the Perfect in this variety. Ultimately, it also explains the existence of utterances like (17), and gives us a key for understanding the dominant use of the Perfect in oral German and French: not as a form neutralization at the expense of the Preterite, but as a modal mark of speech actualization or orality (Barbazan 2007; Azpiazu in press).

References

Alarcos, Emilio. 1947. Perfecto simple y compuesto en español. *Revista de Filología Española* XXXI: 108-139. Also in *Estudios de gramática funcional del español*. 1980, 13-49. Madrid: Gredos.

9. We do not assume that the particular semantics of the Present determines that of the Perfect in every language, as Klein (1992) suggests for English, and Xiqués (2015) does so for Catalan, but the evidence for the Portuguese Present refutes this (Azpiazu in press: § 3.2.). We contend that the different conception of what “simultaneity” is, and not the grammatical properties of a specific tense, provide the key for understanding the Perfect’s functional cross-linguistic differences.
10. As long as this conception of “simultaneity” is neither connected to the properties of the past event nor seems to maintain very strict temporal boundaries, it becomes a problematic time conception for the linguistic description; one that requires surpassing the limits of grammar and moving into the more unsystematic sphere of pragmatics or stylistics. This could also explain the major dialectal variation attested for this form in Spanish.

- Azpiazu, Susana. 2012. Pretérito perfecto en el habla de Salamanca. Problemas metodológicos de las clasificaciones a la luz de una Lingüística de la Facticidad. *Revista Española de Lingüística* 42(1): 5-33.
- Azpiazu, Susana. 2014. Del perfecto al aoristo en el antepresente peninsular: un fenómeno discursivo. In Azpiazu, Susana (ed.). *Formas simples y compuestas de pasado en el verbo español*, 17-30. Lugo: Axac.
- Azpiazu, Susana, 2015. La variación Antepresente / Pretérito en dos áreas del español peninsular. *Verba* 42: 269-292.
- Azpiazu, Susana. 2017. El sistema de oposición PPC / PPS en el español del s. XVII. Análisis de la primera parte del *Quijote* (1605). *Moenia* 23: 257-284.
- Azpiazu, Susana. In press. The impact of the simultaneity vector on the tempo-aspectual development of the perfect tense in romance languages. In Melum Eide, Kristin & Fryd, Marc (eds.). *The Perfect Volume*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Azpiazu, Susana & Kempas, Ilpo. 2017. Acerca del uso prehodiernal del pretérito perfecto resultativo en español. *Zeitschrift für romanische Philologie* 133(3): 1-19. <<https://doi.org/10.1515/zrp-2017-0035>>
- Azpiazu, Susana & Quijada, Carmen. 2016. El trabajo de Alarcos sobre los perfectos simple y compuesto en español como hito gramaticográfico: antecedentes y proyección. In Calero Vaquero, M. Luisa & Hassler, Gerda (eds.). *La historiografía de la lingüística y la memoria de la lingüística moderna*, 17-32. Münster: Nodus Publikationen.
- Barbazan, Muriel. 2007. Le trait [+/- allocutif]. Un principe explicatif de l'opposition du passé simple et du passé composé. *Romanische Forschungen* 119(4): 429-463.
- Bello, Andrés. 1847. *Gramática de la lengua castellana destinada al uso de los americanos*. Critical edition of Trujillo, Ramón. 1981. Santa Cruz de Tenerife: Instituto Universitario de Lingüística Andrés Bello – Cabildo Insular de Tenerife.
- Borrego Nieto, Julio. 2013. *Gramática de referencia para la enseñanza de español*. Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca.
- Bybee, Joan L. 1985. *Morphology: A study of the relation between meaning and form*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Bybee, Joan L., Perkins, Revere & Pagliuca, William. 1994. *The evolution of grammar: tense, aspect, and modality in the languages of the world*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Comrie, Bernard. 1976. *Aspect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Copple, Mary T. 2009. *A Diachronic Study of the Spanish Perfect(ive): Tracking the Constraints on a Grammaticalizing Construction*. PhD Dissertation. The University of New Mexico.
- DeMello, George. 1994. Pretérito compuesto para indicar acción con límite en el pasado: *Ayer he visto a Juan*. *Boletín de la Real Academia Española* 74: 611-633.
- Detges, Ulrich. 2000. Time and truth: the grammaticalization of resultatives and perfects within a theory of subjectification. *Studies in Language* 24(2): 345-377.
- Dowty, David. 1979. *Word Meaning and Montague Grammar*. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Escobar, Anna María. 1997. Contrastive and Innovative Uses of the Present Perfect and the Preterite in Spanish in Contact with Quechua. *Hispania* 80: 859-870.
- Harris, Martin. 1982. The 'past simple' and 'present perfect' in Romance. In Harris, Martin & Vincent, Nigel (eds.). *Studies in the Romance Verb*, 42-70. London: Croom Helm.
- Hernández, César. 1984. *Gramática funcional del español*. Madrid: Gredos.

- Hopper, Paul. 1991. On some principles of grammaticalization. In Traugott, Elizabeth Closs Traugott & Heine, Bernd (eds.). *Approaches to Grammaticalization*, vol. 1, 17-35. Amsterdam: Benjamins.
- Iatridou, Sabine, Anagnostopoulou, Elena & Izvorski, Roumyana. 2003. Observations about the form and meaning of the perfect. In: Alexiadou, Artemis et al. (eds.). *Perfect explorations*, 153-204. Berlin: Mouton/de Gruyter
- Jacob, Daniel. 1996. Von der Subjekt-Relevanz zur Gegenwartsrelevanz: Gebrauch und Entwicklung der Perfektperiphrase *aver* + Partizip Perfekt Passiv im Altspanischen. *Romanistisches Jahrbuch* 46: 251-286.
- Kempas, Ilpo. 2006. *Estudio sobre el uso del pretérito perfecto preodiernal en el español peninsular y en comparación con la variedad del español argentino hablada en Santiago del Estero*. PhD Dissertation. University of Helsinki.
- Kempas, Ilpo. 2008. El pretérito perfecto compuesto y los contextos preodiernales. In Carrasco Gutiérrez, Ángeles (ed.). *Tiempos compuestos y formas verbales complejas*, 231-273. Frankfurt-Madrid: Vervuert-Iberoamericana.
- Kempas, Ilpo. 2017. ¿‘Pre-presente’ o ‘pretérito perfecto compuesto aoristizado’? Una mirada sobre dos planteamientos opuestos respecto a un cambio lingüístico en curso. *Moenia* 23: 239-256.
- Klein, Wolfgang. 1992. The present perfect puzzle. *Language* 68: 525-552.
- Lindstedt, Jouko. 2000. The perfect – aspectual, temporal and evidential. In Dahl, Östen (ed.). *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe*, 403-439. Berlin - New York: Mouton – de Gruyter.
- McCoard, Robert W. 1978. *The English perfect: tense-choise and pragmatic inferences*. Amsterdam: North-Holland.
- Pancheva, Roumyana & Von Stechow, Arnim. 2004. On the Present Perfect Puzzle. In *Proceedings of NELS 34*, K. Moulton & M. Wolf (eds.). <http://www.sfs.uni-tuebingen.de/~astechow/Lehre/Japan2004/VortraegeJapan/PresentPerfect/nels-34_corrected.pdf>.
- Porto Dapena, J. Álvaro. 1989. *Tiempos y formas no personales del verbo*. Madrid: Arco/Libros.
- Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española. 2009. *Nueva gramática de la lengua española*. Madrid: Espasa.
- Reichenbach, Hans. 1947. *Elements of Symbolic Logic*. New York: The MacMillan Company.
- Rojó, Guillermo. 1974. La temporalidad verbal en español. *Verba* 1: 68-149.
- Rojó, Guillermo & Veiga, Alexandre. 1999. El tiempo verbal. Los tiempos simples. In Bosque, Ignacio & Demonte, Violeta (dirs.). *Gramática descriptiva de la lengua española*, vol. II, cap. 44, 2867-2934. Madrid: Espasa.
- Samper Padilla, José Antonio. 1998. *Macrocorpus de la norma lingüística culta de las principales ciudades del mundo hispánico (MC-NLCH)*. CD-ROM. Las Palmas de Gran Canaria: Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de las Palmas de Gran Canaria.
- Schwenter, Scott A. 1994. The grammaticalization of an anterior in progress: evidence from a peninsular Spanish dialect. *Studies in Language* 18: 71-111.
- Schwenter, Scott A. & Torres-Cacoulllos, Rena. 2008. Defaults and indeterminacy in temporal grammaticalization: The ‘perfect’ road to perfective. *Language Variation and Change* 20(1): 1-39.

- Seco, Manuel. 1972. *Gramática esencial del español: introducción al estudio de la lengua*. Madrid: Aguilar.
- Serrano, María José. 1994. Del pretérito indefinido al pretérito perfecto: un caso de cambio y gramaticalización en el español de Canarias y Madrid. *Lingüística Española Actual* 16: 37-57.
- Squartini, Mario & Bertinotto, Pier Marco. 2000. The simple and compound past in Romance languages. In Dahl, Östen (ed.). *Tense and aspect in the languages of Europe*, 403-439. Berlin/New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Stechow, von, Arnim. 1999. Eine erweiterte Extended Now-Theorie für Perfekt und Futur. *Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik* 113: 86-118.
- Thieroff, Rolf. 2000. On the areal distribution of tense-aspect categories in Europe. In: Dahl, Östen (ed.). *Tense and Aspect in the Languages of Europe*, 265-305. Berlin / New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Veiga, Alexandre. 2013. De *ante-presente* a *pre-presente*. Reconsideración de una significación temporal en el verbo español. *Moenia* 19: 115-127.
- Veiga, Alexandre. 2014. La anterioridad del 'pretérito perfecto'. In Azpiazu, Susana (ed.). *Formas simples y compuestas de pasado en el verbo español*, 147-177. Lugo: Axac
- Wigger, Lars-Georg. 2004. *Die Entwicklungsgeschichte der romanischen Vergangenheitstempora am Beispiel des Preterito Perfeito Composto im Portugiesischen*. PhD Dissertation. University of Tübingen.
- Xiqués García, Teresa M. 2015. *Towards a Unified View of the Present Perfect. A Comparative Study on Catalan, English and G'ikũyũ*. PhD Dissertation. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.
- Xiqués García, Teresa M. In press. More on Hodiernality. In Eide, Kristin Melum & Marc Fryd (eds.). *The Perfect Volume*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.