The Perfect: variation workshop

Towards a unified view of the present perfect. A comparative study on Catalan, English and Gĩkũyũ

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Main goals

- To examine one of the most striking differences between the uses of the PrP in Catalan and English, namely a hodiernal reading of the PrP in Catalan but not in English.

- To examine a type of hodiernal reading found in Gıküyü. Gıküyü has a specific prefix which places the eventuality on the day surrounding the utterance time.
Outline

1) Revisit the hodiernal reading

2) Derive the hodiernal reading of the present perfect

3) The case of Gĩkũyũ
1. Revisiting the hodiernal reading
The Present Perfect Puzzle

- English exhibits the *Present Perfect Puzzle* (Klein 1992).

(1) a. *Chris has left New York yesterday.
   b. *Chris has left at six.

- Catalan has a hodiernal reading of the PrP that is not found in languages that exhibit the *Present Perfect Puzzle*.

(2) a. Hem anat al mercat avui a les deu.
   ‘We went to the market today at ten.’
   b. *Vam anar al mercat avui a les deu.
      aux go to the market today in the ten

(3) a. *Hem anat al mercat ahir.
      have.1pl gone to the market yesterday
   b. Vam anar al mercat ahir.
      ‘We went to the market yesterday.’
Unmodified present perfect sentences

- The literature has also assumed that the PrP in Catalan has a specific pragmatic constraint called the 24-hour rule.

(4) \[ E \text{ | } R \text{ s} \]

(5) The 24-hour Rule:
The Reference Time of a Spanish PrP sentence is an interval that is included in TODAY.

(Giorgi & Pianesi 1997:122)
Unmodified present perfect sentences

- The hodiernal is not necessarily the reading that arises without temporal adverbials:

(6) En Joan ha sortit.
   ‘John has left.’

a) **Hodiernal**: the event time takes place at some unspecified time within the same day of speaking

b) **Experiential**: the event time takes place at some unspecified time in a time interval that reaches up to now. The sentence denotes that the subject has the experience of having left at some time in the past (John has left on holidays).

c) **Resultative**: the event time takes place at some unspecified time, and there is a resultant state that holds at the moment of the utterance, i.e., the subject is not at home now.
Iatridou et al. (2001) group the experiential, resultative and recent past under the name of ‘existential’.

**Existential**
- Experiential
- Resultative
- Recent past

**Universal**

Following Iatridou et al. (2001), I analyse the hodiernal reading as a subtype of the ‘existential’.
Present tense and future time adverbials

Pancheva & von Stechow’s (2004) analysis aims at explaining the semantics of the English and German PrP on the basis of the compatibility of future time adverbials with the present tense.

The contrast between English and German:

(7) a. Fritz ist in 10 Tagen krank.
    ‘Fritz will be sick in 10 days.’
   
b. #Fred is sick in ten days.

(7) is related to the differences in the PrP interpretation in English and in German.
Present tense and future time adverbials

However, Swedish is a counterexample.

(8) * Johan har slutat klockan fyra.
    Intended: ‘Johan has finished at four.’

(9) Johan åker till Paris nästa år.
    Intended: ‘Johan drives to Paris next year.’
Present tense and future time adverbials

In Catalan, the present is only available with plans or situations that are expected, but disallowed in pure future interpretations.

(10) a. Comprem el cotxe dijous.
    ‘We will buy the car on Thursday’

b. ⚫Demà plou.
   ‘It will rain tomorrow.’
An alternative
The progressive meaning of the present tense

The present tense allows for a progressive interpretation:

(11) a. Vi spelar fotboll. [Swedish]
    Intended: ‘We play football (now).’
b. Juguem a futbol (ara). [Catalan]
    Intended: ‘We play football (now).’
c. Wir spielen Fussball (heute). [German]
    Intended: ‘We play football (now).’
d. *We play football now / We are playing football now.

In English, only states, which are true down to instants, can be located at the utterance time.

(12) a. Mary knows Greek.
    b. Mary plays tennis (*now/usually).
Does the progressive meaning of the present tense matter in the context of PrP sentences?
The conceptualization of the present tense has empirical consequences...

The PrP in English is unable to locate a boundary of a time interval when the delimiter does not contain the moment now.

(13) a. John {*has called/called} me today at five.
   b. He {*has come/came} two hours ago.

Unlike in English, in Catalan, it is possible to fix the event time on the time axis.

(14) a. Hem anat al mercat a les deu.
    Intended: ‘We have gone to the market at ten.’
   b. Hem anat al mercat fa una hora.
    Intended: ‘We have gone to the market one hour ago.’

In Swedish, the PrP with punctual time adverbials in conjunction with deictic time adverbials such as idag ‘today’ is not great, but ok.

(15) ??Idag har jag stigit upp klockan 12.
    Intended: ‘Today I have gotten up at 12.’
Summirising, …

- The PrP in Catalan does not correspond to the temporal schema of a past tense (i.e., E,R,S) since it maintains its orientation towards the utterance time and disallows past time adverbials.

- It appears that the specific readings of the PrP cannot be clearly distinguished without extra sentential or discourse information.

- Crucially, I claim that PrP sentences may be interpreted as hodiernal when they appear with time adverbials that assert a time interval that surrounds the day of the utterance and have a fixed position on the timeline.

- I claim that the main property of the PrP in Catalan is not that it has an extra reading that English does not possess, but rather that hodiernal is a subtype of the existential PrP that allows, in addition, for a temporal modification of the event by punctual time adverbials.

- I have suggested that, apart from the ability of present tense to have future orientation, there are other components of the meaning of the present tense that allow us to give a more straightforward explanation to the Present Perfect Puzzle.
2. Deriving the hodiernal reading of the present perfect

Claims

- I adopt the Extended Now or Perfect Time Span (PTS) theory (Dowty 1979; McCoard 1978; Iatridou et al.’s 2001) and assume a split between the PTS and the reference time (Pancheva & von Stechow 2004) to account for the hodiernal reading of the Catalan PrP.

- I will take into account the progressive meaning of the present tense. The ability of the present tense to locate an eventuality at the utterance time in Catalan is directly connected to the possibility of fixing the event time on a fixed position in PrP sentences.

- I apply the typological relation of overlap between the PTS and the reference time to show that the perfect time interval in Catalan requires a delimited temporal interval that overlaps with the reference time, which contains the utterance time.
The properties of the Perfect Time Span

- **English**: the PTS equals the reference time

  (16) a. I have been to Cape Cod since 1990.
  
  b. LB .................................................. RB
      [--------------------------------------------]
      1990 ........................................ NOW

  (Iatridou et al. 2001:171)
The properties of the Perfect Time Span

- **German.** The PTS interval has weaker restrictions: ‘it may also precede or partially overlap with the reference time, or it may entirely precede it’ (= (8), from Pancheva & von Stechow 2004).

(17) a. Sirgurd ist gestern angekommen.
    Sirgurd be.3sg yesterday come
    ‘Sirgurd came yesterday.’

    b. LB RB R
        [------------------------]------------
        yesterday NOW
Pancheva & von Stechow's (2004) analysis is based on the differences between the English and German present tense.

(18) a. Fritz ist in 10 Tagen krank.
    ‘Fritz will be sick in 10 days.’
    b. #Fred is sick in ten days.
- Swedish exhibits the *Present Perfect Puzzle*, but it contrasts with English in that the present tense allows for future time adverbials.

- The status of the PrP in Catalan seems to be between the English and the German-type perfect, i.e., it allows for locating time adverbials whose denotation does not necessarily include the utterance time, but does not allow for adverbials referring to the past.
The conceptualization of the present tense

- In contrast to English, the present tense in Catalan admits a progressive interpretation.

(21) Context: speaker A asks speaker C about what speaker B is doing at the moment and speaker C replies that B is working.

a. Ara treballa. ¡No el molestis!
   Intended: ‘He works now. Don’t bother him!’

b. He is working now. Don’t bother him.
The analysis of the progressive

- The classical analysis of the progressive (Bennet & Partee 1972; among others) presupposes a change of relation between the E(vent) and the R(efERENCE) time.
- The E interval is normally contained in the R time, but in the progressive, R is contained in the E interval:

(22) \([E]_R \rightarrow [R]_E\)

- In English, the E time can intersect with S only if R is contained in the E interval (I am playing now).

- In languages such as Catalan, German or Swedish where progressive is one of the possible meanings of the present tense, it is not a necessary condition to have R time contained in the E interval.
Given the empirical facts shown before, I consider that the possibility of fixing the eventuality in time in PrP sentences is linked to the semantics of the present tense. In particular, to the progressive meaning of the present tense.

In contrast to Catalan, the PrP in English denotes a very restricted temporal interval, i.e., an extended now that is always coextensive with the reference time.

\[ [R]_{PTS} \]

I claim that the XN or PTS encoded by the perfect in Catalan does not necessarily need to intersect with the utterance time.

\[ [E]_{PTS} \]
The meaning of the present perfect in Catalan

The temporal relation between the PTS and the reference time is that of overlap in Catalan.

(23) a. *Ha arribat ahir.
    have.3sg arrived yesterday

b. Ha arribat a les tres.
    have.3sg arrived in the three
    Intended: ‘He has arrived at three.’

c. [-------------- E arrive------[------]------t_c]
    t_1 at 3 t t_1 t
Characteristics of the PrP in English and in Catalan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Catalan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prog.meaning present tense</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relation PTS-R</td>
<td>Containment</td>
<td>Overlap</td>
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3) A comparison with Gĩkũyũ

- Gĩkũyũ is a Bantu language that has three-way distinctions of remoteness in the past and in the future time sphere (i.e., hodiernal, near and remote).

- The expression of hodiernality is contributed by a specific prefix, i.e., the hodiernal TRM (Temporal Remoteness Morpheme) *kū*.

- The hodiernal TRM is used when the speaker strongly suspects or knows that the described situation takes place on the same day as the utterance time (Cable 2013).

(27) Mwangi niekũinite. [Hodiernal perfect] ‘Mwangi has danced (within the day).’
The hodiernal TRM is consistent with time adverbials that refer to a subpart of this specified time interval.

(28) nīekūhanyūkīte rūcinī.
‘He had run this morning.’

The location of the eventuality can be fixed on the timeline.

(29) Mwangi nīegūcemanītīe na Barack Obama thaa inya cia kiroko.
‘Mwangi met Barack Obama at ten (today).’
Data in support of the Extended Time Span analysis

- The hodiernal TRM does not appear in the perfective form.

(30) Mwangi nĩainire.
   ‘Mwangi danced (within the day).’

- The hodiernal TRM allows for a future planned interpretation of the event.

(31) Mwangi nĩekũina.
   ‘Mwangi will dance (within the day).’
Conclusion

- Comparative study on the most striking differences between Catalan, English, Gĩkũyũ.
- Compositional account: time adverbials, present tense
Thank you!