

# A Semantic/Pragmatic Analysis of Present Perfects in Peninsular Spanish

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## 1. Introduction

Much of the literature regarding the Present Perfect (PP) in Spanish has dealt with its variation in relation to the simple past or Preterite form (Westmoreland 1988; Serrano 1994; Schwenter 1994; Escobar 1997). Most notably this variation occurs in dialects in the central and southern parts of Spain. Similar variation also occurs in various dialects of South America (Bolivia, Peru, NW Argentina), though the similarities with the Peninsular case are purely superficial<sup>1</sup> (see Howe and Schwenter 2002). The fact remains that the Spanish PP retains its core meanings across dialects. In terms of meaning variation, the Spanish perfect is similar to that of English and can be described in terms of the taxonomy provided by Comrie (1976), as in (1)a-d.<sup>2</sup>

- (1) a. María se **ha ido**. (resultative: present state resulting from past action)  
'Maria has left.'
- b. Juan **ha visitado** Italia. (experiential: situation has held at least once in past)  
'Juan has visited Italia.'
- c. **He llorado** mucho desde ese día. (continuative: situation begun in past continues at present)  
'I have cried a lot since that day.'
- d. El presidente de la república **ha fallecido**. ('Hot News')  
'The president of the republic has died.'

All of the PP's in (1) exemplify the prototype meaning of 'past event with present relevance'. Following Reichenbach (1947), tenses can be described as ordering relations between *Event Time* (E), *Speech Time* (S), and *Reference Time* (R). In the case of the PP, Reference Time is simultaneous with Speech Time, as shown in (2) below. Though Reichenbach's analysis was formulated originally for the tenses of English, it has also been applied to Spanish (cf. Zagona 1991; Giorgi &

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<sup>1</sup> The relevant distinction between the innovative PP and the Preterite in the South American cases is not a matter of the temporal semantic reference of the Preterite. Instead, the PP in South America is motivated by features of discourse organization and, in narratives, to the relation of past time situations to the overall narrative sequence (Howe and Schwenter 2002).

<sup>2</sup> Although the Spanish PP seems to have these four readings (as does the English PP), I am not arguing that the Spanish PP is ambiguous among these four meanings. My analysis focuses on the core semantic/pragmatic features of the PP without specific reference to the type of reading involved.

Panesi 1997). Cross-linguistically, however, Reichenbach's analysis does not account for the readings in (1). This suggests that the temporal semantic features of the PP are not the *only* features that distinguish the PP from other verbal elements (at least among the few languages that will be considered here).<sup>3</sup> Part of the focus of the current analysis will be to determine what semantic/pragmatic features, if any, can be consistently attributed to the PP in Spanish.

(2) E<R,S

In the continuing discussion of PP's in Spanish, researchers have proposed a battery of explanations that are supposed to account for the dialectal (and cross-linguistic) variation of what has been dubbed 'Present Perfect' in Spanish. There does not exist, however, any consensus about what the core meaning of the PP should be in this language. My analysis assumes that the semantics of the PP can be best treated following McCoard's (1978) notion of the Extended Now (XN), as elaborated by Dowty (1979) and more recently by Portner (2003). In describing the situation of the PP in Spanish, the semantics of the simple past and the PP will be distinguished in order to account for the so-called hodiernal ("today") uses of the PP in Spain (see Schwenter 1994). What will ultimately be shown in this extension is that these hodiernal PP's no longer share the core semantics of the PP but rather have the same semantic properties as the simple past form, i.e. they are aspectually perfectives, but restricted to the past tense.

Furthermore, as an essential component in the meaning of the PP, the notion of current relevance as advanced by various authors (Brugger 2002) will be scrutinized and ultimately shown to be inadequate with respect to the pragmatic features of the PP. In sketching the pragmatics of the PP, I assume the theory of information structure as developed by Roberts (1996). Under this theory, it can be shown that (current) relevance is a relation between a proposition introduced (or presupposed) by a PP<sup>4</sup> and the proposition's status in the discourse. The exact nature of this relation will be explored further in the subsequent analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> It should be noted that the examples considered here are all morphologically similar in that we have similar constructions in both Spanish and English: AUX + PAST PARTICIPLE. There is, of course, variation in the selection of auxiliaries (even in English). It is not uncommon to have the verb *tener* 'to have' used as an auxiliary, especially with predicates that have a strong result state implication as in (i) below (see Harre 1991 for a more complete discussion of *tener* as an auxiliary in Spanish).

(i) Tengo hecho la tarea.  
'I have done the homework.'

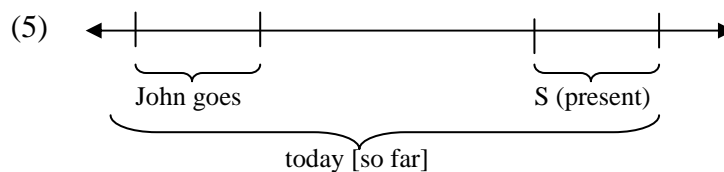
<sup>4</sup> Portner (2003) argues that the English PP involves a current relevance presupposition that occurs as part of its modal pragmatic features.

## 2. An Overview of the Semantics of the Present Perfect

The semantic analysis that I present for the PP follows McCoard's notion of the Extended Now (1978), later elaborated by Dowty (1979). Extended Now (XN) theory, as developed by McCoard argues that the perfect expresses 'an action that has been completed or perfected in the present time, i.e. in the present year, the present, aeon, etc.' (Binnick 1991: 104). In accounting for the various meanings of the present perfect noted above, McCoard argues that all that is needed is an understanding of the way in which prior events relate to the moment of coding. XN characterizes perfects solely in terms of time reference. Under XN theory, the perfect can be treated as a kind of present translated by an 'extended now' operator XN. The truth of proposition under XN is evaluated at an interval of time of which the present is the final subinterval. In his analysis of the PP, Dowty defines the predicate PAST, as in (3), and the predicate XN, as in (4). These two predicates essentially map out ordering relations of Reichenbachian times that can be applied to either a simple past or a PP: in a simple past (or PAST) sentence the Event Time (t) is strictly prior to Speech Time; in a PP (or XN) the Event Time occurs in an interval that includes Speech time. According to XN theory, *John has gone* is true if *John goes* is true of some subinterval of an interval of which the present is the final subinterval, as shown schematically in (5). XN theory also explains why *John has gone to see Jane today* is good but *\*John has gone to see Jane yesterday* is not.<sup>5</sup>

(3) PAST(t) is true at  $\langle w, i \rangle$  iff there exists an interval  $i'$  such that (the time denoted by)  $t \langle i' \rangle \langle i$ .

(4) XN(t) is true at  $\langle w, i \rangle$  iff  $i$  is a final subinterval of the interval denoted by  $t$ .



Turning to the Spanish data, it would seem that this initial sketch helps to describe the semantics of the PP. Let us contrast (3) and (4) with the examples in (6)a and b. The application of (3) to the simple past and PP forms in (6)a and (6)b,

<sup>5</sup> It is perhaps important to note here that without the time adverb, the simple past and PP have equivalent semantics. So, with the time adverb excluded, both (i) and (ii) essentially have the same logical form, as in (iii).

(i) John went.

(ii) John has gone.

(iii)  $\forall t [t < S \wedge \text{PAST}(t) \wedge \text{AT}(t, \text{leave}'(j))]$  (where **S** denotes Speech time)

respectively, show that the two sentences should have the same truth conditions since they both are true at some time preceding the time evaluation (in this case, the present). Notice, however, that in their interaction with time adverbials they are not both compatible with the same adverbs. Dowty treats these ‘Main Tense Adverbials’ as constants denoting intervals such that the constant **yesterday**, for example, would denote the interval of time bounded by a previous day. Under the fragment that Dowty provides for Main Tense Adverbials, the logical form for (6)a would be that in (6)c.

- (6) a. María se fue (ayer).  
       ‘María left (yesterday).’  
 b. María se ha ido (\*ayer).  
       ‘María has left (yesterday).’  
 c.  $\forall t[t \subseteq \text{yesterday}' \wedge \text{PAST}(t) \wedge \text{AT}(t, \text{leave}'(m))]$

It would seem that we are still left with accepting the notion that (6)b, in which the PP is used, can be truth conditionally consistent with our semantics of the simple past, which incorporates the ordering relation defined in (3). Given the nature of the eventive predicate ‘to leave’, it may beg the question that eventive predicates have simply a more ‘simple past tense’ interpretation when used in a PP. If we look at a stative predicate, as in (7), or a PP and simple past under the scope of negation, as in (8), then the difference in interpretation is obvious.<sup>6</sup>

- (7) a. María estuvo enfermo.  
       ‘María was sick.’ (She is not sick at the present.)  
 b. María ha estado enfermo.  
       ‘María has been sick.’ (She may or may not be sick at the present.)
- (8) a. María no comió.  
       ‘María did not eat.’ (But she might have eaten since.)  
 b. María no ha comido.  
       ‘María has not eaten.’ (She still hasn’t eaten at the present.)

What should be clear from this brief discussion is that while the PP does not have distinct semantic properties from a simple past (at least without time adverbials), there are important distinctions in how the two are interpreted. These properties are perhaps best fleshed out by their respective compatibilities with different Main Tense Adverbials. Clearly, the simple past can be used with definite past tense adverbs (e.g. ‘yesterday’, ‘last year’, ‘two days ago’, etc.), while present

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<sup>6</sup> In principle it is possible that ‘not sick at the present’ is only a conversational implicature, generated by the fact that the PP could have been used instead, which would allow this present possibility. So to say that (7)a and (7)b are not truth conditionally equivalent is perhaps misleading. This observation, however, does not bear critically on the current analysis.

tense adverbs (e.g. ‘now’) and indefinite adverbs (e.g. ‘lately’, ‘recently’, etc.) are consistent with the PP. The adverb ‘today’, among others, proves to be more problematic, especially considering the use of the PP as a simple past in Peninsular dialects of Spanish. In English, ‘today’ can be used with either a simple past or a PP, shown in (9). Note that (9)b is an example of an experiential PP, as described in (1). Similarly, (10)b is an experiential PP, but in the aforementioned Spanish dialects, the simple past use of the PP is also available.

- (9) a. I checked the mail today.  
b. I have checked the mail today.  
c. \*I checked the mail now.

- (10) a. Leí el correo hoy.  
‘I read the mail today.’  
b. He leído el correo hoy.  
‘I have read the mail today.’

Under Dowty’s analysis of Main Tense Adverbials as constants, it would seem that **today**’ enjoys the special status of being able to simultaneously contain both the Speech Time and the Reference Time. As mentioned above, some dialects of Peninsular Spanish make use of what has been termed a ‘hodiernal’ past using the PP, as in (11). In fact, the distribution of this phenomenon is so extended that when referring to events bounded by the **today**’ interval, speakers of this dialect will almost always use a PP (for a more detailed description of the distribution of this contrast in Peninsular dialects of Spanish, see Serrano 1994; Schwenter 1994; and Carter 2003). At first glance this situation seems to mirror that of the *passé composé* in French, which is morphologically similar to the PP in Spanish but functions as a simple past. Though not as developed as its French counterpart, the Spanish PP is a clear case of grammaticalization whereby the PP is taking over functions previously ascribed solely to the Preterite.

- (11) Me he levantado esta mañana a las siete. (uttered at three in the afternoon)  
‘I have gotten up (out of bed) this morning at six.’

If we assume that the PP, as in (11), retains the feature of being incompatible with definite past tense adverbs, then we are left with determining how to amend our description of the PP so that such examples are interpreted as a simple pasts. Assuming that the truth value of (11) can be determined at an interval that includes the Speech Time as a final subinterval, as would be the case if we were applying the XN operator described in (4), we are left with concluding that ‘getting out of bed’ is interpretable as being either true or false at Speech Time despite having occurred prior to Speech Time. The simpler solution would be to just argue that Spanish has two simple past operators: one that requires strict temporal anteriority between Event Time and Speech Time, as in (3); and another

that adds the additional stipulation that Event Time occur in the **today**' interval, as described below in (12). Note that (12) rules out the possibility of having a normative use of the PP in a **today**' interval with the same interpretation as the simple past usage of the PP—as in *Ya he comido hoy* 'I have already eaten today'. In this case, Speech Time can be simultaneous with Reference Time and thus would be ruled out by (12) as a PP with simple past meaning.

- (12)  $PAST_2(t)$  is true at  $\langle w, i \rangle$  iff there exists an interval  $i'$  such that (the time denoted by)  $t < i'$  and  $t, i$  and  $i'$  are all bound by the **today**' interval.

The main goal in this section has been to provide a rough sketch of the core semantics of the PP. That is, the term 'Present Perfect' is perhaps a misnomer given that in some cases, as in (11), a morphological PP is used as a simple past. For this reason, it is important to note that we cannot assume that a PP form is semantically a PP simply because of morphology. Granted, the semantics of the PP are more complicated than has been implied here. From this brief outline, however, it should be clear that the overall 'meaning' of the PP is not captured solely by a semantic analysis, given that the notion of the Extended Now does not address the variety of meanings shown in (1) nor does it address the role of current relevance in the distribution of the PP. The rest of the analysis below deals with describing the notion of current relevance as it relates to the use of the PP. Ultimately, I show that current relevance follows directly from pragmatic properties of the PP, namely the relationship between a proposition and this proposition's status in the discourse.

### 3. A Pragmatic Analysis of the PP

Within the normative uses of the PP shown in (1), researchers have suggested a myriad of ways to account for the functional distribution of the PP in Spanish. In a recent article, Brugger (2002) discusses what are essentially constraints on the PP. A close look at these constraints, however, shows that most of them follow directly from our outline of the semantics of the PP. For example, the *Past Adverb Constraint* is Brugger's description of what was discussed above as the PP's incompatibility with time adverbials that denote definite intervals in the past. This constraint is, of course, predictable given that in Reichenbachian terms an adverbial must modify the Reference Time. Contrary to the Reichenbachian analysis, however, an adverb can also modify an Event Time, as in example (13) where, clearly, Mary's call is recent (i.e. its Event Time is recent) not the Reference Time. Klein (1992) discusses this issue and posits his P-Definiteness Constraint, which states that the Event Time and the Reference Time cannot both receive a definite temporal specification. Since Reference Time is equated with Speech time in a PP, the Event Time may not be modified by a definite past time adverbial as well. The temporal coindexation of Speech Time and Reference Time is the main factor in the PP's incompatibility with definite past time adverbials.

- (13) Mary has called just recently.

Next, Brugger discusses the *24-hour Rule*, which states that the reference time of a Spanish PP-sentence is an interval that is included in **today**'. Given i) that the XN analysis of the PP makes truth relative to an interval containing a final subinterval of which the Speech Time is a member and ii) that Speech Time is always in the **today**' interval, since **today**' denotes the interval that is bounded by the current day, we can again eliminate the need to assume a *24-hour Rule*. Even the Reichenbachian treatment of the PP of having the Reference Time and Speech Time be simultaneous (i.e.  $E > R, S$ ) would predict that the Reference time of a PP-sentence occurs in a **today**' interval. It is more likely that Brugger intended for this constraint to additionally address the use of the PP as a (hodiernal) simple past since this sort of usage would be consistent with the *24-hour Rule*. But as we have seen in §2, the PP in this case is not to be treated as a 'Present Perfect' but rather is assumed to have the same semantics as the simple past with the addition of the binding interval **today**'.

What we are left with from Brugger's analysis is his discussion of current relevance. McCoard (1978) argues that current relevance is a pragmatic issue and does not follow as part of the (compositional) semantics of the PP construction (My analysis also assumes that current relevance follows from the pragmatics of the PP rather than the semantics.). Brugger argues that the PP may or may not have Current Relevance (CR) if the Event Time (in the Reichenbachian sense) lies within TODAY. However, if the Event Time is prior to **today**', then the PP will definitely have CR. Furthermore, his *Current Relevance Corollary* states that CR arises iff Reference Time coincides with Speech Time. Example (14) would therefore be currently relevant since the event time is not bounded by the interval **today**' and since it is 'entailed' that the window is still open at Speech Time<sup>7</sup>. Example (14), however, does not have CR since the event is viewed from a past Reference Time. Brugger's observation about (14) seems to be consistent with our analysis of the simple past uses of the PP given that under the Reichenbachian analysis a simple past would be represented by the temporal ordering  $E, R > S$ , where Reference Time and Speech Time are *not* simultaneous.

- (14) Esta mañana a las seis Juan **ha abierto** la ventana.  
'This morning Juan has opened the window at six.'

- (15) Juan **ha abierto** la ventana ayer/hace dos días.  
'Juan has opened the window yesterday/two days ago.'

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<sup>7</sup> Brugger argues that the window's being open is 'entailed' but does not specify whether or not this is semantic entailment. I would argue that this is not semantic entailment but rather arises through conversational implicature.

Before moving on in Brugger's analysis, let us take a look at the repercussions of assuming that current relevance arises because of the temporal coindexation of Speech Time and Reference time. Brugger's analysis assumes that *any* PP (as opposed to a PP used as a simple past) will have CR. We have already seen that the CR of (15) leads us to the entailment that the window is still open at Speech Time. Under a more conversational definition of 'relevance', we may assume that the window's being open is important in interpreting some aspect of an ongoing discourse: e.g. someone is preparing for a party and the windows need to be opened in the house. In this sense, knowing that the window is open may be conversationally useful. Now consider the example in (16):

- (16) Juan ha aprobado su examen ayer.  
'Juan has passed his exam yesterday.'

By Brugger's definition, example (16) should be currently relevant because it occurs before **today**' and entails that Juan's exam is still in a state of 'having been passed'. The problem with this analysis, and many others, is that Brugger assumes that *something* in the PP sentence is relevant and does not specify what that something might be or what it might be relevant to. In example (16) we could plausibly assume that the speaker either wants to make relevant i) a fact about Juan (i.e. that he passed his exam) or ii) that the exam has now been passed (e.g. he had just taken his candidacy exams). Furthermore, there must be something in the discourse that licenses a context in which one of these elements can be relevant. In sum, Brugger does not give any indication as to the nature of the interaction between the PP and the discourse situation.

At this point, it should also be noted that 'opening a window' in (15) is an eventive predicate that does not entail 'being open' for all times *t* subsequent to Event Time. And while the predicate 'pass an exam' is eventive in the sense that taking an exam is a temporally bounded event, the resulting state is still true at all subsequent times. We could simply reformulate Brugger's definition of Current Relevance to address different types of predicates (i.e. eventives vs. statives). It is not clear, however, how this might be accomplished using his criteria. We might argue that, in a PP whose Event Time is prior to **today**', CR arises as a result of temporal simultaneity of Reference Time and Speech Time unless the PP is used with a predicate that indicates a resulting state whose truth value at Speech Time is entailed by the predicate, as in (16). There are two reasons why this extension does not work. The first is that it seems to bifurcate the meaning of CR in an *ad hoc* way. Secondly, and more importantly, the sentence in (16) *can* be interpreted as relevant to a current discourse, as discussed above. Speakers who use the PP in this way would have no problem in interpreting the sentence in (16). By Brugger's definition, this sentence should have CR. It seems clear then that Brugger's analysis does not adequately describe current relevance as it relates to the interaction between the PP and the discourse situation.

In the subsequent analysis, it will be shown that Brugger's notion of CR can be more adequately described using a dynamic model of conversational exchange. Using Roberts' (1996) theory of Information Structure, I will show that CR is related to the question under discussion at Speech Time.

#### 4. Relevance à la Roberts

In this section, I provide a brief overview of the main points of Roberts' (1996) theory of information structure. For Roberts, the structure of discourse consists of questions and answers. The arrangement of these questions and answers is dependent on the immediate topic of discussion, which she refers to as the question under discussion, or QUD. Participants in the discourse utilize strategies of inquiry whose objectives are to answer questions under discussion. Let us consider the simple question in (17). In answering this question, it is reasonable to assume that a speaker might ask the questions in (18) as a strategy of inquiry. Under Roberts' analysis, the questions in (18) are subquestions entailed in the answering of the superquestion in (17).

- (17) What do you like?  
 (18) a. *What food do you like?*  
       b. *What music do you like?*

In answering a question, participants in a discourse must consider what elements in the question need to be answered (e.g. the question *Who likes what?* has two *wh*-elements that will entail subquestions). The set of propositions that can be derived by abstracting on a question's *wh*-phrase is called the *Q-alternative set*. This abstraction is in turn applied to all the things in the model (entities, functions, etc.) which are of the same type as that denoted by the *wh*-phrase (i.e. individuals such as *John* and *Lisa* can be used in the valuation of a *wh*-phrase denoting an individual). Roberts' formalization of the *Q-alternative set* is shown in (19). Given this set, the denotation of a question is its Q-alternative set, as in (20).

- (19)  $\mathbf{Q-alt}(\alpha) = \{p : \exists u^{i-1}, \dots, u^{i-n} \in D[p = |\beta|(u^{i-1}) \dots (u^{i-n})]\}$ , where  $\alpha$  has the logical form  $wh^{i-1}, \dots, wh^{i-n}(\beta)$ , with  $\{wh^{i-1}, \dots, wh^{i-n}\}$  the (possibly empty) set of *wh*-elements in  $\alpha$ , and  $D$  is the domain of the model for the language, suitably sortally restricted.

- (20) **Interpretation of a Question ? $\alpha$  :**  
 $|\alpha| = \mathbf{Q-alt}(\alpha)$

Now that we have a question under discussion and a set of items that can be used in answering the question, we can see how Roberts' analysis addresses the

strategy of answering the question. First, not all answers are equal in the hierarchy of answering subquestions of a main QUD. The definition in (21) gives us an idea of how a proposition might contribute to answering a QUD. Notice that in this formulation of partial and complete answering, completely answering a superquestion entails the answers to all its subquestions.<sup>8</sup> The notions in (21) and (23) help in further defining the definition of answerhood given in (20).

- (21) A **partial answer** to a question  $q$  is a proposition which contextually entails the evaluation—either true or false—of at least one element of  $Q\text{-alt}(q)$ .
- (22) A **complete answer** is a proposition which contextually entails an evaluation for each element of  $Q\text{-alt}(q)$ .

Using the concepts presented thus far, we are now able to analyze a sample discourse in this questions-and-answers framework. Let us assume that we have a domain  $D$  whose members are all of the same type as their respective *wh*-elements that have been extracted from the question. (23) (adapted from Roberts 1996) is a very simple application of Roberts' theory which illustrates nicely the robustness of her generalizations.

- (23) Sample Discourse:  
 D: {chris, gale, muffins, scones}  
 1. Who ate what?  
 a. What did Chris eat?  
 a<sub>i</sub>. Did Chris eat muffins?  
*Ans(a<sub>i</sub>) Yes.*  
 a<sub>ii</sub>. Did Chris eat scones?  
*Ans(a<sub>ii</sub>) No.*  
 b. What did Gale eat?  
 b<sub>i</sub>. Did Gale eat muffins?  
*Ans(b<sub>i</sub>) No.*  
 b<sub>ii</sub>. Did Gale eat scones?  
*Ans(b<sub>ii</sub>) Yes.*

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<sup>8</sup> Roberts provides the definitions in (i) and (ii) as additional description of the nature of answerhood in her theory.

- (i) A question  $q_1$  **entails** another question iff answering (i.e., giving an answer to)  $q_1$  yields a complete answer to  $q_2$ .
- (ii) A question  $q_1$  **contextually entails** another  $q_2$  iff answering  $q_1$  in a discourse context with common ground  $c$  (a set of propositions) is such that  $c \cup \text{answer}(q_1)$  entails a complete answer to  $q_2$ .



*Ans(b)*                    *María comió frijoles.* vs. *María ha comido frijoles.*  
                                   ‘María ate beans.’                    ‘María has eaten beans.’

In (25) both answers to the subquestions of *I* are answerable using either the simple past or the PP. What happens, however, if we follow the answer to *a* with ‘But I don’t know about the beans’? It seems odd with the simple past to mention the beans since we have presumably given a complete answer to *a*. On the other hand, this follow-up works perfectly well with the PP version of *Ans(a)*. This result suggests that in a question such as that given in *a*, the use of the simple past is meant to entail a *complete* answer to *a*, whereas the PP only provides a *partial* answer. Answering with the PP, then, in this case allows for the possibility for Juan to have eaten something in addition to rice.

Let us look at an example with a *yes/no* question. In answering a *yes/no* question, an affirmative answer, of course, automatically rules out a negative answer, leaving, presumably, no doubt as to the completeness of the answer provided. (26) gives us a context of this type.

- (26) Q:            ¿Y qué tal el partido de tenis de Juan del otro día?  
                           ‘And what about Juan’s tennis match the other day?’
- Ans<sub>1</sub>(Q)*:            Ganó.  
                                   ‘(Juan) won.’
- Ans<sub>2</sub>(Q)*:            Ha ganado.  
                                   ‘(Juan) has won.’

Either *Ans<sub>1</sub>(Q)* or *Ans<sub>2</sub>(Q)* seems to provide a complete answer to *Q*, given that a *yes/no* question should, by definition, be exhaustively answered by either option. Even in this seemingly clear-cut case, *Ans<sub>2</sub>(Q)*, the PP answer, still does not completely answer *Q*. Consider again the felicity of a follow-up such as ‘but the results are still being disputed’. Again, the follow-up statement is odd after the answer with the simple past (*Ans<sub>1</sub>(Q)*). After the PP answer, however, the follow-up statement is fine. What this type of follow-up statement shows us is that in answering *Q* there is ‘more’ to Juan’s winning the game than just the fact that he did or did not win. This type of contextual enrichment is common in discourse and is in fact assumed as an essential part of Roberts’ theory. Given my description of (26), it seems that the speaker who utters *Ans<sub>2</sub>(Q)* is actually introducing a strategy in answering *Q* rather than introducing a complete answer.

In light of these observations, I can now provide a definition of the PP as it relates to an ongoing discourse in cases where it contrasts with a simple past:

- (28) **PP(Φ)(x)** entails that (a) event Φ(x) happened in the past, (b) there is some property P that x has at present and (c) P(x) now is a consequence of

the past event  $\Phi(x)$ , and (d) the fact that  $P(x)$  is now true is only a partial answer to some question under discussion.

Under the definition in (27)a, I argue that the proposition introduced by the PP is *only* a partial answer to the last QUD.<sup>9</sup> This means that  $Ans_2(Q)$  in (26) requires that there be additional propositions made available (or at least inferrable from the proposition introduced by the PP) in order to answer the last QUD. Again, it would be helpful here to see a different type of example.

(29) Q: ¿Cómo está Juan?

‘How is Juan?’

$Ans_1(Q)$ : Aprobó su examen final ayer.

‘Juan passed his final exam yesterday.’

$Ans_2(Q)$ : Ha aprobado su examen final ayer.

‘Juan passed his final exam yesterday.’

In (29),  $Q$  could be answered in a variety of ways (i.e. the person asking the question does not presuppose anything about the nature of the answer). The nature of both answers in (29) is such that we are led to assume something about Juan’s attitude after having passed in exam (i.e. Juan is happy because he passed his exam.). It would be, of course, the implicature derived from Juan’s having passed his exam that would provide the answer to  $Q$ . Again utilizing the follow-up statement diagnostic, we can determine if both  $Ans_1(Q)$  and  $Ans_2(Q)$  are compatible with the same statement. If we try to cancel the implicature, for example, with the follow-up statement, ‘but he has been really sad all day today’,  $Ans_1(Q)$  seems odd, given a context in which interlocutors assume a causal relationship between Juan’s academic performance and his state of mind. Under our assumption that the proposition introduced by the PP offers only a partial answer to the QUD, then  $Ans_2(Q)$  would mean either i) that Juan’s state of mind cannot be entirely assessed based on his performance in the exam or ii) that there are additional complications affecting his state of mind (e.g. he passed his exam but his car broke down on the way home). With either  $Ans_1(Q)$  or  $Ans_2(Q)$ , we are left with determining what the information status is following the answer. Assuming the definition given in (29), the simple past gives an immediate end to the current QUD while the PP entails further subquestions.

In the examples given above, I have shown that the PP expresses relevance in so much as the proposition introduced by the PP is related to the strategy in answering a QUD. Peninsular Spanish provides evidence that a simple past and PP can function distinctively in terms of their relative contributions to discourse

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<sup>9</sup> Portner argues along similar lines but assumes that the PP can function as either a complete or partial answer to a QUD. His analysis, however, deals only with the English PP, which does not share the (exact) same semantic/pragmatic features as the Spanish PP.

organization. It is this pragmatic feature of the PP that continues to distinguish it functionally from a simple past despite the process of grammaticalization that has led the PP to become aspectually perfective in Spanish.

## 6. Conclusions

The analysis that I have sketched is by no means exhaustive in its characterization of the relevance relation between the PP and the ongoing discourse. These observations suggest that the PP is used by speakers as a strategy in maintaining a current topic in the discourse. We can also say that the simple past seems to introduce a proposition that completely (or in some cases partially) answers a QUD. My intuitions tell me that the interaction between the PP/simple past and the discourse is more complex than suggested here. The value of these observations, however, is in the fact that they explicate better the type of relationship that exists between propositions and questions in discourse. In addition to a more rigorous explanation of the semantics of the Spanish PP, the next step in extending this analysis of relevance in PP's should involve a larger number of perhaps corpus examples covering a wider array of contexts (and possibly languages). The generalizations made in §5 seem to account for the Spanish (and English) data. It would undoubtedly be a fruitful endeavor to determine if this observation holds for PP's in other languages.

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