



Revisiting the ‘present perfect’: Semantic analysis of Andean colonial documents

Anna María Escobar^{*}

School of Literatures, Cultures, and Linguistics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 4080 Foreign Languages Building, 707 S. Mathews Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 4 July 2009

Received in revised form 4 October 2011

Accepted 15 October 2011

Available online 21 November 2011

Keywords:

Perfect

Semantic analysis

Structured narrative

Spanish

Andean

ABSTRACT

The present perfect (PP) exhibits great variation in use, while concurrently following the same general evolutionary path across languages. The Spanish PP is no exception, with some varieties being more conservative (e.g. Northwestern Spain, Mexico City), than others (e.g. Alicante, Andes). As little is known of the evolution of the PP in the Andean region – the focus of this paper – a detailed semantic analysis of perfect constructions in the Andean colonial period is presented.

Judicial complaints are chosen for the analysis, as they represent controlled event-structured narratives, where the author is the complainant, and the audience is the Spanish administration. As expected, PPs are common in the description of the wrongdoing, since this section narrates events close to the experience of the complainant, that is, events that have affective charge.

The analysis suggests that during this period, the PP exhibited semantic functions found in the Spanish of the time, although constrained by discourse strategies attributable to differences in the social status of individuals in colonial society. A unified development of the PP is found to have taken place during this stage of the evolution of the PP in this region, including resultative and current relevance functions.

© 2011 Elsevier B.V. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Extensive work has been done on constructions expressing the perfect, both cross-linguistically as well as historically within specific languages.¹ The present perfect, in particular, is described in the literature as exhibiting great variation. The grammaticalization path leading to present perfects progresses through the following semantic stages: resultative > anterior > perfective/past (Bybee et al., 1994: Chapter 3), although it can develop somewhat differently in distinct languages (cf. Comrie, 1976; Harris, 1982; Dahl, 1985, 2000; Dahl and Hedin, 2000; Lindstedt, 2000; Detges, 2006). Variation in the present perfect in modern Spanish is described as representing different evolutionary stages (Meier, 1968:603; Harris, 1982; Squartini and Bertinetto, 2000), and presenting the greatest verbal variation across dialects (Meier, 1968; cf. Howe, 2006). Some varieties are considered more conservative (e.g. Northwestern Spain [Meier, 1968; Harris, 1982], Mexico City [Lope Blanch, 1983; Squartini, 1998; Schwenter and Cacoullous, 2008], Buenos Aires [Burgos, 2004; Rodríguez Louro, 2009], Las Palmas [Piñero Piñero, 2000]), while others are considered more innovative (e.g. Alicante, Madrid [Schwenter, 1994; Schwenter and Cacoullous, 2008], Andean Spanish [Escobar, 1997; Sánchez, 2003; Howe, 2006]). In some varieties, the

^{*} Tel.: +1 217 333 3390; fax: +1 217 244 8430.

E-mail address: aescobar@illinois.edu

¹ Perfect constructions are defined as those composed of an auxiliary and a past participle.

Table 1

Description of Andean colonial documents.

Colonial period	Origin of complainant	Documents (N = 111)	Source
Early 17th century	Spaniard	37	Fontanella de Weinberg (1993)
Early 17th century	Indigenous	28	Escobar; Rivarola (2000) and Fontanella de Weinberg (1993) ^a
Late 17th century	Indigenous	46	Escobar; Rivarola (2000) ^b

^a Three documents come from Fontanella de Weinberg (1993), seven from Rivarola (2000), and the remaining 18 were collected by the author from the National Archive of Peru and the Archive of the Archbishop of Lima.

^b Twenty-two documents come from Rivarola (2000), and the remaining 24 are documents collected by the author from the National Archive of Peru and the Archive of the Archbishop of Lima.

Spanish present perfect expresses hodiernal function and contrasts with the preterit (e.g. Alicante, Madrid, cf. Meier, 1968; Schwenter, 1994; Serrano, 1994; Howe, 2006; Schwenter and Cacoulios, 2008), while in others it expresses evidential function and contrasts with the pluperfect (e.g. Ecuadorean and Peruvian Andean Spanish; cf. Bustamente, 1991; Escobar, 1997; Howe, 2006; Jara, 2006). Studying the Spanish present perfect, in particular, requires, then, detailed semantic analysis, paying special attention to the linguistic variety under study (e.g. Jara, 2006; Rodríguez Louro, 2009).

Several questions arise regarding the evolution of the Spanish present perfect (PP), especially in the 15th and 16th centuries, with the inception of the Spanish-speaking settlements in the Americas and the diversification of Spanish in diaspora. The present study focuses on the Andean region, where modern varieties of Andean Spanish have been found to use innovative functions of the PP not found in other varieties of Spanish (Bustamente, 1991; Escobar, 1997; Sánchez, 2003; Howe, 2006; Jara, 2006). This paper explores the early stages of the formation of the PP during the Andean colonial period with the goal of uncovering the early functions of the PP in this region.

2. Spanish in the 15th and 16th centuries

During the period of the Spanish conquest and settlement in the Americas (the 15th and 16th centuries), Spanish in the Peninsula was going through a period of great linguistic variation, with different norms coexisting side by side, as noted in historical (e.g. Alonso, 1962:306; Cano Aguilar, 1992:225–227) and historical sociolinguistic studies (Tuten, 2003; Medina, 2005). Cano explains that this situation was due to the fact that the Spain that emerged in 1479 was mainly a confederation of smaller kingdoms under the same rulers (1992:222), where medieval variants could be found alongside more modern ones in the same individuals (cf. Medina, 2005).² The absence of a single norm in Peninsular Spanish enabled this *stable* coexistence of variants, making this an ideal period for the study of Spanish variation (Medina, 2005:11).

Latin American Spanish during the colonial period (16th to early 19th centuries) evolved distant from and with little contact with the imperial metropolis, although different Peninsular dialects were majority dialects in different urban centers of Hispanic America (Boyd Bowman, 1968:XVff.). Viceroyalty capitals – mainly Mexico City (founded in 1519), Lima (founded in 1535) – and Caribbean ports (Cartagena, Veracruz) had more frequent contact with Peninsular norms because they were seats of their respective Viceroys or entry ports. After Lima and Mexico City (and entry ports), capitals of later Viceroyalties (Bogotá, Río de la Plata) had less contact, while the majority of the regions of the Spanish territory were considered areas of little or no contact (e.g. Central America, Venezuela, Paraguay, Santiago de Chile) (de Granda, 1995). In the Americas, then, a more complex linguistic variation situation ensued after the 16th century settlement period (cf. Cano Aguilar, 1992:225ff.).

In order to account for the variation found during this period, I focus on data from the early 17th century from the Peruvian Viceroyalty.³ This time period is at least two generations after the creation of this administrative region, and during a well-known stable and prosperous political and economic period. The documents written during this time and analyzed in this study consist of judicial claims filed with the judicial or ecclesiastical authorities by individuals living in different regions of the Peruvian Viceroyalty (Table 1). Somewhat more than half of the complainants are of Spanish origin, while the others are of Indigenous origin; origin is indicated in this manner at the beginning of each document. A second group of late 17th century claims (1659–1679) of Indigenous origin is included in the study to determine changes in patterns of use in the documents.

Claims are chosen because they represent a controlled event-structured narrative (cf. Labov and Waletzky, 1967; cf. Ritz and Engel, 2008). They all contain an introduction of the complainant (e.g. name, ethnicity, origin), a description of the wrongdoing done to the plaintiff, the actors involved, a petition for justice, a closing and a signature. Moreover, they all have the complainant as the author, the Spanish administration as their audience, the same topic (a complaint), and the same purpose: to obtain justice. Documents will be referred to as monolingual or bilingual documents, depending on whether the origin of the complainant is Spanish or Indigenous, respectively.

This paper centers on the description of the wrongdoing, because it is in this section that the complainant describes the events that he/she was involved in, in the temporal sequence in which they took place, and, more importantly, according to his/her own viewpoint (Fleischman, 1990; Fleischman and Waugh, 1991). Research has shown that the present perfect is a linguistic variable sensitive to event and discourse structure (cf. Hovav and Levin, 2001; Portner, 2003), both in conversational (Hernández, 2006; Ritz and Engel, 2008; Rodríguez Louro, 2009) and narrative styles (Givon, 1982; Rodríguez

² The study centers on language use in picaresque novels, where characters are considered to be speaking a variety of the time (2005:36).

³ The documents were written between 1595 and 1646.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/936134>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/936134>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)