

Perfect variations in Romance

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Abstract

The morpho-syntactic configuration auxiliary (*have* or *be*) + past participle known as the *HAVE-PERFECT* functions as a tense-aspect category in many Western European languages. Synchronic variation within Romance nicely illustrates the developmental pattern described as the *aoristic drift*, whereby the *PERFECT* develops over time into a *PERFECTIVE*

PAST with full-fledged past meanings. A parallel corpus study of *L'Étranger* by Albert Camus (1942) and its translations using the *Translation Mining* methodology provides empirical data supporting the view that modern French, Romanian and Italian make a more liberal use of the PERFECT, whereas the PERFECT distribution in Spanish is closer to (but not identical to) English. Catalan occupies an intermediate position and Portuguese has the most restricted PERFECT among the Romance languages. We argue that this variation is best captured by a PERFECT scale, without a clear cut-off point between perfect and perfective past meaning. The meaning ingredients that govern the distribution of the HAVE-PERFECT across Romance languages emerge from the parallel corpus. They include lexical, compositional and discourse semantics, and range from sensitivity to aspectual class, pluractionality, hodiernal and pre-hodiernal past time reference to narration.

Keywords: Romance languages; tense; aspect; perfect; variation.

1. Introduction

The morpho-syntactic configuration consisting of the auxiliary *HAVE* or *BE* combined with a past participle is called the *HAVE-PERFECT* by Dahl & Velupillai (2013). We focus on the PRESENT tense form of this construction, and when we talk about the PERFECT or *HAVE-PERFECT*, we always mean the PRESENT *HAVE-PERFECT*. The PERFECT displays substantial cross-linguistic variation, which the literature explains as the result of the *aoristic drift*, the development from resultative to perfect to perfective past (Harris 1982, Bybee et al. 1994, Squartini & Bertinetto 2000, Condoravdi & Deo 2014). While our study does not make any diachronic claims, our synchronic data nicely illustrate the outcomes of the aoristic drift for the different Romance languages. The patterns are in line with observations made by Laca (2010), Squartini & Bertinetto (2016), Grisot (2018), and Schaden (2021) and show that the PERFECT varies across the Romance languages in its distribution and use. Because of this variation in Romance and beyond, it is a non-trivial enterprise to build a cross-linguistically robust semantics of the PERFECT (Ritz 2012). As an important step towards that goal, this paper identifies the meaning ingredients at stake in the Romance PERFECT as they emerge from language use.

Methodologically, we rely on *Translation Mining*, a multilingual parallel corpus-based method akin to *Primary Data Typology* (Wälchli & Cysouw 2012) that was introduced in the literature by Van der Klis et al. (2022). *Translation Mining* works with multilingual datasets which enable us to compare the cross-linguistic distribution of forms over meanings in context. The contexts come from a source text that is aligned with its translations. Relevant forms are extracted from the source text and matched with their translations. All forms receive language-specific labels and for each context, these labels are collected in an n-tuple, which constitutes the input to the multilingual comparison. Quantitative and qualitative analysis are combined in an investigation of the distributional patterns and the linguistic features that give rise to them. The underlying working assumption is that translation is a meaning-preserving process, and our corpora are built on published translations to ensure the highest level of professional quality. Grounding the analysis in actual language data rather than constructed examples enables us to use translations as an empirical test of hypotheses in the literature. We refer to Kotze (2022) for an overview of the ongoing debate on translated language as a separate language variety, and to Le Bruyn et al. (2022a) for methodological reflections on the use of translation data in linguistic theory.

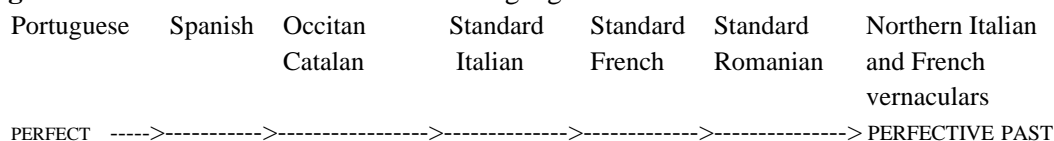
Van der Klis et al. (2022) illustrate the *Translation Mining* methodology with a dataset consisting of all the instances of the *Passé Composé* extracted from Chapters 1-3 of *L'Étranger*, aligned with their Italian, (Peninsular) Spanish, German, Dutch, and English translations. The current paper leaves the Germanic languages aside to focus on PERFECT variations in Romance. To do so, we keep the Italian and (Peninsular) Spanish translations and add translations to (European) Portuguese, Catalan, and Romanian. English data are included for reference. They allow for a convenient presentation of key examples and facilitate a fine-grained discussion of the data, because much of the theoretical and typological literature on the PERFECT takes its starting point in the English *Present Perfect* (see Section 2).

L'Étranger has been recognized early on as a novel in which the extensive use of the *Passé Composé* achieves a special literary effect (Sartre 1947). The literary value of the tense choice in *L'Étranger* puts pressure on the translator to maximize PERFECT use in the target language. If the grammar of the target language does not allow the PERFECT in contexts where Camus uses the *Passé Composé*, we expect the translator to switch to a different verb form. This translation bias, along with the fact that French has been argued to rank among the languages with the most liberal use of its PERFECT (see – among others – Schaden 2009; Bres 2010; Apothéloz 2016), makes the contexts with a *Passé Composé* in *L'Étranger* into a good starting point for our research.

Our tense-aspect labels rely on the terminology familiar from traditional grammar, so for Spanish for instance, we find the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto*, but also the *Pretérito Indefinido* as translations of the French *Passé Composé*. We organize the language-specific labels into cross-linguistic tense-aspect categories, written in small caps. In line with Schaden (2021), these categories are form-based, building on morpho-syntax (e.g., for the HAVE-PERFECT) and on the assumption that inflectional morphology in Romance goes back to the same Latin origins (e.g., for the PRESENT, PERFECTIVE and IMPERFECTIVE PAST). Thus, the Romanian *Prezent* qualifies as a PRESENT and the Spanish *Pretérito Indefinido* and the Italian *Imperfetto* qualify as PERFECTIVE and IMPERFECTIVE PASTS, respectively. The overall correspondence between language-specific forms and cross-linguistic categories is spelled out in Appendix 2.

With data from Italian, (Peninsular) Spanish, Romanian, Catalan and (European) Portuguese, we have a multilingual dataset that is representative of the landscape pictured by Harris (1982), Squartini & Bertinetto (2000), Laca (2010) and others as the outcome of the *aoristic drift* in Romance. The aoristic drift is a process that leads to a change from a past event with current relevance meaning to a perfective past meaning, passing through four stages of development. Diachronic linguists use the term to explain the historical evolution of the PERFECT, but Harris (1982) initially proposed the four stages of the aoristic drift as synchronic patterns to describe the geographical differences of the PERFECT in the different Romance languages and language varieties. This synchronic mirror image of the language evolution process may be visualized as the continuum in Figure 1 (adapted from Grisot 2018).

Figure 1: Scalar orientation of Romance languages in the aoristic drift



Portuguese is the only language in Figure 1 that presents a reversal of the aoristic drift in Schaden’s (2012) terminology, because this language shows the opposite pattern of development and uses the PERFECT less now than before. In other Romance languages

and vernaculars, the PERFECT has expanded its distribution encroaching on the meaning domain of the PERFECTIVE PAST, and the scalar orientation reaches its maximum in northern Italian and French vernaculars.

Since the *Translation Mining* methodology relies on published translations, we cannot use it to do full justice to the extensive variation we find across Romance languages (see – among others – Valente (2021) on Italian vernaculars and Kempas (2006), Howe (2013) and Azpiazu (2019) on Spanish vernaculars).¹ Instead, we focus on the variation we find across the varieties represented in our corpus and argue that our data provide sufficient breadth and depth to identify the main meaning ingredients that underly the scale in Figure 1. Given that the varieties represented in our corpus are intended to reflect the different standard languages, we will refer to them with the names of these languages. References to the literature on variation will be inserted throughout the paper, when relevant to key points in the argumentation.

The organization of the paper is as follows. Section 2 develops the semantic background and typological motivation for the study. Section 3 introduces the methodology, presents the *L'Étranger* corpus data, and argues that the distributional patterns we find should be analyzed in terms of a PERFECT scale. Section 4 moves from distribution to grammar and identifies the meaning ingredients underlying the PERFECT scale in Romance. Section 5 concludes with an overview of the distribution and meaning of the Romance PERFECTS.

2. Background and motivation

2.1. The semantics of the English Present Perfect

The comparison of the six Romance languages with English makes it easier to ground the investigation of the meaning of the *HAVE*-PERFECT in the semantic literature. The English *Present Perfect* describes a past event with current relevance (Comrie 1976, Dahl & Velupillai 2013). The literature provides a range of temporal, aspectual or temporal-aspectual analyses that account for the resultative, experiential, pluractional, ‘hot news’, universal and continuative perfects in (1a-f). Contexts like (1g-h) illustrate that pre-hodiernal past time reference and lifetime effects require the *Simple Past* (McCawley 1981, Michaelis 1994, Portner 2003, 2011, Nishiyama & Koenig 2010, Kamp et al. 2015):

- | | | | |
|-----|----|--|-----------------------------------|
| (1) | a. | Mary <i>has moved</i> to Paris. (she currently lives in Paris) | [resultative] |
| | b. | Mary <i>has visited</i> Paris. (her past visit is relevant now) | [experiential] |
| | c. | Mary <i>has visited</i> Paris <u>twice</u> . (two events up till now) | [pluractionality] |
| | d. | Mary <i>has just arrived</i> in Paris! (recent event, unexpected) | [‘hot news’] |
| | e. | Mary <i>has always regretted</i> leaving Paris. (regret up till now) | [universal] |
| | f. | Mary <i>has lived</i> in Paris <u>since</u> 1990. (she currently lives in Paris) | [continuative] |
| | g. | Mary <i>has left</i> this morning (today’s morning /*yesterday’s morning). | [(hodiernal) past time reference] |
| | h. | Einstein <i>#has visited/visited</i> Princeton. | [life time effect] |

¹ Note that we can use *Translation Mining* for micro-variation research if the language variety has a written tradition. We refer to Fuchs & Gonzalez (2022) for a comparison of three Spanish translations of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher’s Stone* produced for different European and Latin-American markets. The use of the PERFECT and PERFECTIVE PAST differs significantly in Spanish, both within the Iberian Peninsula and across European and American varieties.

In all examples, the event underlying the past participle has taken place in the past. Current relevance comes in different flavors, but the event must be viewed from the perspective of the utterance time. As a result, past time reference as in (1g) is restricted to a hodiernal past, and possible only when the utterance time is included in the denotation of *this morning* ('today's morning'), whereas the *Simple Past* can relate the time adverbial to the current morning or the previous one (Quirk et al. 1985, Declerck et al. 2006). Experiential, pluractional and 'hot news' readings in (1b-d) are generally assigned an existential semantics, with a special role for the underlined adverbials (Portner 2003, 2011 and others). A universal semantics underlies the universal and continuative readings in (1e-f), again with a special role for the underlined expressions. Distributional differences between the Romance languages and English underline the contrast between universal and continuative readings, as we will see in Section 3.3. We highlight the pluractional reading as a subcase of the existential reading, because it plays a special role in Portuguese. We do not go further into the formal analysis of English but use the different readings in (1) to exemplify the perfect meaning as a past event with current relevance.

2.2 From the semantics of English to the HAVE-PERFECT in Romance languages

A common strategy in typological research is to take the meanings that the English *Present Perfect* can convey as defining the semantic space of the Perfect. The contexts of use in (1a-h) can be implemented in translation questionnaires (Dahl 1985) and other elicitation materials (e.g., the storyboard materials in Rullmann et al. 2022) to investigate the variety of morpho-syntactic constructions that cover Perfect meanings across languages. The same meaning-based (onomasiological) approach can fruitfully be applied in micro-variation research to establish the meanings that a given instantiation of the PERFECT allows for in the different diatopic varieties of a language (Howe 2013; Azpiazu 2019; Valente 2021). We relate to this meaning-based approach, but we argue that a form-based (semasiological) approach should take precedence in the study of the HAVE-PERFECT across Romance.

Historically speaking, the HAVE-PERFECT of the Romance languages is taken to have its origin in Latin (Drinka 2017). There is discussion on the pace of its grammaticalization in Early and Classical Latin (e.g., Cennamo 2002; Adams 2013) and on the forces underlying this process (e.g., Jacob 1998; Ledgeway 2012). However, Late Latin is generally taken to have provided the input for the HAVE-PERFECTS of the different Romance languages and understanding how these PERFECTS relate to one another is one of the goals that Romance scholarship has set for itself (e.g., Harris 1982; Squartini & Bertinetto 2000).

If we were to follow the typological meaning-based approach to the PERFECT in the synchronic perspective we adopt here, there would be little to study. Indeed, most of the instantiations of the morpho-syntactic configuration consisting of HAVE/BE + past participle either have a use that is too restricted (Portuguese, see Schmitt 2001; Laca 2010) or too liberal (French, Italian, Romanian, see – among others – Vet 1992; Lenci & Bertinetto 2000; Crăiniceanu 2005) to qualify as a Perfect in the typological sense. We conclude that a meaning-based approach cannot be the primary one in a synchronic study of the distribution of the Romance verb forms descending from the Late Latin HAVE-PERFECT. Accordingly, we follow Schaden (2021) in giving priority to a form-based approach. As noted in the introduction, we make our form-based approach explicit in our notation by using small caps for cross-linguistic tense-aspect forms. We adopt this form-based approach for the HAVE-PERFECTS as well as for the other verb forms that play a role in our argumentation (see Appendix 2). The HAVE-PERFECTS studied in this paper include

the French *Passé Composé*, the Romanian *Perfect Compus*, the Italian *Passato Prossimo*, the Catalan *Perfet*, the Spanish *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* and the Portuguese *Pretérito Perfeito Compost*. We rely on the identical morpho-syntactic make-up of the English and Romance *HAVE*-PERFECTS as a bridge between our form-based approach and the meaning-based approach we find in typological research.

3. Distribution of the PERFECT across Romance languages

3.1 Distributional patterns of PERFECT forms

Rather than building on constructed examples, we carry out a multilingual comparison through parallel corpora using the *Translation Mining* methodology. The multilingual dataset we work with is based on the instances of the *Passé Composé* in Chapters 1-3 of the French novel *L'Étranger* and their translations to finite indicative tense forms in Romanian, Italian, Catalan, Spanish, Portuguese, and English. In this section, we present descriptive statistics and propose two small restrictions that lead to our final dataset.

Table 1 lists the totals per language per tense-aspect category. Empty cells indicate absence of occurrences, and the languages are presented according to the frequency of their PERFECTS. As we noted before, the use of small caps formalizes our commitment to a cross-linguistic form-based approach. Given that this paper is about Romance, we only commit ourselves to cross-linguistic categories for the Romance languages, explaining why we set the English *Simple Past* and *Simple Present* apart. The English *Present Perfect* is the exception: based on its morpho-syntactic make-up, we include it in the category of PRESENT PERFECTS and use it as a bridge between our form-based approach and the meaning-based approach from typology.

Table 1. Totals per tense-aspect category per language as translation of the *Passé Composé*

Totals per category	French	Romanian	Italian	Catalan	Spanish	English	Portuguese
PRESENT PERFECT	367	365	357	341	19	12	
<i>Simple Past</i>						352	
PERFECTIVE PAST				3	347		359
IMPERFECTIVE PAST			5	9	1		3
PERIPHRASTIC PAST				8			
PAST PERFECT		1	3	2			
ANTERIOR PAST							2
PRESENT		1	2	4			3
<i>Simple Present</i>						3	

Table 1 shows that the Romanian and Italian translators almost always chose a PERFECT to translate the *Passé Composé* in *L'Étranger*, whereas the Portuguese translator never did so (zero occurrences in the dataset). The PERFECT is more frequent in the Catalan translation than in the Spanish one.

The overall patterns in Table 1 are clear, but the numbers per language do not provide us with the cross-linguistic correlations we are after. For instance, we cannot see from Table 1 whether the contexts in which the Spanish translator uses the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* are the same as those in which the Catalan translator opts for the *Perfet*. To get a grip on the distribution over contexts, we use the seven-tuples consisting of the combination of verb forms in all seven languages. Table 2 lists the tuples that occur

more than once in the dataset and records their corresponding frequencies. We come back to the meaning of the grey shading in due course.

Table 2. Seven-tuples in the Camus *Passé Composé* dataset with occurrence >1

French	Romanian	Italian	Catalan	Spanish	English	Portuguese	count
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PERFECTIVE PAST	9
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	<i>Simple</i> <i>Past</i>	PERFECTIVE PAST	6
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple</i> <i>Past</i>	PERFECTIVE PAST	320
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PERIPHRASTIC PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple</i> <i>Past</i>	PERFECTIVE PAST	8
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple</i> <i>Past</i>	PERFECTIVE PAST	5
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple</i> <i>Past</i>	PERFECTIVE PAST	2
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PAST PERFECT	PERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple</i> <i>Past</i>	PERFECTIVE PAST	2

The PRESENT PERFECTS in Table 2 appear in boldface to facilitate comparison. By far the most frequent pattern (320 contexts) is the tuple in which French, Romanian, Italian and Catalan use a PERFECT, Spanish and Portuguese a PERFECTIVE PAST, and English a *Simple Past*.² A typical example is (2), which lists the French original and the translations in the other languages. Here and elsewhere, examples from the different languages appear in a fixed order, mirroring the one we adopted in Tables 1 and 2. The verb forms of interest are in italics.

- (2)
- a. Quand je *suis parti*, ils m'*ont accompagné* à la porte. [French]
 - b. Când *am plecat*, m-*au condus* până la uşă. [Romanian]
 - c. Quando *ho fatto* per andarmene, mi *hanno accompagnato* alla porta. [Italian]
 - d. Quan *he marxat*, m'*han acompanyat* fins a la port. [Catalan]
 - e. Cuando *salí* me *acompañaron* hasta la puerta. [Spanish]
 - g. When I *left*, they *came* to the door with me. [English]
 - f. Quando *sai*, *acompanharam-me* à porta. [Portuguese]

Boogaarts (1999) proposes *when*-clauses as a criterion for narrativity, and (2) shows that French, Romanian, Italian and Catalan can use the PERFECT to report sequences of events that make up the main storyline, whereas Spanish and Portuguese rely on the PERFECTIVE PAST for narration.

In Section 3.2, we will analyze the distributional patterns from Table 2 in more detail. Before going there, we however need to comment on two restrictions we impose on our dataset. In Table 2, we only listed the tuples that appear more than once, removing 15 contexts. In line with Le Bruyn et al. (2022b), we hypothesized that this restriction was likely to discard tuples exhibiting translation-induced rather than grammatical variation. Manual inspection of the individual contexts suggested that this hypothesis was on the right track and given that we target grammatical variation, we proceeded with the removal of the contexts corresponding to these tuples. We further argue that the tuples

² Recall that the results in Tables 1 and 2 report attested data, based on published translations, so we acknowledge that not all the occurrences illustrated in the paper may be characteristic of all varieties of all Romance languages under investigation.

that only appear twice in our dataset also display translation-induced rather than grammatical variation and remove the corresponding contexts (n=4) from further analysis. For reasons of space, we cannot comment on each of these contexts but (3) serves as an illustration:³

- (3) Preceding context: *J'ai retrouvé dans l'eau Marie Cardona, une ancienne dactylo de mon bureau dont j'avais eu envie à l'époque. Elle aussi, je crois.* ('In the water I met Marie Cordona, who used to be a typist at the office. I'd fancied her at the time, and I think she fancied me too.')
- | | |
|---|--------------|
| a. Mais elle <i>est partie</i> peu après et nous n'avons pas eu le temps. | [French] |
| b. Dar ea a <i>plecat</i> îndată după aceea și n- am avut timp destul. | [Romanian] |
| c. Ma se n'era <i>andata</i> subito e ci era <i>mancato</i> il tempo. | [Italian] |
| d. Però <i>marxà</i> poc temps després, i no n'hi <i>hagué</i> ocasió. | [Catalan] |
| e. Pero se <i>fue</i> poco después y no <i>tuvimos</i> tiempo. | [Spanish] |
| f. But she <i>left</i> soon afterwards and nothing <i>came</i> of it. | [English] |
| g. Mas <i>despediu-se</i> pouco depois e não <i>tivemos</i> tempo. | [Portuguese] |

The combination of a PERFECT in French and Romanian (3a-b) with the PERFECTIVE PAST in Catalan, Spanish and Portuguese (3d-e-g), and the SIMPLE PAST in English (3g) is not unusual, but the Italian PAST PERFECT in (3c) comes as a surprise. The preceding discourse indicates that the protagonist is reminded of an earlier encounter with Marie Cardona. Because of the flashback, the use of the PAST PERFECT in *avais eu envie* ('had taken an interest in') is appropriate in combination with the past time adverbial *à l'époque* ('at the time'). The Italian translator marks the flashback through a continuation of the PAST PERFECT, even though the French original switches to a *Passé Composé*. We have no reason to assume that the Italian translator could not have continued with a *Passato Prossimo* and conclude that the exceptional status of Italian in this context reflects a choice of the translator rather than a grammatical restriction on the use of the *Passato Prossimo*.

With the removal of tuples that occur only once or twice, our final dataset consists of the 348 contexts occurring in the tuples in the shaded cells in Table 2. This amounts to approximately 95% of the contexts in Table 1. Section 3.2 analyzes the patterns in our final dataset and Section 3.3 develops these patterns further while arguing for their robustness.

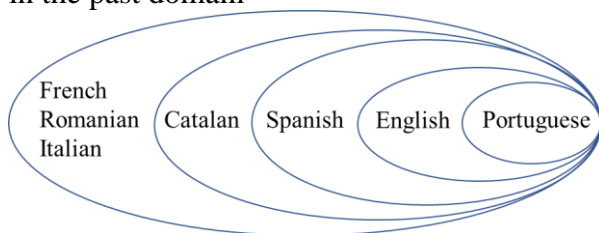
3.2 A PERFECT scale in the past domain

The numbers in Table 1 show that PERFECTS in Romanian and Italian are almost as frequent as in the French original, whereas the Portuguese PERFECT is not instantiated in this dataset at all. The seven-tuples in Table 2 show that frequency and distribution are related. The pairwise comparison of the languages in the shaded part of Table 2 reveals that the distribution of the French, Romanian and Italian PERFECTS is identical in our dataset and subsumes that of the Catalan *Perfet*: there are no tuples in Table 2 in which we find a PERFECT in Catalan, but not in French, Romanian and Italian. Similarly, the Catalan *Perfet* subsumes the Spanish *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto*: there are no tuples in which we find a PERFECT in Spanish, but not in Catalan. Finally, the Spanish *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* subsumes the English *Present Perfect*, and with 0 occurrences of the *Pretérito Perfeito Composto*, Portuguese represents the empty subset included in all other sets. We conclude that the distribution of PERFECTS in our dataset instantiates the subset

³ For reference, we provide the official English translation of the preceding context.

relation in Figure 2. Given that the PERFECTS in Table 2 only compete with past tenses, we take this subset relation to belong to the past domain.

Figure 2. Distribution of PERFECTS in the Camus *Passé Composé* corpus: a subset relation in the past domain



The subset relation in Figure 2 is in line with observations made by Dahl & Velupillai (2013), Squartini & Bertinetto (2016) and Grisot (2018) (see Figure 1). The distributional patterns in the multilingual dataset show that we cannot divide languages into two groups, called ‘past’-oriented and ‘perfect’-oriented by Schaden (2009). Rather than a binary opposition, we are dealing with a scale ranging from strongly PERFECT oriented languages (French, Romanian, Italian) to strongly PAST oriented languages (Portuguese, but also modern Greek, as established by Van der Klis et al. 2022), with intermediate positions for Catalan and Spanish.

In (2), we discussed the most frequently attested tuple in our dataset, showing that the French, Romanian, Italian and Catalan PERFECTS all allow for narrative uses, unlike their Spanish, Portuguese, and English counterparts. Turning to the first tuple in Table 2, in which all languages, except for Portuguese, use a PRESENT PERFECT, we find resultative and experiential PERFECTS as in (1a) and (1b). We illustrate with (4) and (5):

- (4)
- a. Dans l'escalier, il m'a expliqué: «Nous l'avons transportée dans notre petite morgue. [French]
 - b. Pe scară mi-a explicat: *Am transportat-o* la mica noastră morgă. [Romanian]
 - c. Scendendo le scale, mi ha spiegato: "L'abbiamo trasportata nel nostro piccolo obitorio." [Italian]
 - d. Ja a l'escala, m'ha explicat: "L'hem traslladada al nostre petit dipòsit." [Catalan]
 - e. En la escalera me explicó: «La hemos transportado a nuestro pequeño depósito. [Spanish]
 - f. On our way downstairs he explained, 'We've transferred her to our little mortuary.' [English]
 - g. Nas escadas, explicou-me: "Leva mo-la para a nossa morgue particular." [Portuguese]
- (5)
- a. J'ai bien agi avec toi et tu me le rends mal. [French]
 - b. M-am purtat bine cu tine și tu te porți urât cu mine. [Romanian]
 - c. Io ho agito bene con te e tu mi ricambi male. [Italian]
 - d. Jo m'he portat bé amb tu, i tu no em correspons. [Catalan]
 - e. Me he portado bien contigo y tú no me lo agradeces. [Spanish]
 - f. I've been fair with you and now you're being unfair with me. [English]
 - g. Portei-me bem contigo e tu não me pagas na mesma moeda. [Portuguese]

Even the more liberal PERFECT languages French, Romanian, Italian and Catalan, which have expanded their *HAVE*-PERFECT to the narrative use in (2), subsume the resultative and experiential perfect readings in (4) and (5).

A recurring argument to label the French *Passé Composé*, the Romanian *Perfect Compus*, and the Italian *Passato Prossimo* as verb forms that have lost their perfect meaning is that they can be used to describe sequences of events in contexts like (2). In a meaning-oriented approach, Lindstedt (2000) takes past time reference and narrative use as the hallmark of a Perfective Past, not a Perfect. The problem with a continuum as depicted in Figure 2, is that it does not reflect such a binary distinction. The subset relation makes it difficult to determine the cut-off point between perfect and perfective past meaning based on distribution. In the form-based approach adopted here, we consider narrative use as one of a broader range of meaning ingredients that drive cross-linguistic variation in the *HAVE*-PERFECT.

Based on examples (4) and (5), we argue that the French, Romanian and Italian PERFECTS subsume core perfect meanings, which we take to mean that they have not changed into perfective pasts, but rather have expanded their meaning. Not all Romance languages follow this path. A reversal of the aoristic drift is found in Portuguese, where the PERFECTIVE PAST in (4g, 5g) conveys the resultative and experiential meanings just as well as the PRESENT PERFECT does in the other Romance languages. The distributional patterns support the conclusion that there is no one-to-one correlation between meaning and form, and favor an analysis in terms of a PERFECT scale.

3.3 The PERFECT scale: robustness and domain

On the basis of our corpus data, we argued in Section 3.2 that the distribution of the Romance PERFECTS should be conceived of in terms of a PERFECT scale in which PERFECTS occur in complementary distribution with past tenses. In this section, we argue that the scale constitutes a robust pattern in our corpus and is not an artifact of our choice to focus on translations of the *Passé Composé*. We furthermore argue that the domain of the PERFECT scale can be narrowed down further to the perfective past domain. To make both points, we follow Le Bruyn et al. (2022b) in constructing a secondary dataset based on all contexts in Chapter 1 of *L'Étranger* in which the languages included in our main corpus use finite indicative tense forms.

Our main dataset was built from all occurrences of the *Passé Composé* extracted from chapters 1-3 of *L'Étranger* and their Romanian, Italian, Catalan, Spanish, Portuguese, and English translations. French has a liberal PERFECT, so it made sense to take our starting point in the *Passé Composé*. The subset relation in Figure 2 shows that this step was well motivated. Even so, we need to make sure that we are not missing any PERFECTS in the other languages, which could appear as the translation of a verb form other than the *Passé Composé*. Manual inspection revealed that no PERFECTS occurred in the Portuguese translation. For the other languages, we annotated all finite verb forms in Chapter 1 of *L'Étranger* and their translations in Romanian, Italian, Catalan, Spanish and English. Table 3 adopts the tuple format from Table 2 and presents the data of the three French tenses that led to PERFECT translations: the *Passé Composé* (PERFECT), the *Présent* (PRESENT), and the *Imparfait* (IMPERFECTIVE PAST). For translations of the *Passé Composé*, the data are limited to the tuples in Table 2. For the translations of the *Présent* and the *Imparfait*, we list all tuples with their corresponding frequencies. For convenience, we have boldfaced the PRESENT PERFECTS across the tuples.

Table 3. Distribution of tense-aspect categories in translations of the *Passé Composé*, *Présent* and *Imparfait* from Chapter 1 of *L'Étranger* in Romanian, Italian, Catalan, Spanish and English

French	Romanian	Italian	Catalan	Spanish	English	count
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	3
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	<i>Simple Past</i>	4
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	164
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PERIPHRASTIC PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	4
PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	3
PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	<i>Simple Present</i>	36
PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT PERFECT	3
PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	<i>Simple Future</i>	2
PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	FUTURE	PRESENT	<i>Simple Present</i>	2
PRESENT	PRESENT	FUTURE	PRESENT	PRESENT	<i>Simple Present</i>	1
PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT PERFECT	1
PRESENT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT	PRESENT PERFECT	1
PRESENT	PRESENT	FUTURE	PRESENT	FUTURE	<i>Simple Present</i>	1
PRESENT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT	PRESENT PERFECT	PRESENT	<i>Simple Present</i>	1
PRESENT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT	PRESENT	PRESENT	<i>Simple Present</i>	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	105
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Past Continuous</i>	36
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	5
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	4
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PAST PERFECT	3
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT PERFECT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	2
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PAST PERFECT	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PAST PERFECT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PAST PERFECT	PAST PERFECT	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Past Continuous</i>	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT PERFECT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT	PRESENT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Past Continuous</i>	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PRESENT PERFECT	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Past Continuous</i>	1
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	PERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Simple Past</i>	1

We make three observations. The first is that the translations of the *Passé Composé* neatly mirror the pattern we found in Table 2: even though a subset of the data could have led to gaps in the scale, we find that this is not the case. We take this as a justification of the size of our main dataset and support for the relevance of the scale across the contexts that are rendered with a *Passé Composé* in the French original. The second observation is that the PERFECTS occurring as translations of tenses other than the *Passé Composé* are limited in number (n=10) and mainly appear in singleton tuples. Even though we will still have a closer look at the data, we take this to suggest that the distribution of the *Passé Composé* covers the distributions of all other Romance PRESENT PERFECTS. Our third observation is the flip side of the second, *viz.* that there seems to be little interaction between the PRESENT PERFECT and the PRESENT and IMPERFECTIVE PAST. We take this to confirm our claim from Section 3.2 that variation of the Romance PERFECT is limited to the past domain and to suggest that this domain can be further restricted to the perfective past domain, in line with the literature on the aoristic drift (see Section 1). In what follows, we discuss the translations of the French *Présent* and *Imparfait* to further substantiate observations 2 and 3. Our focus will be on contexts containing a PERFECT in at least one of the languages.

The English *Present Perfect* stands out as the PERFECT appearing most frequently as the translation of a French *Présent*. We argue that most of these cases can be considered instances of translation-induced variation and that we find the same type of variation to underlie PERFECT translations in the Romance languages. We illustrate with (6), (7) and (8):

- (6) Context: À ce moment, le concierge m'a dit :
(‘At that point the caretaker said to me,’)

a. ‘C'est un chancre qu'elle a.’	[French]
b. ‘Are un șancru.’	[Romanian]
c. ‘È un cancro, quello che ha.’	[Italian]
d. ‘Té una úlcera.’	[Catalan]
e. ‘Tiene un cáncer.’	[Spanish]
f. ‘It's a chancre she's got.’	[English]
- (7)

a. Il <i>est</i> en avance.	[French]
b. A <i>venit</i> mai devreme.	[Romanian]
c. È in anticipo.	[Italian]
d. Ha <i>vingut</i> d'hora.	[Catalan]
e. <i>Llega</i> antes de la hora.	[Spanish]
f. He's early.	[English]
- (8) Context: Il a pris le téléphone en main et il m'a interpellé :
(‘He picked up the telephone and addressed me.’)

a. Les employés des pompes funèbres <i>sont</i> là depuis un moment.	[French]
b. <i>Au sosit</i> cioclii adineaori.	[Romanian]
c. Gli impiegati delle pompe funebri <i>sono</i> già qui.	[Italian]
d. Els empleats de la funerària ja <i>han arribat</i> .	[Catalan]
e. Los empleados de pompas fúnebres ya <i>esperan</i> hace un momento.	[Spanish]
f. The undertaker's men <i>have just arrived</i> .	[English]

Example (6) illustrates the switch in the translation from a present state to a resultative perfect. Although not all translators maintain the cleft configuration in (6a), they all use

a possession verb in the PRESENT tense, except for English, where we find *have got*, describing a past event of getting with a result state of possession at speech time. The variation in (7) is comparable but leads to PERFECTS in Romanian and Catalan and not in English. The PRESENT of *llegar* ('to arrive') in Spanish further completes the various alternatives that translators have at their disposal to render the same meaning. Example (8) presents a mixture of PRESENTS and PERFECTS across the six languages. The French original combines a *Présent* with *depuis* 'since' (8a). The Italian and Spanish translations combine a PRESENT tense with *già* ('already') in (8c) and *hace un momento* ('a little while ago') in (8e). The Catalan translator combines *ja* ('already') in (8c) with the PERFECT, whereas the Romanian and English translations combine the PERFECT with *adineaori* ('just') and *just* in a recent past configuration (Van der Klis 2018, see also 1d). The switch from a stative 'to be' in (8a), maintained in (8c) and (8e) to the active 'to arrive' in (8b, 8d and 8f) is also notable. A full account of (8) is beyond the scope of this paper, but the variation in this example reminds us that a full-fledged compositional analysis of the PERFECT needs to take into account the combination of tense with other temporal and aspectual information in the sentence. Small changes in how the translator packages the same information can have important consequences in the choice of tense. This holds for translations to any language, and we argue that this type of translation-induced variation explains the majority of the cases in which we find PERFECTS as translations of a French *Présent*.

There is one case for which we argue that the variation we find is not translation-induced but grammatical in nature:

- (9) Context: J'ai dit au concierge, sans me retourner vers lui:
(‘Without turning round, I said to the caretaker,’)

a. ‘Il y a longtemps que vous <i>êtes</i> là?’	[French]
b. ‘De mult <i>ești</i> aici?’	[Romanian]
c. ‘È molto tempo che <i>siete</i> qui?’	[Italian]
d. ‘¿Que fa gaire temps que <i>sou</i> aquí?’	[Catalan]
e. ‘¿Hace mucho tiempo que <i>está</i> usted aquí?’	[Spanish]
f. ‘ <i>Have</i> you <i>been</i> here long?’	[English]

The use of the PERFECT in English mirrors the continuative reading in (1f). The French original uses the *Présent* on ‘to be’ in (9a) to inquire after the starting moment of a state that holds at the utterance time. All Romance languages maintain this configuration in the translations in (9a-e), but English requires a *Present Perfect* in this context. Although there is just a single example of the continuative reading in the dataset, the obligatoriness of the English *Present Perfect* in this context as it is reported in the literature (see, e.g., Comrie 1976), contrasts with the acceptability of PRESENTS in all Romance languages. On the basis of this contrast, we submit that the variation of tense use in (9) relies on a grammatical difference between English and Romance. We acknowledge that further unpacking of the semantics of continuative readings is necessary, in particular to oppose them to universal readings (as in (1f)) that can be argued to underlie the instances of continuative readings identified in Romance (see – among others – RAE & ASALE 2009: 23.7o: 1726; Veiga 2014; Azpiazu 2019). For now, we maintain that – independently of whether Romance allows for continuative readings of PERFECTS – we have no reason to assume that there is variation across the Romance languages that have a PERFECT that is at least as productive as the English one. Based on our corpus data and the literature, we conclude that variation in the use of the PERFECT in Romance is limited to the past domain.

Moving to the variation we find in the translations of the *Imparfait*, we find four contexts in which it is translated to a PERFECT. We argue that these changes in tense-aspect category from the source text to the translations involve translation-induced rather than grammatical variation. For two contexts, the change in tense-aspect category originates in a change in lexical verb. We illustrate with (10).

- | | | |
|------|--|------------|
| (10) | a. Devant la porte, il y <i>avait</i> une dame que je ne connaissais pas | [French] |
| | b. În fața ușii <i>am găsit</i> o doamnă pe care nu o cunoșteam | [Romanian] |
| | c. Davanti alla port <i>c'era</i> una signora che non conoscevo | [Italian] |
| | d. A la porta hi <i>havia</i> auna senyora que m'era desconeguda | [Catalan] |
| | e. Delante de la puerta, <i>había</i> una señora que yo no conocía | [Spanish] |
| | f. By the door there <i>was</i> a woman I hadn't seen before | [English] |

The Italian, Catalan and Spanish translators all choose to take over the existential construction from the French original and opt for the IMPERFECTIVE PAST. The choice for the PERFECT in Romanian is likely to be due to the fact that the translator does not opt for the stative-like existential construction but for the verb *găsi* ('to find'). In the two other contexts, there are more subtle changes in meaning, one shifting from a past state to a universal perfect meaning (compare 'it was always' to 'it has always been'), the other from a progressive past to a perfective past meaning. All in all, the PERFECTS in our dataset that originate in the French *Imparfait* can straightforwardly be analyzed as involving translation-induced variation and we conclude that there is no grammatically relevant variation across Romance translations of the French *Imparfait*.

In this section, we have looked into all PERFECTS occurring in the different languages of our corpus on the basis of a secondary dataset based on Chapter 1 of *L'Étranger*. We established that PERFECTS only occur as translations of the *Passé Composé*, *Présent* and *Imparfait*. Next, we zoomed in on the PERFECTS occurring as translations of the *Présent* and *Imparfait*, arguing that none of them reveal grammatical variation across Romance. Two conclusions impose themselves. The first is that the PERFECT scale we identified in Sections 3.1 and 3.2 covers all the grammatical variation pertaining to the PERFECTS in our corpus and is not an artifact of our choice to focus on PERFECTS occurring as translations of the *Passé Composé*. The PERFECT scale is thus a robust pattern that can be studied on the basis of our main corpus. The second conclusion is concerned with the domain of the PERFECT scale: the absence of grammatical variation in translations of other tenses than the *Passé Composé* and of the PRESENT and IMPERFECTIVE PAST in particular confirms our conclusion from Section 3.2 according to which variation of the Romance PERFECT is limited to the past domain and allows us to restrict it further to the perfective past domain.

In Section 4 we take the next step in our analysis. Under the assumption that cross-linguistic variation arises when languages fix the correspondences between form and meaning in different ways, the PERFECT scale invites us to connect distribution to grammar. Section 4 uses the translation data from our main corpus to identify the meaning ingredients of the Romance *HAVE*-PERFECT.

4. The meaning ingredients of the Romance *HAVE*-PERFECT

The aim of this section is to identify the main linguistic ingredients driving the correspondences between form and meaning in Figure 2. We start on the low end of the PERFECT scale, so Section 4.1 investigates the PERFECT in (European) Portuguese. From

(Peninsular) Spanish onwards (Section 4.2), we will see an emerging orientation towards the perfective past domain, and via Catalan (Section 4.3), we work our way up to the liberal PERFECT languages French, Romanian and Italian (Section 4.4).

4.1. Extra-restricted PERFECTS: the case of Portuguese

Recall that the Camus dataset does not contain any occurrences of the (European) Portuguese *Pretérito Perfeito Composto*. The literature claims that the Portuguese PERFECT lacks most of the core perfect meanings, so the switch to the PERFECTIVE PAST in (4)-(5) does not come as a surprise. Of course, it would be nice if we could also collect positive evidence about the Portuguese PERFECT in a translation corpus. According to Schmitt (2001) and Laca (2010), the *Pretérito Perfeito Composto* is used exclusively to describe a discontinuous series of events (as in 1c), so it is claimed to have a pluractional semantics (Van Geenhoven 2004, Laca 2006). Pluractionality is not attested in our Camus corpus, but we find it – with two occurrences in one sentence – in our corpus based on J.K. Rowling's (1997) *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*.⁴

- (11) a. Des téléspectateurs qui habitent dans des régions aussi éloignées les unes des autres que le Kent, le Yorkshire et la côte est de l'Ecosse m'ont téléphoné pour me dire qu'au lieu des averses que j'avais prévues pour aujourd'hui, ils ont vu de véritables pluies d'étoiles filantes! [French]
- b. Gli osservatori di località distanti fra loro come il Kent, lo Yorkshire e Dundee mi hanno telefonato per informarmi che, al posto della pioggia che avevo promesso ieri, hanno avuto un diluvio di stelle cadenti. [Italian]
- c. Alguns observadors han trucat des de punts tan distants com Kent, Yorkshire i Dundee per dir-me que, en comptes dels xàfeces que vaig anunciar ahir, han tingut una pluja d'estels. [Catalan]
- d. Telespectadores de lugares tan apartados como Kent, Yorkshire y Dundee han telefonado para decirme que en lugar de la lluvia que prometí ayer ¡tuvieron un chaparrón de estrellas fugaces! [Spanish]
- e. Viewers as far apart as Kent, Yorkshire and Dundee have been phoning in to tell me that instead of the rain I promised yesterday, they've had a downpour of shooting stars! [English]
- f. Observadores de Kent, Yorkshire e Dundee têm telefonado insistentemente a informar-nos de que, em vez da chuva que eu previra ontem, têm tido uma tempestade de estrelas cadentes! [Portuguese]

Example (11) reports a multitude of callers to the weather channel talking about a multitude of shooting stars as relevant to the current situation. Pluractionality licenses the PRESENT PERFECT in all the Romance languages, including Portuguese. In combination with the absence of the *Pretérito Perfeito Composto* in resultative and experiential contexts, its presence in (11) provides empirical support for the claims Schmitt (2001) and Laca (2010) make about the special distribution of the Portuguese PERFECT. It also highlights that pluractionality is one of the ingredients that underlies the Romance PERFECT scale. We note that the Spanish translator maintains the PERFECT for the first pluractional event (*han telefonado*), but switches to the *Pretérito Indefinido* for the

⁴ We are grateful to Purificação Silvano (Universidade do Porto) and António Leal (Universidade do Porto) for their annotation of the Portuguese *Harry Potter* data. The Romanian translation of *Harry Potter* has not been annotated yet, so this language is not in (11). We refer to Tellings et al. (2022) for details on the *Harry Potter* corpus and a first report of the data.

second one (*tuvieron*). Table 2 suggests that Spanish makes a more liberal use of the PERFECT than English, but further research is needed to deal with the complications in (11).

So far, we contrasted the Portuguese PERFECT to its counterparts in all the other languages under consideration, and we could do that because it constitutes the smallest subset in Figure 1. For the other languages, we will carry out a series of pairwise comparisons, starting with Spanish and English in Section 4.2. Given the highly restricted distribution of the PERFECT in Portuguese, we leave this language aside in the examples in the rest of Section 4.

4.2 Meaning ingredients of the Spanish PERFECT

The data in Section 2 show that the Spanish *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* subsumes the English *Present Perfect* (Table 2). Examples (9) in Section 3.3 and (11) in Section 4.1 nuance that picture, so we hypothesize that the meaning ingredients that the Spanish and English PERFECTS are sensitive to are different or play out differently due to the way the two PERFECTS interact with other tenses. This hypothesis finds support in the literature. Schaden (2021) draws attention to the fact that Spanish uses a verbal periphrasis instead of the PERFECT to convey a recent past reading (e.g., *acaba de llegar* ‘finishes of arrive’). Evidence from a multilingual dataset supporting this claim is provided in Van der Klis (2018). We will not try to provide a full account of the differences between English and Spanish but focus instead on the differences that are exemplified in our main corpus.

According to García-Fernández (2000), Martínez-Atienza (2006, 2008, 2010), Howe (2013) and others, one of the readings of the Spanish *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* is that of a hodiernal PERFECT.⁵ Hodiernality means that the PERFECT can be used for past time reference, as long as the event is located in a past interval that includes the speech time (see 1g). In the opening sentence of the novel in (12), all Romance languages use a PERFECT to refer to the death of the narrator’s mother, but in English, we find a *Simple Past*. In contrast, the temporal adverb *un jour* in (13a) refers to an indefinite interval in the past and blocks PERFECT use in both English and Spanish.

- | | | |
|------|--|------------|
| (12) | a. <u>Aujourd’hui</u> , maman <i>est morte</i> . | [French] |
| | b. <u>Astăzi</u> a murit mama. | [Romanian] |
| | c. <u>Oggi</u> la mamma è morta. | [Italian] |
| | d. <u>Avui</u> ha mort la mama. | [Catalan] |
| | e. <u>Hoy</u> , mamá <i>ha muerto</i> . | [Spanish] |
| | f. Mother <i>died today</i> . | [English] |
| (13) | a. J’en ai fait la remarque <u>un jour</u> à mon patron. | [French] |
| | b. I-am spus <u>într-o zi</u> patronului. | [Romanian] |
| | c. <u>Una volta</u> l’ho fatto notare al principale. | [Italian] |
| | d. <u>Un dia</u> ho vaig fer notar al meu patró. | [Catalan] |
| | e. Se lo <u>señalé un día</u> a mi patrón. | [Spanish] |
| | f. I <i>mentioned this once</i> to my boss. | [English] |

⁵ According to Veiga (2014), the use of the PERFECT for recent past events and hodiernal past events distinguishes European Spanish (except for the northwestern area) from the varieties spoken in America, which align with the Spanish spoken in the Canary Islands. The hodiernal PERFECT has also been attested in Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay, the northeast of Argentina and part of Central America (RAE & ASALE 2009: 23.8p: 1735).

All Romance languages allow reference to an event in the hodiernal past (12), but only French, Romanian, and Italian can also use the PERFECT for past events with pre-hodiernal time reference (13). Spanish resorts to the *Pretérito Indefinido* in (13e), and Catalan to the *Passat Perifràstic*, formed on the basis of the verb ‘to go’ plus infinitive (13d). Interestingly, the French *Passé Composé* was sensitive to hodiernality in earlier stages of the language (Dahl 1985, Caudal & Vetters 2007). In a broader picture of synchronic and diachronic variation, we take hodiernality to be a central ingredient of the Romance PERFECT, and hypothesize that modern French, Romanian and Italian have moved further along the aoristic drift.

Hodiernality has also been claimed to be a meaning ingredient of the PERFECT in English (1g), but the tense distribution in (12) suggests that hodiernality plays out differently than for the Spanish PERFECT, possibly due to a different interaction with the *Simple Past* in contexts that are sensitive to lifetime effects (1h). A full analysis of the contrast between Spanish and English in (12) lies beyond the scope of this paper and we refer the reader to Fuchs & Van der Klis (to appear) for an experimental exploration that builds on our corpus findings.

In sum, the comparison between the English and Spanish PERFECTS in our dataset reveals that they share core readings of past events with current relevance (4)-(5), that the English PERFECT occupies a more prominent place in the present domain in continuative contexts (9), and that the Spanish PERFECT has a more liberal use within the hodiernal time interval (12). With an eye on the scale identified in Section 3, we conclude that the Spanish PERFECT subsumes the English *Present Perfect* in the perfective past domain and that this subset relation is linked to the fact that the Spanish PERFECT has a more extensive use in the hodiernal time interval. In the literature, the hodiernal PERFECT is analyzed either as an aorist (Schwenter 1994; Serrano 1994; Schwenter & Torres Cacoullós 2008) or as an existential PERFECT (Xiqués 2015, 2021). In the scalar approach adopted in this paper, we view hodiernal past time reference in Romance as one of the meaning ingredients of the aoristic drift. Given that the pluractional context in (11) is hodiernal as well, we furthermore hypothesize that the role of hodiernality extends to the lower boundary of the PERFECT scale, where we find the extra-restricted Portuguese PERFECT.

4.3 The Catalan *Perfet* compared to the Spanish *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto*

In Sections 4.1 and 4.2, we explored the lower boundary of the Romance PERFECT scale and determined how it relates to the English PERFECT. In this section, we move up the scale from Spanish to Catalan PERFECTS and we will find that the Catalan *Perfet* allows for an even more extensive use within the hodiernal time interval than its Spanish counterpart.

Pérez Saldanya (2002), Curell (2002), Curell & Coll (2007) and Martínez-Atienza (2008) claim that Catalan has a hodiernal PERFECT similar to Spanish. The relevance of hodiernality for the Catalan *Perfet* is confirmed by our data (12)-(13). Xiqués (2015, 2021) emphasizes that hodiernality is broader than the 24-hour rule and argues that it involves an extended deictic time span which allows temporal expressions that can make reference to the most recent (before the utterance time) relevant past time interval. In the Camus dataset, we see that hodiernal past time reference is available with locating time adverbials headed by a proximate demonstrative and combined with a clock-calendar expression, as in (14).

- | | | |
|------|---|------------|
| (14) | a. Je t' <i>ai</i> <i>acheté</i> un ensemble <u>ce mois-ci</u> . | [French] |
| | b. Ți- <i>am</i> <i>cumpărat</i> un costum nou <u>luna asta</u> . | [Romanian] |
| | c. Ti <i>ho comprato</i> un vestito <u>questo mese</u> . | [Italian] |

- d. Aquest mes t'he comprat roba. [Catalan]
 e. Te he comprado un conjunto este mes. [Spanish]
 f. I bought you a new suit this month. [English]

The *aqwest*-deictic demonstrative expresses immediate proximity with respect to the hearer, and requires the *Perfet* (Curell 2002, Xiqués 2021).

In (14), we find PERFECTS in both Catalan and Spanish. However, the hodiernal contexts in which we find the Catalan *Perfet* do not always correspond to those in which we find the Spanish *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto*. We identify three types of contexts in which the distribution of the *Perfet* extends beyond that of its Spanish counterpart. The first is concerned with (hodiernal) past occurrences of a (lexical) state as in (15).

- (15) a. Il y avait un tas de connaissances qui s'amoncelaient sur ma table et il *a fallu* que je les dépouille tous. [French]
 b. O mulțime de conosamente se adunau neconținut pe masa mea și *a trebuit* să le rezolv pe toate. [Romanian]
 c. C'era una quantità di pratiche che si erano accumulate sulla mia scrivania e *ho dovuto* farle passare a una a una. [Italian]
 d. Hi havia una pila de coneixements que s' acumulaven sobre la meva taula, i *he hagut* d' examinar-los tots. [Catalan]
 e. Había un montón de conocimientos que se apilaban en mi mesa y *tuve* que examinarlos todos. [Spanish]
 f. There was a whole stack of bills of lading piling up on my desk and I *had* to go through them all. [English]

The French original in (15a) and the translations in (15b-d) show that none of the other Romance languages blocks hodiernal past time reference for states. Examples like (15e) indicate sensitivity of the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* to lexical aspect (Kempas 2006). We note that lexical states with a hodiernal past reading may be dispreferred, but are not grammatically excluded by the Spanish PERFECT, because we find instances of this configuration in the *Harry Potter* dataset (not illustrated here).

The second type of hodiernal contexts in which we find Catalan PERFECTS next to Spanish PERFECTIVE PASTS consists of those containing a locating time adverbial whose denotation does not include the utterance time but locates the described eventuality on the day of the utterance time, as illustrated in (16).

- (16) a. J'*ai dormi* jusqu'à dix heures. [French]
 b. *Am dormit până la zece*. [Romanian]
 c. *Ho dormito fino alle dieci*. [Italian]
 d. *He dormit fins a les deu*. [Catalan]
 e. *Dormí hasta las diez*. [Spanish]
 f. I *slept* till ten. [English]

Catalan (16d) patterns with French, Romanian and Italian (16a-c), in contrast to the Spanish *Pretérito Indefinido* in (16e).⁶ We find a similar contrast in (17), where the time

⁶ Although the translator opts for the *Pretérito Indefinido*, in European Spanish, the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* could be licensed with time adverbials which delimit temporally an event as in (16e). This is also the case with localizing punctual time adverbials in examples such as {*Me levanté / Me he levantado*} *a las cuatro de la mañana* 'I woke/have woken up at four o'clock in the morning' (from García Fernández 1999: 48.2.1: 3168). According to García

adverbial measures the distance between the utterance time and the event time of dying. The Catalan translator uses a *Perfet* (17d), but the Spanish translator switches to a *Pretérito Indefinido* (17e).

- | | | |
|------|--|------------|
| (17) | a. Il <i>a perdu</i> son oncle, <u>il y a quelques mois</u> . | [French] |
| | b. Lui <i>i-a murit</i> un unchi, <u>acum câteva luni</u> . | [Romanian] |
| | c. Lui <i>ha perso</i> suo zio <u>qualche mese fa</u> . | [Italian] |
| | d. A Emmanuel, se li <i>ha mort</i> un oncle, <u>fa pocs mesos</u> . | [Catalan] |
| | e. <i>Perdió</i> a su tío <u>hace algunos meses</u> . | [Spanish] |
| | f. He <i>lost</i> his uncle, <u>a few months ago</u> . | [English] |

The interval denoted by the locating time adverbials in (14)-(16)-(17) extends further to the past but is still connected to the present time sphere. The *Perfet* is the tense form of choice here because the Catalan *Passat Perifràstic* is restricted to pre-hodiernal past time reference (Pérez-Saldanya 1998, Curell 2002, Xiqués 2015, 2021). As for (17d), the use of the *Passat Perifràstic* might be expected given the pre-hodiernal location of the event, but it seems that the deictic nature of *fa XP* ‘makes XP’ is sufficient to define the location of the event time with respect to the utterance (Kempas 2021).⁷

The third and final type of context in which the Catalan *Perfet* shows a broader distribution than its Spanish counterpart involves narrative contexts. The narrative *when*-clause in (2) showed this already, and the sequence of events reported by independent clauses in (18) confirms.

- | | | |
|------|---|------------|
| (18) | a. Il m' <i>a invité</i> à me rendre au réfectoire pour dîner. Mais je n'avais pas faim. Il m' <i>a offert</i> alors d'apporter une tasse de café au lait. Comme j'aime beaucoup le café au lait, j' <i>ai accepté</i> et il <i>est revenu</i> un moment après avec un plateau. J' <i>ai bu</i> . | [French] |
| | b. El m- <i>a poftit</i> să merg în sala de mese la cină. Dar nu-mi era foame. Mi- <i>a propus</i> atunci să-mi aducă o ceașcă de cafea cu lapte. Cum mie îmi place foarte mult cafeaua cu lapte, <i>am acceptat</i> și el s- <i>a întors</i> puțin după aceea cu o tavă. Am băut. | [Romanian] |
| | c. Mi <i>ha detto</i> che potevo andare al refettorio per la cena. Ma non avevo fame. Allora mi <i>ha offerto</i> di portarmi una tazza di caffelatte. Siccome il caffelatte mi piace molto, <i>ho accettato</i> e lui è <i>ritornato</i> dopo un istante con un vassoio. Ho bevuto. | [Italian] |
| | d. L'home m' <i>ha suggerit</i> d'anar a sopar al menjador de l'asil. Però jo no tenia gana. Aleshores s' <i>ha ofert</i> a dur-me una tassa de cafè amb llet. A mi m'agrada molt el | |

Fernández (1999), there may be a difference in interpretation between the choice of the simple or the compound form. It is generally understood that the speaker who uses the *Pretérito Indefinido* woke up at four and went to sleep again; the choice of the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* makes reference to the last episodic event of *waking up* that took place before the utterance time, i.e., the speaker woke up and did not fall asleep again.

⁷ Kempas (2021) finds similar data in a Google corpus, especially with postponed *fa XP* ‘makes XP’ adverbials. Mirror examples for Spanish are provided by Azpiazu (2019), who notes that in these contexts the main predicate is a telic resultative verb, the time adverbial is postponed, and *hace XP* ‘makes XP’ has a deictic nature, i.e., it measures a time frame from the utterance time, (as in 17). In addition, the Google corpus analyzed in Kempas (2021) contains examples in which the *perfet* is combined with *ahir* ‘yesterday’, especially when the adverbial is in a postponed position. Further research is needed to exactly delineate the domain of the hodiernal PERFECT in Catalan and Spanish, but this is beyond the scope of this paper.

café amb llet, i *he acceptat*: un moment després *tornava* amb una safata. *He begut*.

[Catalan]

e. Me *invitó* a dirigirme al refectorio para cenar. Pero yo no tenía hambre. Me *ofreció* entonces traer una taza de café con leche. Como me gusta mucho el café con leche, *acepté*, y, al cabo de un momento, *volvió* con una bandeja. *Bebí*.

[Spanish]

f. He *asked* me if I wanted to go to the canteen to have some dinner. But I wasn't hungry. He then *offered* to bring me a cup of white coffee. I'm very fond of white coffee, so I *accepted* and he *came* back a few minutes later with a tray.

[English]

Such series of sentences in the *Passé Composé* are quite frequent in *L'Étranger*, and they are interspersed with sentences in the *Imparfait* and the *Présent* (not italicized in 18a). The *Passé Composé* in (18a) is consistently translated by means of a PERFECT in Romanian and Italian (18b, c), whereas Spanish and English switch to the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* and *Simple Past* in (18e) and (18f), respectively.⁸ The Catalan translation in (18d) uses the *Perfet* to translate all but one of the instances of the *Passé Composé*, and thus clearly instantiates a narrative use.

The one case in (18) in which the Catalan translator switches from the *Perfet* to the *Imperfet* occurs in combination with the time adverbial *un moment després* ('a moment later'). In such configurations, the time adverbial is responsible for forward movement of the narrative time and the IMPERFECTIVE PAST introduces the event as ongoing at that time. This is known as a narrative imperfective use (Molendijk et al. 2004; Bres 2005; Egetenmeyer 2021 and references therein). The narrative IMPERFECTIVE shows up elsewhere in the Catalan translation as well, so this constitutes a regular pattern, which includes most of the contexts in which the Catalan IMPERFECTIVE PAST appears alongside PERFECTS and PERFECTIVE PASTS in the other languages (see Table 2). As we find that the use of the *Imperfet* as a translation of the *Passé Composé* is dependent on the presence of a time adverbial and we find no further interactions between the PERFECT and IMPERFECTIVE PAST (Section 3.3), we maintain that the relevant PERFECT scale in Romance is limited to the perfective past domain.

The presence of the *Perfet* in hodiernal contexts with stative verbs, time adverbials and especially narrative sequences is responsible for the much higher number of PERFECTS in Catalan than in Spanish. We thus confirm that hodiernality is an important ingredient underlying the PERFECT scale in Romance but also find that it is not a unidimensional concept and deserves further scrutiny. On the other hand, the role of narration in opposing the Catalan and Spanish PERFECTS leads us to propose it as another important ingredient underlying the Romance PERFECT scale. In the next section, we move from Catalan to the most liberal Romance PERFECTS.

4.4 Meaning ingredients of liberal Romance PERFECTS

⁸ Spanish may also license the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* in sequences of events to make the events more vivid (RAE & ASALE 2009: 23.8g: 1731, Schaden 2021). According to Azpiazu (2019), the compound form alternates with the simple one in oral texts (e.g., interviews), especially in central areas (e.g., Madrid, Salamanca). The Spanish varieties spoken in the Basque Country and in the region of Levante (Valencia, Alicante) also allow the compound form in narrative contexts. In the Basque Country, Catalonia, Balearic Islands, Valencia, the use of the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* seems to be influenced by the use of the PERFECT in the languages Spanish is in contact with in the region. As no evidence was found for a narrative use of the *Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto* in our dataset, we leave the issue open for further research.

The examples investigated so far indicate that the French, Romanian and Italian PERFECTS cover core PERFECT meanings (4-5) as well as the pluractional meaning (11) but not the continuative meaning characteristic of the English *Present Perfect* (9). They extend their meaning towards past time reference of events and occurrences of states (e.g., 13 and 15), and may appear in narrative contexts (e.g., 2 and 18). These findings confirm observations in the literature about the liberal use of the *Passé Composé*, the *Passato Prossimo* and the *Perfect Compus* (see – among others – Vet 1992; Lenci & Bertinetto 2000; Grisot 2018).

The main difference between the three liberal PERFECT languages and Catalan appears in examples (12) and (13), where Catalan clearly behaves as a hodiernal PERFECT, whereas French, Romanian and Italian also allow location of an event in the pre-hodiernal past. Further evidence for this pattern is in (19).

- (19) a. Mais sur le conseil du médecin visiteur, je lui *ai interdit* la veillée d'hier.
[French]
- b. Dar, după sfatul medicului curant, i- *am interzis* priveghiul de ieri.
[Romanian]
- c. Ma su consiglio del medico visitatore, gli *ho vietato* la veglia di ieri.
[Italian]
- d. Però, per consell del metge de la casa, li *vaig prohibir* de vetllar-la anit.
[Catalan]
- e. Pero, por consejo del médico visitante, le *prohibí* verla ayer. [Spanish]
- f. But on the advice of our visiting doctor, I *forbade* him to keep the vigil last night.
[English]

The narrative *Imperfet* (18) and the *Passat Perifràstic* (13 and 19) fill the gap between a hodiernal *Perfet* with the possibility to appear in narrative contexts (e.g., 2) and a *Passat Simple* that is losing ground, just like its PERFECTIVE PAST counterparts in French, Romanian and Italian. The PERIPHRASTIC PAST is attested in varieties of Occitan as well (Jacobs 2011, Jacobs & Kunert 2014), but Occitan is not in our dataset.

Now that we have completed our overview of the different Romance languages in our corpus, we can zoom out and present the picture that emerges from our data. This picture is one in which the PERFECT assumes a growing role from Portuguese (Section 4.1) over Spanish (Section 4.2) and Catalan (Section 4.3) to French, Romanian and Italian (current section). The Portuguese PERFECT has the most restricted distribution and is limited to (hodiernal) pluractional contexts. All other Romance PERFECTS have a wider distribution, including contexts conveying core PERFECT meanings of past events with current relevance (4 and 5) and a broader subset of hodiernal contexts than the English PERFECT (e.g., 12). From Spanish to Catalan, we find a further extension within the hodiernal domain, originating – among others – in the elimination of the PERFECT'S sensitivity to (lexical) aspectual class (e.g., 15) and in the inclusion of narrative contexts (e.g., 2). The step from Catalan to the most liberal PERFECT languages is accompanied by an extension of the PERFECT to contexts that are squarely in the pre-hodiernal domain (e.g., 13 and 19).

5. Conclusion

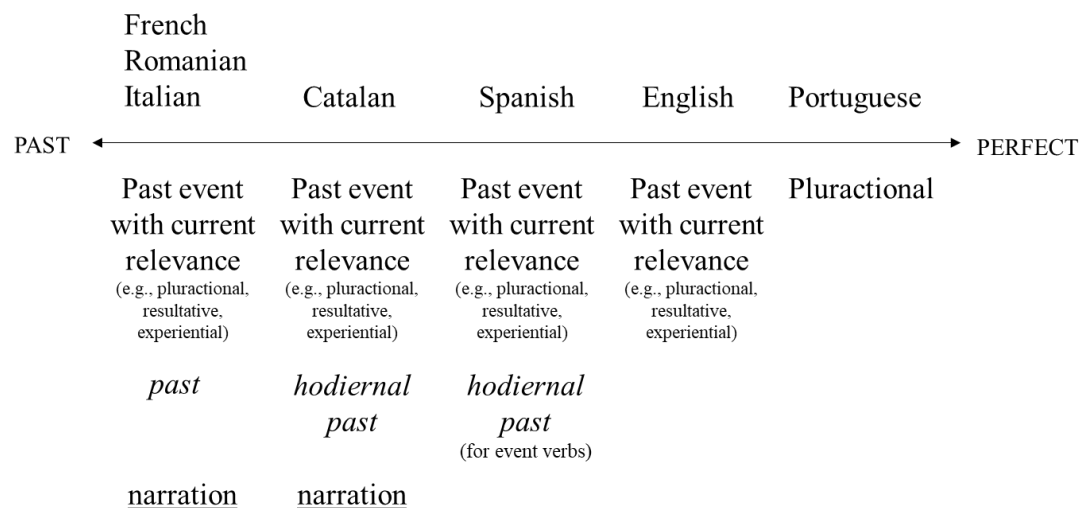
In this paper, we adopted a form-based approach to variation in the distribution and use of the PRESENT HAVE-PERFECT in Romance languages. We established that the data from our multilingual corpus based on *L'Étranger* and its translations to (European)

Portuguese, (Peninsular) Spanish, Catalan, Italian and Romanian reproduce the PERFECT scale that has been argued to underlie the aoristic drift (Section 3) and we showed how we can use our data to identify the main meaning ingredients that are associated with the Romance PERFECTS along this scale (Section 4). We included the English translation to facilitate a comparison with the semantic and typological literature on the PERFECT that often takes the English *Present Perfect* as its starting point.

We conclude that French, Romanian and Italian have extended the meaning space of their PERFECTS to the full range of uses traditionally associated with the PERFECTIVE PAST. The PERFECT in these languages can locate an event in the past and is not restricted to hodiernal past time reference (as in Catalan and Spanish). There is no sensitivity to lexical aspect (not even in the mild version we find in Spanish) and the PERFECT can locate either events or occurrences of states in the past. The French, Romanian and Italian PERFECTS appear in narrative contexts, and serve to describe sequences of events, in contrast to Spanish, but just like Catalan (where narrative use is restricted to the hodiernal past). Despite appearances, the fact that the PERFECT and PERFECTIVE PAST largely overlap in their meaning space does not license the conclusion that the French, Romanian and Italian *HAVE* + past participle constructions have shifted their semantics to a perfective past. Rather, our data convincingly show that they continue to convey the core perfect meanings and have expanded beyond them.

The subset relation depicted in Figure 2 emphasizes that PERFECT variations in Romance constitute a continuum, and that there is no independent cut-off point between meanings that can be covered by the *HAVE*-PERFECT or the PERFECTIVE PAST. In the absence of a one-to-one correlation between form and meaning, we used the translation data underlying the subset relation to investigate the various cut-off points between categories on the PERFECT scale. Figure 3 summarizes the meaning ingredients that emerged from our data as those that the different Romance PERFECTS are sensitive to:

Figure 3. Meaning ingredients underlying the PERFECT scale



Languages further to the left in Figure 3 have more past oriented PERFECTS, where languages to the right restrict their *have*-PERFECT to the core meanings of past events with current relevance or a subset thereof. The continuative meaning of the English *Present Perfect* is not on the scale, because it reflects an extension of its meaning towards the present domain rather than the past. Figure 3 underlines that Portuguese only covers pluractional readings, which constitute a specialized subset of the core meanings of past events with current relevance. More liberal Romance languages to the left of English extend their meaning domain towards past time reference to various degrees, but they all

subsume the core perfect meanings (e.g., resultative and experiential). Hodiernal past time reference constitutes an important meaning ingredient of the Romance PERFECT, and it provides the key to a further extension to narrative use and finally full-fledged past time reference. Figure 3 constitutes the input to a cross-linguistically robust compositional semantics of the PERFECT, the formal details of which will be worked out elsewhere.

The *Translation Mining* methodology enabled us to ground our claims in actual language use from parallel corpora, rather than constructed examples. The methodology lends itself to a range of extensions. We can finetune the PERFECT scale by taking into account more Romance languages, for instance Occitan would be a nice addition. We can also zoom in on subdomains of the PERFECT scale, which is what De Swart et al. (2022) do by comparing the intermediate status of Catalan to the intermediate position Dutch assumes in the PERFECT scale in Germanic languages and by adding the Breton PERFECT to the comparison. We finally also underline the fact that *Translation Mining* is an empirical methodology and is therefore replication-based, results from one corpus serving as input predictions for the next and critical mass building up across studies. Throughout the paper, we have already hinted at data from a corpus based on J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* and the first replication study based on this corpus is in preparation.

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Appendix 1: Source text and translations

Camus, A. 1942. *L'Étranger*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard (French original).

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Appendix 2: Correspondences between language-specific verb forms and tense-aspect categories in Romance

	French	Romanian	Italian	Catalan	Spanish	Portuguese
PRESENT PERFECT	<i>Passé Composé</i>	<i>Perfect Compus</i>	<i>Passato Prossimo</i>	<i>Perfet</i>	<i>Pretérito Perfecto Compuesto</i>	<i>Pretérito Perfeito Composto</i>
PERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Passé Simple</i>	<i>Perfect Simplù</i>	<i>Passato Remoto</i>	<i>Passat Simple</i>	<i>Pretérito Indefinido</i>	<i>Pretérito Perfeito Simples</i>
IMPERFECTIVE PAST	<i>Imparfait</i>	<i>Imperfect</i>	<i>Imperfetto</i>	<i>Imperfet</i>	<i>Pretérito Imperfecto</i>	<i>Pretérito Imperfeito</i>
PERIPHRASTIC PAST				<i>Passat Perifràstic</i>		
PAST PERFECT	<i>Plus-que-parfait</i>	<i>Mai Mult Ca Perfect</i>	<i>Trapassato Prossimo</i>	<i>Plusquam Perfet</i>	<i>Pretérito Pluscuamperfecto</i>	
PRESENT	<i>Présent</i>	<i>Prezent</i>	<i>Presente</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Presente</i>	<i>Presente</i>