



## University of Pennsylvania Working Papers in Linguistics

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Volume 9

Issue 2 *Papers from NWAU 31*

Article 7

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1-1-2003

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# Present Perfect for Preterite across Spanish Dialects

Chad Howe and Scott A. Schwenter

## 1 Introduction

It is well known that the present perfect (PP) in several Romance varieties has encroached on the semantic domain of the simple past or preterite (Harris 1982, Fleischman 1983). In some cases, this process has essentially gone to completion, e.g. the French *passé composé*, and the *passato prossimo* in Northern Italian dialects are both perfect constructions that now carry out many of the functions previously allocated to the simple past forms in these varieties (cf. Squartini and Bertinetto 2000).

In the case of Spanish, it has been argued that the PP in Peninsular (European) Spanish is following the same diachronic path as French (Schwenter 1994a, b), i.e. that the PP in this variety provides evidence of eventually supplanting the Preterite<sup>1</sup> form. In contrast, it is generally assumed that this same process is not occurring in Latin America, where in most regions there is very little, if any, overlap between the functional domains of the PP and the Preterite.

However, a less well-known fact about the Spanish situation is that the PP and Preterite do actually show considerable functional overlap in several South American (SAM) varieties of Spanish, particularly those spoken in Bolivia, Peru, and northwest Argentina. Some scholars (section 4) have therefore claimed that the SAM and Peninsular cases represent parallel cases of grammatical/semantic change whereby the PP is gradually taking over the semantic space and discourse functions previously allocated to the Preterite.

In this paper, we have two principal goals. First, we intend to provide evidence that distinguishes clearly between the Peninsular and SAM situations: while it is true that the PP has encroached on the semantic/functional space of the Preterite in both regions, it has not done so in the same way. Secondly, we will offer a new analysis of the PP in SAM Spanish which can account for both the functional similarities and contrasts it shows with respect to the Preterite. In doing so, our analysis diverges from previous accounts which fail to distinguish the functions of the two forms (e.g. Alonso and Henríquez Ureña 1951) as well as analyses which claim that these functions show no overlap (e.g. Escobar 1997).

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<sup>1</sup> We use initial capitals for "Preterite" to denote that we are talking about the Spanish form specifically.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. In section 2, we present the normative uses of the PP and Preterite in Spanish. In section 3, we summarize the situation in Peninsular Spanish, where the distribution of the PP and Preterite is relatively well understood. In section 4, we present the views of other scholars on the similarities between the situations in Peninsular and SAm Spanish. In section 5 we examine qualitative data from SAm Spanish varieties that illustrate the differences between the uses of the PP in this region and in Spain, and offer a new analysis of the perfective uses of the PP in SAm Spanish. Section 6 presents our conclusions.

## 2 Normative Uses of the PP and Preterite in Spanish

The normative use of the simple past or Preterite in Spanish is that of describing punctual situations in the past. It is an excellent example of a past perfective (cf. Comrie 1976, Dahl 1985), since it presents past events as bounded situations (1a), as opposed to the Imperfect, a past imperfective, which presents past events without regard to their boundaries (1b):

- (1a) *María falleció* en el año 1970. (Preterite)  
 'Maria died in 1970.'
- (1b) *María fallecía* en el año 1970. (Imperfect)  
 'Maria was dying in 1970.'

The Spanish PP, in all dialects of the language, is used for a range of distinct functions, such as resultative (2a), experiential (2b), continuative (2c), "hot news" (2d). All of these exemplify the prototype meaning of "past event with present/current relevance" (cf. Dahl and Hedin 2000). In addition, these uses parallel closely the uses of the PP in US English, with the general result that learners of Spanish in the USA do not tend to experience problems when learning the PP for these functions:

- (2a) *María se ha ido*.  
 'Maria has left.' (resultative: present state resulting from past action)
- (2b) *Juan ha visitado* Italia.  
 'Juan has visited Italy.' (experiential: situation has held at least once in past)
- (2c) *He llorado* mucho desde ese día.  
 'I have cried a lot since that day.' (continuative: situation begun in past continues at present)

(2d) El presidente de la república *ha fallecido*.

'The president of the republic has died.' ('hot news'; situation in the very recent past presumably being conveyed for the first time)<sup>2</sup>

### 3 PP for Preterite in Peninsular Spanish

The four uses of the PP exemplified in the previous section are found, to differing degrees, in all dialects of Spanish spoken throughout the world. But going beyond these cross-dialectal similarities, it is also common to find the PP employed in Peninsular Spanish<sup>3</sup> in utterances like (3), where no "hot news" interpretation is intended:

(3) *Me he levantado* esta mañana a las siete. (uttered at three in the afternoon)

'I got up (lit. have gotten up) this morning at seven.'

This use of the PP to describe punctual situations in the past—situations that do not necessarily have any relevance to the present—is a diachronic innovation in the language (cf. Fleischman 1982, Harris 1982). The PP is taking over functions previously ascribed solely to the Preterite (i.e. simple past), which is the only form used for sentences like (3) in most, but not all, other Spanish-speaking zones (e.g. Mexico, Puerto Rico, Chile):

(4) *Me levanté* esta mañana a las siete. (uttered at three in the afternoon)

'I got up this morning at seven.'

The functional extension of the PP in Spain is however strongly regulated by temporal factors, specifically the distance of the past reference point from utterance time (Schwenter 1994a, b; Serrano 1994). This restriction is shown clearly in Table 1, from Schwenter's (1994a) study in the city of Alicante, where speakers selected the PP and Preterite differentially in a questionnaire depending on the temporal reference of an adverb in the same sentence:

<sup>2</sup> There are substantial dialect differences in the use of the PP to convey "hot news". See Schwenter 1994b for more details.

<sup>3</sup> An important exception to this rule is northwestern Spain, most notably Galicia, where the meaning of the PP has not been extended in this way.

|                    | PP  | Pret | N   |
|--------------------|-----|------|-----|
| "Today" adverb     | 86% | 14%  | 294 |
| Pre-"Today" adverb | 28% | 72%  | 336 |

Table 1. Percentage verb form selected, by adverbial modifier

Schwenter also found significant differences based on age, when looking at which form was chosen in the context of a past event occurring on the "today" of the utterance. These differences are very suggestive of change in progress as opposed to age-grading, especially since there does not appear to be any stigma attached to the use of the PP in place of the Preterite.

|                 | PP  | Pret | N   |
|-----------------|-----|------|-----|
| Younger (18-25) | 94% | 6%   | 147 |
| Older (40+)     | 73% | 27%  | 147 |

Table 2. Percentage verb form selected for "today" past contexts, by age group

The change of PP for Preterite nowadays appears to be spreading even beyond the boundaries of "today", i.e. the PP is now being used to describe past events whose time of occurrence is before "today". Utterances like (5) are becoming more and more common in Peninsular Spanish. But again, the extent of this change differs by age group in Schwenter's (1994a) data from Alicante, as Table 3 shows.

(5) *Lo he visto ayer en el supermercado.*

'I saw (lit. have seen) him yesterday at the supermarket.'

|                 | PP  | Pret | N   |
|-----------------|-----|------|-----|
| Younger (18-25) | 39% | 61%  | 168 |
| Older (40+)     | 17% | 83%  | 168 |

Table 3. Percentage verb form selected for pre-"today" past contexts, by age group

In a similar study of elicited narratives in the capital city of Madrid, Serrano (1994) found the PP to be used in more past tense contexts than in Alicante, but still principally restricted to recent past events occurring "today" and "yesterday" relative to utterance time. Her results for three age groups parallel those seen in the Alicante data above: the Preterite remains a more frequent option for the oldest age group in her study:

|       | PP  | Pret | N  |
|-------|-----|------|----|
| 20-34 | 76% | 24%  | 51 |
| 35-55 | 94% | 6%   | 71 |
| 55-   | 31% | 69%  | 52 |

Table 4. Percentage verb form employed for "yesterday" past contexts in Madrid, by age group

Serrano (1994:50-51) found, however, that more remote past situations (e.g. *hace 2 ó 3 meses* '2 or 3 months ago') still heavily favored the Preterite (82%) over the PP (18%) for all speakers. Thus, the main difference between the dialects of Alicante and Madrid, based on a comparison of Schwenter's (1994a) and Serrano's (1994) respective results in these two cities, regards how past events occurring "yesterday" are encoded (PP or Preterite).

In sum, then, there is a clear extension of the PP to hodiernal ("today") past contexts in Alicante, Madrid, and also in Seville, as reported by Squartini and Bertinotto (2000). The advancement of the change appears to be furthest in Madrid, where the PP is preferred as well in hesternal ("yesterday") past contexts (Serrano 1994). In addition, in Alicante and Madrid the PP is also used in place of the Preterite to mark foregrounded narrative clauses, as long as the temporal reference of these clauses is hodiernal (and also hesternal in Madrid). However, the PP was not found in foregrounded clauses in narratives in the Seville data, no matter what the temporal distance from utterance time. This is suggestive of lesser extension of the PP into the semantic space of the Preterite in Seville.

#### 4 Peninsular and SAM "Extended" PP: Views of Similarity

While the semantic extension of the PP into the domain of the Preterite in Peninsular Spanish is a well-known phenomenon of which even non-linguists are aware, it is less known that the PP in place of the Preterite can also be found in some dialects of SAM Spanish. Moreover, a number of eminent scholars have claimed—usually in passing—that the "extended" usage of the PP is parallel in Peninsular and SAM Spanish.<sup>4</sup> Here we present three representative citations (cf. also Kany 1945:161, Westmoreland 1988):

*...modernamente existe la tendencia a fundir los usos [del pretérito perfecto y pretérito simple]: mientras en Madrid se prefiere el pretérito perfecto y se emplea para significaciones que antes*

<sup>4</sup> There are other citations in the literature that note this SAM use of PP for Preterite without relating it to the Peninsular situation (e.g. Stratford 1991, Lipski 1994:327).

*correspondían al pretérito simple ... en gran parte de América se hace lo contrario ... En nuestras provincias andinas, el uso coincide con el de Madrid, y no con el porteño.*<sup>5</sup> (Alonso and Henríquez Ureña 1964:155).

*Los estudios sobre el español americano parecen dejar en claro la existencia de dos amplias zonas: la que se une a los comportamientos verbales de los dialectos españoles más conservadores [sic]—toda la zona andina, desde el sur colombiano hasta Bolivia—y el resto del continente, que, a semejanza de Canarias y de Andalucía neutraliza estas oposiciones a favor de las formas simples con suma frecuencia...*<sup>6</sup> (López Morales 1996:25).

... *he cantado* does not generally encroach upon the role of *canté*, nevertheless there are isolated cases of such a development, both in America and in Spain. (Penny 2000:161).

Though none of these well-known scholars is fully explicit on the relationship between the PP and the Preterite in SAM dialects, it seems obvious that they are claiming significant parallelism between these dialects and their Peninsular counterparts.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, they provide no empirical corroboration to support their claims.

In the only empirical study we know of that compares PP and Preterite use across Spanish dialects, DeMello (1994) also implies the comparability of the Peninsular and SAM PPs, by including both under the rubric of what he terms “pretérito compuesto para indicar acción con límite en el pasado” (‘compound past to indicate action with a limit in the past’) or PCALP. He

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<sup>5</sup> ‘In modern times the tendency exists to fuse the uses [of the PP and the Preterite]: while the PP is preferred in Madrid and it is used for meanings that before corresponded to the Preterite ... in much of Latin America the contrary occurs ... In our Andean provinces, the use of the PP coincides with that of Madrid, and not with that of Buenos Aires.’

<sup>6</sup> ‘Studies of American Spanish dialects seem to make clear the existence of two broad zones: that which is united to the verbal behavior of the most conservative Spanish dialects—the entire Andean zone, from the south of Colombia to Bolivia—and the rest of the continent, which, like the Canary Islands and Andalusia neutralizes these oppositions in favor of the simple forms with great frequency.’

<sup>7</sup> López Morales’ view that the extension of the PP into the domain of the Preterite is characteristic of the “most conservative Spanish dialects” is wholly misguided, since this extension is indisputably a diachronic innovation in the language (cf. Mackenzie 1995:53). Likewise, Penny’s view that PP for Preterite is limited to “isolated cases” is very misleading, given the geographic extension of the phenomenon.



notes (1994:619) that PCALP is quantitatively most common in La Paz, followed by Lima and Madrid (tied), and lastly Seville. None of the other seven corpora analyzed by DeMello displayed any notable frequency of PCALP. However, a critical shortcoming of DeMello's study is that he does not go much beyond comparing the PCALP data in terms of overall frequencies, and as a result does not resolve the issue of whether the similarities in frequency are paralleled by similarities in function. In other words, overall quantitative similarity in PCALP is not necessarily reflective of functional similarity in how the PP has been extended into the domain of the Preterite.

In the next section, we analyze data extracted from the same La Paz (Marrone 1992) and Lima (Caravedo 1989) corpora that DeMello (1994) examined in his quantitative analysis, and offer an alternative explanation for the encroachment of the PP on the Preterite in these SAM dialects. This explanation distinguishes clearly between the SAM and Peninsular cases.

## 5 An Alternative Analysis of the PP in SAM Spanish

The PP in SAM Spanish, as exemplified in the Lima and La Paz Norma Culta corpora,<sup>8</sup> is employed in contexts where other dialects (including Peninsular varieties) would preferably use the Preterite. However, our analysis of data from the La Paz and Lima corpora makes clear that the two verb forms are not fully interchangeable. On the one hand, the Preterite is heavily restricted to narrative contexts, where it marks foregrounded events on the main storyline. By contrast, the PP is favored for marking non-sequenced situations in the past, as in (8) (the Preterite forms are underlined and the PP forms are in small caps in the examples to follow):

- (8) [Lima, enc. 8, pp. 113-14]  
*¿Qué estudios has realizado?*  
 -- *Bueno desde el comienzo de mi vida en el colegio...San José de Chuny, tuve toda la primaria, secundaria, luego terminando ahí me presenté a la N.N.... ingresé, y... seguí en los estudios generales los primeros años y, posteriormente tuve que viajar a Francia. Estuve allá seis meses en un pueblo que se llama Besanson, haciendo cursos en el centro de lingüística aplicada. Luego, logré sacar un diploma de...estudios franceses que me o sea mi intención, mi intención al ir a Francia era de...e lograr a conseguir un diploma que*

<sup>8</sup> It should be noted that the speakers whose interviews were included in these corpora were all native Spanish speakers, and nearly all were well-educated.

*me permitía ingresar a la escuela de intérpretes y traductores de Ginebra. E...un otro requerimiento era que hablara inglés pero yo en ese entonces no hablaba otro idioma más que el castellano y el francés. Entonces me faltaba el inglés lógicamente y tenía o que regresar a Perú a estudiarlo o irme a Inglaterra a estudiarlo, cosa que... que no no era posible, entonces regresé al Perú nuevamente al terminar los seis años, los seis meses de estudios en Besanson. Y...me presenté, no me presenté porque no había que pasar ningún examen pero. ..entré a la facultad de...literatura, lengua y literatura, ahora programa académico de no sé qué cosa. Ya. Bueno, desde ahí, esto HA SIDO en el setentaidós, hasta la fecha sigo en esto y espero terminar este año. Luego de muchos años de de matarme estudiando...*

'Where have you studied?

-- Well, since the beginning of my schooling...San José de Cluny, where I attended primary and secondary school and after finishing I applied to the N.N...I enrolled and...I continued my general studies during the first years, and later I had to travel to France. I was there for six months in a town called Besanson taking courses in the Center for Applied Linguistics. Later, I managed to finish a degree in...French studies that me or rather my intention, my intention to go to France was to work towards a degree that would permit me to enroll in the school of interpreting and translating in Ginebra. And...another requirement was that I had to speak English, but at that time I didn't speak any language other than Spanish and French. So, of course I could not speak English, and I had to return to Peru to study English or go to England to study it, something that...that wasn't possible, so I returned to Peru again to finish the six years, six months of study in Besanson. And...I applied, I didn't apply because you didn't have to pass any exam but...I entered the department of...literature, language and literature, now some type of program or other. Well, since then, this was in '72, until today I'm still working on this and hope to finish this year. After killing myself studying...'

Note that in (8) above, the temporal sequentiality is created by the Preterites and not by the PPs. Nonetheless, the PP in (8) is a case of past perfective reference. Past perfective references in narrative are generally foregrounded (and in most cases temporally sequenced), leading us to believe that this PP usage should be functionally similar to the Preterite. Examples such as (8),

however, suggest that the use of the PP to encode perfective situations is not related to foregrounding or temporal sequencing.

In (9) below, the PP signals a disruption in the narrative timeline: it appears in a relative clause with past perfective reference that adds identifying information about the project (*el proyecto*) in question. The temporally sequenced events are once again marked by the Preterite:

- (9) [La Paz, muestra 28, p. 317]  
 Enc.- *¿En qué consistía la universidad antes? ¿Y cuáles eran los puntos que necesitaban modificación?*  
 Inf. 4- *Antes era un...no tenía absolutamente ninguna libertad. Era dependiente completamente del gobierno. No tenían voz, voto, independencia de ninguna clase. Y eso es lo que se consiguió. Y también, en ese Congreso, yo presenté un proyecto que HA SIDO el primer...la primera actitud que HA PASADO a las cámaras, sugiriendo a las cámaras...resolvió el Congreso apoyar...derechos civiles para la mujer, derechos civiles y políticos para la mujer. Y como se aprobó en el Congreso, la resolución esa pasó...o en el Congreso de estudiantes, pasó a la cámara.*  
 ‘Interviewer- What did the university consist of before? And which points needed changing?  
 Inf. 4- Before it was a...there was absolutely no freedom. It was completely dependent on the government. They didn’t have a voice, a vote, any type of independence. And this is how it was. And also, in that Assembly, I presented a project that was the first...the first resolution that passed to the administration, suggesting that the administration...that the Assembly resolve to help...civil rights for women, civil and political rights for women. And as it was approved in in the Assembly, that resolution passed...in the Council of students, passed to the administration.’

Likewise in (10), the PP is used to provide a summary statement of the complete preceding narrative sequence—marked invariably by the Preterite—regarding how the speaker began her career as a writer:

- (10) [La Paz, muestra 2, p.32]  
 Enc.- *Quería preguntarle, ¿cómo se inició usted en su labor de escritora?*  
 Inf.- [...] Yo empecé haciendo un diario íntimo, que en un momento dado lo junté, hice un librito pequeño y se lo regalé a mi padre en un cumpleaños. Fue una gran sorpresa para él... que luego él,

*estando yo ausente, justamente en Estados Unidos, mi padre lo editó. Esa fue mi iniciación, muy... muy a pesar mío, casi. Y luego, yo presenté una vez en un concurso... así en el revés de la convocatoria, escribí un poema. Me olvidé y me sorprendió cuando un día me llamó justamente Alcides Arguedas que era el del jurado y me dice: "¡Hola, chica, ¿tú eres Colla?" "Colla" era el seudónimo que yo había puesto. Y dije: "Sí, ¿por qué?" "Bueno sacaste un premio", pero era un premio, una mención, una cosa muy mínima. Y, bueno, tuvo éxito. Es uno de los poemas que sigue figurando en antologías. Así es que me HE INICIADO con buena suerte, con buenos auspicios. Y continué. [...]*

'Interviewer- I wanted to ask you, how did you begin your work as a writer?

Inf.- [...] I began by keeping a personal diary, that at one point I collected and made a short book and gave it to my father for his birthday. It was a big surprise for him...that later he, me being in the United States, my father edited it. This was my starting point, very...almost without me there. Later, I enrolled in a course...and sort of in reverse to the norm, I wrote a poem. I forgot about it and was surprised later when one day Alcides Arguedas, who was the judge, called me and said, "Hello, are you 'Cola'?" 'Cola' was the pseudonym that I had been using. And I said, "Yes, why?" "Well, you won a prize," but it was a prize, something rather small. And, well, I had some success. It's one of the poems that keeps showing up in anthologies. So that's how I started with good luck and recognition. And I continued. [...]

In both (9) and (10), we have clear examples of the SAM PP used as a non-sequenced, past perfective verb form, lying outside of the main narrative storyline. In (10), for example, the PP refers to the superordinate event of having started her career, even though this larger event essentially consists of the series of temporally-sequenced sub-events presented using the Preterite.

Unlike what is found in Peninsular Spanish, the PP in SAM Spanish is also not temporally restricted to situations with hodiernal or hesternal past time reference. Rather, the temporal distance of the described situation from utterance time is not relevant to the choice of the PP, as (11) and (12) illustrate clearly:

(11) [La Paz, muestra 28, p. 317]

Inf. 4- *Sí, realmente yo he sido una de las que ha ayudado a la lucha por la reforma universitaria porque hace treinta años,*

*cincuenta años, el año 29, SE HA REUNIDO la primera Convención Nacional de Estudiantes que es la que HA HECHO la reforma universitaria, base de la autonomía universitaria. HA SIDO una lucha muy fuerte y muy valiente. El Congreso de Sucre HA SIDO seguramente el Congreso más grande de las universidades de Bolivia.*

Inf. 4- Yes, really I've been one of those who has helped in the effort for university reform because 30, 50 years ago, in '29, the first National Convention of Students met, which was the source of the university reform, based on the university autonomy. It was a very strong and valient effort. The Assembly of Sucre was surely the biggest assembly of Bolivian universities."

(12) [Lima, enc. 7, p. 104]

*¿Qué recuerdas de tu infancia?*

*- Ah de mi infancia, bueno, ah...cosas juguetes eh...yo solía ser...bueno yo HE SIDO muy enfermiza eh...entonces recuerdo los, los regalos de las enfermedades y los remedios juntos con los regalos no.*

'What do you remember about your childhood?

-About my childhood, well, um...toy things, um...I tended to be...well I was very sickly...and I remember the, the gifts I got while I was sick and the medicines along with the gifts.'

As mentioned above, the PP in these SAm dialects is heavily restricted to non-sequential past time contexts, though it is not wholly incompatible with sequential ordering. Nonetheless, as (13) shows, when the PP does occur in temporal sequences, these sequences do not form part of prototypical narratives. The PP in (13) is used in the sequential enumeration of cities visited during a trip to Spain, with what appears to be at least some temporal ordering, but the speaker switches fully to the Preterite to narrate a specific incident that occurred in the city of Burgos:

(13) [Lima, enc. 12, p. 170]

*... después HEMOS ESTADO en Sevilla, Córdoba, Granada, que son ciudades, realmente muy, muy...muy...interesantes por, por lo que muestran, hemos estado en además en pueblos muy pequeños. HEMOS ESTADO en Montilla, precisa, con el propósito exclusivo de ver la casa del... Inca Garcilaso, donde hay montón, una serie de fotos, más Montilla es una zona muy linda porque es, una zona vinera. Otro pueblo pequeño, al cual HEMOS ESTADO HA SIDO, Ronda, para ver una plaza de toros muy antigua que hay, e...*

*Montilla, e digo... Lusena, donde trabajan mucho en, cosas de metal. E... luego HEMOS ESTADO en Valladolid, y en Cáceres. Cáceres una ciudad muy fría, muy dura. En... en Burgos, que es una ciudad hermosísima y, que siempre, me hacía recordar mucho al Cid. En Burgos fuimos al monasterio, de... Cardeña. Creo que es de Cardeña, en este momento ya me he olvidado, donde llegamos a golpe de cinco para la seis, era un, monasterio cartujo y a la seis sonó la campanada, llamando todos los monjes en, profundo silencio que, tenía un sabor muy muy medieval. Se fueron reclusando, paso a paso, hasta... que desaparecieron, de manera que, nos tuvimos que retirar ya simplemente por... después de haber visto, nada más.*

'...afterwards we were in Sevilla, Córdoba, and Granada, they are all really very, very...very interesting cities because of what there is to see. We were also in some very small towns. We were in Montilla with our only intention being to see the house of... Inca Garcilaso, where there are a lot, a series of photos. Montilla is also a very pretty area because it's wine country. Another small town, Ronda, we went to in order to see a very old bull ring there, and Montilla, and also Lusena, where they work a lot with metals. And...later we were in Valladolid and in Cáceres. Cáceres is a very cold and hard town. In...in Burgos, which is a very beautiful city and has always reminded me a lot of El Cid. In Burgos we went to the monastery of...Cardeña. I believe that after Cardeña from there I've forgotten, but we arrived there at the stroke of five 'til six. It was a silent monastery and at six the bells rang, calling all of the monks in, in deep silence. It had a very, very medieval feel. They gathered, step by step, until...they disappeared and we had to leave simply because...after having seen this, there was nothing else.'

Finally, the essentially non-sequencing function of the PP favors its use with durative perfective situations. This function is seen above in (13), where the time spent in any one of the cities listed is greater than any of the corresponding situations depicted by the Preterite, situations which are all bounded events within a longer embedded narrative. Likewise, in (14) below, there is a clear contrast between the unbounded Imperfect verb form (*admitía* 'allowed'), and the bounded (i.e. perfectly-interpreted) events marked by the PP (note that the father of the woman speaking is most likely deceased, since she herself is 68 years old). Again, however, these situations are not interpreted as constituting a temporal sequence:

- (14) [La Paz, muestra 1, p. 24]  
 [...] *Mi padre no admitía pongos, ni personas de servicio, y cuando HA SIDO prefecto, etc., nunca HA PERMITIDO que se le hinquen ni le hagan señales de adoración. Siempre LES HA HECHO sentar, les HA DADO la mano y... Nos HEMOS CRIADO nosotros en ese tono de igualdad y de democracia con ellos. [...]*  
 '[...] My father did not allow assistants, nor any other type of service people, and when he was mayor, etc., he never permitted anyone to salute or to make any signal of adoration. He always made everyone sit down, shook their hands, and... We grew up with this idea of equality and democracy with them. [...]

It is clear from the data presented above that the PP and the Preterite in SAM dialects exhibit some degree of overlap in the expression of past time situations. Specifically, they are both options for depicting past perfective situations, but only the Preterite occurs in temporally sequences and foregrounded clauses. This kind of overlap in function clearly does not follow the same pattern as that illustrated by the findings from Peninsular Spanish in section 3. The relevant distinction between the innovative PP and the Preterite in the SAM cases is not a matter of the PP assuming part of the temporal semantic reference of the Preterite. Instead, the PP in SAM is motivated by features of discourse organization and, in narratives, to the relation of past time situations to the overall narrative sequence.

## 6 Conclusion

Peninsular and SAM dialects both demonstrate the extension of the PP into functional domains reserved strictly for the Preterite in other Spanish-speaking regions. However, despite the widespread view that the PP and the Preterite overlap in the same way in both dialects, the two situations are clearly distinct, as we have demonstrated above. The differences in the meaning/function of the PP form in Peninsular and SAM Spanish can be summarized as follows:

|                   | PP in perfective functions? | Hodiernal/hesternal Restriction? | Foregrounded clauses? |
|-------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| PP Penin. Spanish | Yes                         | Yes                              | Yes                   |
| PP SAM Spanish    | Yes                         | No                               | No                    |

Table 5. Summary of Peninsular and South American "Extended" PP

The SAm PP has clearly encroached upon and even taken over many of the past perfective functions of the Preterite in other dialects. However, there still exists functional specialization of the two forms, such that the Preterite is mainly restricted to marking temporally sequenced events in narrative contexts, and the PP is heavily favored in contexts of non-temporally-sequenced past situations. The qualitative hypothesis and analysis provided herein need to be further corroborated by quantitative data, comparing the relative frequencies of the PP and Preterite while taking into account the different restrictions we have detailed above.

In more general terms, our study shows that a discourse-analytic check on quantitative results (like those reported in DeMello 1994) is often necessary—one cannot assume sameness of function based solely on quantitative similarity. This same point has already been made rather forcefully by Cameron (e.g. 1993) with regard to specific/generic *tú* across Spanish dialects, but it seems that, in the case of Spanish PP/Preterite variation, it is necessary to make it once again.

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