

Chapter 12

Perfect Mismatches: 'Result' in English and Portuguese

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Introduction

In this chapter I describe a corpus-based study designed to test the claim that the meaning of 'result' associated with the English present perfect – according to some authors the main meaning – is not operational in Portuguese. In order to do this, I start by briefly summarising some of the claims about the present perfect in English and several plausible Portuguese counterparts, proceeding then to describe the empirical study conducted and the conclusions reached.

The study is informed by at least three general assumptions about language, previously presented in Santos (1996, 1997, 2000, 2004). The first assumption is that contrastive studies are the best way to access semantic data in an objective way. The second is that a relativist approach is the only methodologically sound way to perform contrastive studies, that is: one must describe each language system in its own right, before comparing the two in order to illuminate both the translation task and the semantics of each particular language. This standpoint implies that linguistic categories, realised by grammatical (morphosyntactic) categories, are language specific, and that although related languages (such as English and Portuguese) are bound to reflect rather similar concepts, the degree of similarity or difference has to be established empirically rather than postulated *a priori*.

Another important assumption behind the present study is that categories contain several 'components'¹ of meaning. There is thus no point in arguing for a unique meaning, or primary role, given that grammatical categories have to serve many purposes. This is related to the view in Santos (1997) that vagueness is an essential property of language. Furthermore, owing to the dynamic nature of language, categories take on new roles and drop old ones. Given that a linguistic device such as a tense form applies to a wide spectrum of different verbs or verb phrases with different properties, behaviour and therefore requirements in terms of subcategorisation and so on, it will, with time, develop different uses for different verbs, as is often the case concerning the distinction between events and states.

The source of the empirical data discussed in this chapter is COMPARA (Frankenberg-Garcia & Santos, 2003), a sizeable manually edited parallel corpus of English–Portuguese and Portuguese–English translations of published fiction, publicly available at <http://www.linguateca.pt/COMPARA/>. Table 12.1 gives a quantitative snapshot of the version of COMPARA used, containing 38,099 alignment units in the Portuguese–English direction, and 36,937 in the English–Portuguese direction. All examples in this chapter are thus authentic.

A Look at the Present Perfect

The English present perfect is well known as a difficult subject to teach Portuguese students (Casanova, 1985). However, it is a feature of English grammar that has been extensively studied and which is often used to demonstrate the import of result in tense and aspect (see, for example, Comrie, 1976; Dahl, 1985; McCoard, 1978; Moens, 1987; Sandström, 1993).

A previous corpus-based study of the translation to and from Portuguese of this tense form was marred by too few examples (see Santos, 1996: 449–471; 2004: 119–123). Nevertheless, the study revealed one of the cases where the two aspectual systems differ most. After all, there is no aspectual class distinction in Portuguese that hinges on a difference of interpretation between perfect and non-perfect, one of Vendler's (1967) criterial tests for English. Figure 12.1 illustrates the schemas assigned to the two languages as far as the conceptualisation of events is concerned.

The schemas in Figure 12.1 give rise to what I have called here the 'perfect mismatch': as there is no grammatical device that conveys result in Portuguese, there should be no trace left in the translation when the English present perfect performs this function.

Following the works mentioned above, especially Comrie (1976) and McCoard (1978), it is clear that there are other 'components' of meaning attributed to the English perfect. Although these are generally presented with different emphases in order to better suit competing theories, I prefer to consider them as together making up the meaning of a single linguistic category, as they can all occur together, and are not logically incompatible, as will be described below. The examples in Table 12.2 illustrate respectively: the purely temporal concept of 'extended now', present relevance, the existential meaning (or experiential perfect) and 'hot news' (or recency).

It is notable that, although apparently acknowledging roughly the same set of uses and even citing the same examples, each scholar groups the meanings in a different way.² A more objective way of clustering uses of the perfect, such as can be done by using translation evidence, will be attempted here. Of course, care must be exercised to take into account all

Table 12.1 COMPARA contents v.6.1*

	Source texts	Translations	Words in source texts	Words in translations	Words in source texts & translations
Portuguese	33	24	525,466	571,181	1,096,647
English	22	34	584,121	599,845	1,183,966
Totals	55	58	1,109,587	1,171,026	2,280,613

*34 translations of the 33 Portuguese originals, and 24 translations of the 22 English originals

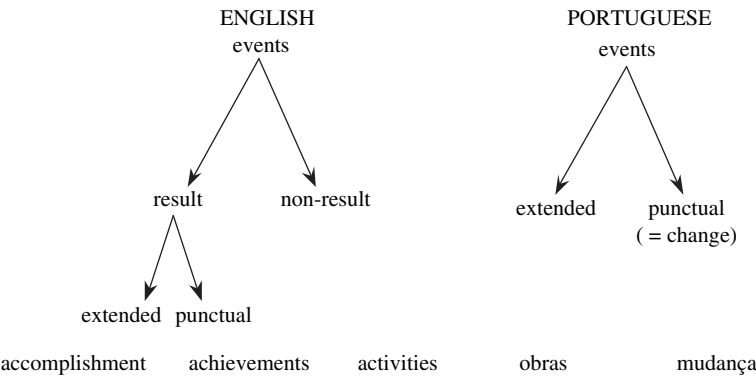


Figure 12.1 Aspectual classes covering events in English and Portuguese

sorts of contrastive factors, and the fact that translation is a way of looking at a source text through target-language eyes, meaning that the translator recognises (and conveys) most distinctly the particular meaning(s) s/he is familiar with. This requires a Portuguese-grounded view of the English perfect meanings to be presented, so that a reader may assess what can be recognised or shown by translation into Portuguese.

Table 12.2 Examples of English present perfect meanings

Source text	Target text
'Well anyway, how have you been '?	– 'Bem, tirando isso, como tens passado '?
This profession in America has constantly been held in honour, and more successfully than elsewhere has put forward a claim to the epithet of 'liberal'	Na América, esta profissão é tida em grande conta e, com mais êxito do que em qualquer outro país, tem reivindicado o epíteto de 'liberal'.
'That's right,' said the Queen, patting her on the head, which Alice didn't like at all, 'though, when you say "garden" – I've seen gardens, compared with which this would be a wilderness'	'Muito bem', disse a Rainha, dando-lhe uma palmadinha na cabeça, de que Alice não gostou nada, 'se bem que jardim, como tu dizes... eu tenho visto jardins e este comparado com esses não passa de um deserto'.
The senior conductor has just announced that we are approaching Rugby.	O motorista do comboio acabou de anunciar que estamos a chegar a Rugby.

The 'extended now', that is, a period that encompasses past and present, has two ways of being realised in Portuguese, namely different tenses: *Presente* and the Portuguese *Pretérito Perfeito Composto*. Furthermore, there are several other ways to convey extended periods that share some resemblances with the English perfect, as we shall see.

As to the 'relevance' and 'hot news' 'components' of meaning, however, these are, from the point of view of Portuguese, hard to differentiate from an emphasis on result; present relevance just seems a way to convey the idea that some result is still valid, even when 'result' is pragmatically inferred from the context. Similarly, the inference of 'hot news' can be explained as a pragmatic device associated with the result meaning: by grammatically marking the fact that some new information produces a relevant result now, the meaning conveyed is that of 'hot news'. Conversely, the more recent an event, the more probable it is that its result is relevant now.

The existential meaning, on the other hand, appears at first to be altogether different and related to quantification. It is employed in those cases where asserting mere existence is meaningful; it is sometimes emphatically uttered. However, its use can again be easily subsumed under the relevance interpretation: the present perfect is used to convey mere existence in some indefinite time because this existence is relevant to some discourse purpose.

A different way of relating result to relevance is to argue that by adding a result to an event description, one is conveying that it is relevant for the present. Others claim that this is exactly what happens when the event is placed in an 'extended now'. In this connection, it is interesting to note that two similar uses, that is, marking relevance to the present and conveying an existential assertion, have been attributed in Portuguese to the aspectual marker *já* associated with an event description in the Portuguese *Perfeito*. This is, however, at odds with the available translation evidence, as will be shown.

Elsness (1991) explains the opposition of the past simple and the present perfect with the fact that the former is the narrative tense in English, also stressing its deictic character. However, the *Perfeito* in Portuguese can have both deictic and existential uses, and this may be another explanation of why the two past tenses in English both translate into the *Perfeito*.

A more abstract cross-linguistic notion of tense, mood and aspect (TMA) categories is presented by Dahl (1985). His study assigns considerable weight to the (cross-linguistic) perfect category, distinguishing between two perfect uses, 'perfect of result' and 'perfect of persistent situation' (exemplified in English by the present perfect and the present perfect progressive respectively), and 'perfect related categories' such as the experiential, the pluperfect and the quotative. The results of the study

indicate that Portuguese appears to lack any perfect in Dahl's sense. However, there are several problems with Dahl's account of Portuguese (Santos, 1996): on the one hand, he groups present perfect and pluperfect together; on the other hand, he does not study the *já* marker.

Perfect Meanings Through Portuguese Eyes

In the previous section it was claimed that the result/relevance/hot news meaning cluster of the English perfect is alien to Portuguese. Portuguese, not having a grammatically realised concept of result, would not mark such concepts. On the other hand, we will see that the 'extended now' concept is very relevant in Portuguese, but the tense in question has different requirements and consequences: in particular, it is deeply connected to indefinite repetition, something also expressed by several other TMA devices in Portuguese. Furthermore, the stative realm – or the way states are conceptualised in Portuguese – is much more fine-grained than in English, which is shown in the multitude of state-like competing grammatical devices which is presented in Figure 12.2. I have argued elsewhere, in connection, for example, with the Portuguese Imperfeito and the *ser/estar* distinction, that a fundamental distinction lying at the heart of Portuguese grammar (and embodied world view) is the separation between permanent (essential) and temporary (accidental) states. There are also several aspectualisers that convey a whole shade of situations between these two kinds of states. Figure 12.2 reflects this proposal about states in Portuguese.

A description of relevant or related grammatical devices in Portuguese is in order, before we proceed.

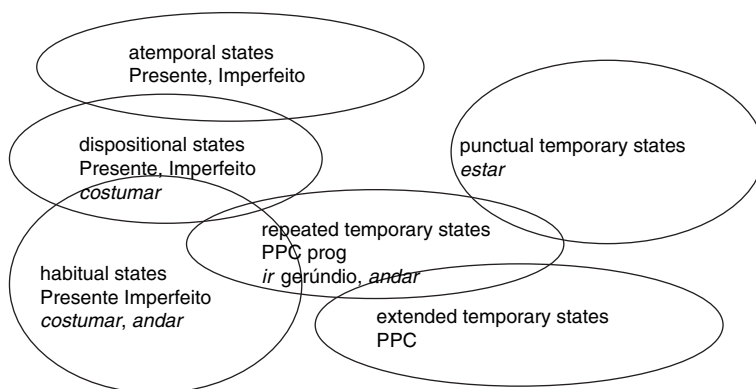


Figure 12.2 Several different categories of states in Portuguese

The Portuguese Pretérito Perfeito Composto (PPC)

This is a tense that has received much attention from Portuguese scholars, because it displays a tendency contrary to other Romance languages in that it is never interchangeable with the Perfeito. What is notable about it in connection with the present study is that the PPC is temporally related to a period covering past and present, as is also claimed for the English present perfect, an interval which has no other equivalent in time if we try to change the co-ordinates (that is, there is no past or future version of PPC). In addition, when used with event predicates, it always signals (not simply entails) indefinite repetition (iteration):

What makes the PPC especially expressive and gives it a unique and unmistakable place in the Romance language landscape is [...] its ability to express duration and iteration without adverbial expression (although this can also be added). (Boléo, 1936: 8, my translation)

In this, it is very different from English, where the present perfect may encourage such an inference (or may coerce the interpretation), but does not express it (cf. for example, McCoard, 1978). With an eventive predicate the PPC always expresses repetition (an indefinite number of times). Campos (1987) suggests that the PPC is a tense even more present than the simple present (which is often habitual or even dispositional). Taking a different stance, Peres (1993) stresses the meaning of temporal anteriority associated with the past participle, assigning an avowedly *ad hoc* iterative role to the *ter* auxiliary in order to provide an analysis of the PPC.

Other ways to refer to an extended now

In Portuguese there are other conventional ways to present an 'extended now', using adverbials such as *desde* (standard translation: 'since') or *há* (either translated by 'for' or by 'ago') which require the Portuguese Presente (the simple present tense), as illustrated in Table 12.3.

These two different ways to convey states in Portuguese in an extended now period support the claim regarding the more fine-grained conceptualisation of states in Portuguese, which can be illustrated by the minimal pair *Estou doente desde quinta* (Presente) and *Tenho estado doente desde quinta* (PPC), both translated by *I've been ill since Thursday*, but with the second sentence expressing a temporariness that is absent from the first.

Portuguese aspectualisers

There are also several auxiliaries in Portuguese whose meaning is imprecise repetition, covering a diffusely extended period. When used in the present tense, they could be said to convey an extended now, which, however, situates 'now' in the middle and not at the end of the interval.

Table 12.3 Ways of presenting an ‘extended now’ in Portuguese with Presente

Source text	Target text
– Ela está morando aqui. . . <i>desde</i> que o senhor foi embora.	‘She’s living here. . . since you left’
‘Mesmo comigo, que não penso em outras mulheres <i>desde</i> que conheci a filha do comerciante’.	‘Even me – I haven’t thought of other women since I met the merchant’s daughter.’
Teu irmão Manuel, <i>desde</i> que fugiu para Espanha, absorve -me todas as economias.	Your brother Manuel, since he ran off to Spain, has been using up all my savings.
Era a carta, a carta costumada, a carta necessária, a carta que <i>desde</i> a velha Antiguidade a mulher sempre escreve ; começava por ‘Meu idolatrado’ (..)	It was the usual letter, the inevitable letter, the letter that women have written ever since Antiquity: it began ‘My idol’ (..)
Não do tio Maximino de agora (<i>há</i> mais de vinte anos a gente não se vê), (..)	Not Uncle Maximino as he was now (we haven’t seen one another in more than twenty years),

These aspectualisers work in a way similar to (but are considerably more fine-grained than) the English progressive, although they obey different constraints and are used with different lexical items. In other words, while the superordinate meaning can be expressed in a similar way, the aspectualisers apply to different cases, crucially connected with a lack of difference between accomplishments and activities in Portuguese. Examples are *andar*, *ir* and *estar*, literally ‘walk’, ‘go’ and ‘be’, all presupposing a larger interval where some (repetitive or durative) behaviour can be asserted, as shown in Table 12.4.

Finally, *acabar* is a very interesting aspectualiser for several reasons. On the one hand, it is standardly translated by English ‘just’; on the other hand, it is vague between two different meanings, best explained by the two different English translations of a sentence such as *Ele acabou de pôr a mesa*: ‘he has finished laying the table’, ‘he has just laid the table’. *Acabar* is often mentioned as one of the renderings of the English present perfect with ‘just’. However, it is fully operational in all tenses in Portuguese, as ‘just’ is in English.

The *já* marker

Já is a very frequent adverbial in Portuguese which can be described as a recency marker or a temporal closeness marker, as it can be used in

Table 12.4 Portuguese aspectualisers conveying an 'extended now'

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
Esse deve pensar que o dinheiro lhe dá o direito de conservar a mulher, apesar de ela andar a dar com a cabeça nas paredes.	He must suppose that money gives him the right to keep his wife in spite of the fact that she's screwing everybody in sight.
Na certa, a vizinhança anda falando de nós.	The neighbours must be talking .
Você anda fazendo alguma bobagem?	Have you been up to something dumb?
Barulhosos, os colonos foram chegando .	The settlers began their noisy arrival.
Frase a frase, quilómetro a quilómetro, o cilindro da máquina de escrever vai rolando pacientemente, pedalada após pedalada, por caminhos, e estradas, curvas de nível, charcos.	Sentence by sentence, kilometre by kilometre, the typewriter ploughed patiently in the wake of revolving bicycle-wheels, on the road, by-roads, uphill, downhill, through the puddles.
E assim foi nascendo no meu coração, pudicamente, uma paixão pela Vicência.	And thus there grew up in my heart a chaste passion for Vicência.
– Depois do almoço, que acabou às duas horas, estive arranjando uns papéis.	'After lunch, which lasted until two o'clock, I was working on some papers'.
– Também me está a apetecer uma coisa assim.	'Frankly I wouldn't mind doing the same myself.'

both directions³ (future and past) and/or as a relational adverb (proximity) between two event descriptions (a discourse connector⁴).

Other meanings associated with *já* are mere existence (an existential claim), the implication that something was planned and the marking of perfectivity (not to be confused with the perfect aspect) – something seen as completed, as shown in the three examples in Table 12.5.

It should be noted that *já* is somehow related to English 'already', which has also been reported to co-occur often with the perfect. We will see below, however, that *já* is far from being directly translatable by 'already'. In fact, it seems likely that the two uses of 'already' in Table 12.5 are examples of translationese.

Interestingly, *já* may also co-occur (though very seldom) with the Portuguese PPC, adding the connotation of rarity: *Já tenho feito, já tem*

Table 12.5 Uses of *já* in Portuguese

Source text	Source text
Quem já teve um namoro, por menos sério que seja, e que levou um logro destes; (...)	Anyone who has ever been in love, no matter how slightly, and has had to undergo such a disappointment; (...)
Tem de ser hoje, já recebi ordem, disse o carcereiro quando lhe contou o plano para a fuga, (...)	It must be today, I have already received orders, said the gaoler, when he told him the plan for his escape (...)
E, quanto à minha avó, que já morreu , essa mudou-se para a nossa quinta, (...)	And as far as my grandmother, who is already dead , is concerned she moved to our country (...)

acontecido ('there have been times I did this', 'it has happened that ...'). According to Campos (1984), *já* neutralises some of the distinction between *Perfeito* and *PPC*, and simply marks the fact that the situation is not current, that is, it does not extend until now. Campos (1985: 127) also notes that *já* and *acabar* have a complementary distribution.

Summing up

We have reviewed a number of descriptions of disparate grammatical devices in the two languages, which are of relevance to the present study of 'result', mainly based on monolingual studies and on the intuition of the scholars concerned. In the rest of the current chapter, two things will be attempted:

- to explore what contrastive (and authentic) data can add to the understanding of these features; and
- to test the hypothesis that result is not grammatically relevant in Portuguese, based on a number of predictions tested against the available corpus evidence.

Two kinds of predictions can be made: those related to translation behaviour and those related to monolingual properties. Starting with translation, the hypothesis will be confirmed if the following situations emerge, given sufficient data:

- (1) almost no distinction in translation into Portuguese between other present perfect uses and the past simple (except possibly when adverbial markers enforce different behaviour) will emerge, although a good overlap of the Portuguese *PPC* and the English present perfect of the 'extended now' kind should occur in both translation directions when dealing with stative predicates;

- (2) an English-only rationale in the choice of present perfect or past simple when translating from Portuguese, because English needs to attend to distinctions that Portuguese does not specify;
- (3) systematic loss or addition in translation, and/or compensation through the use of different aspectual classes, as Portuguese has no similar category to the English present perfect. The second kind of prediction, relating to monolingual properties, will concern the lexical field of cause and result in the two languages:
- (4) English will be superior in lexical richness, that is, in the number of distinct items which are related to and/or convey result;
- (5) English will also display a significantly higher frequency of lexical items occurring in running text.

Given time and space limitations, for this second kind of prediction I will only use those parts of COMPARA which can be considered directly comparable between English and Portuguese, that is I will be comparing original Portuguese and translated Portuguese (and only for Prediction 5).⁵ To investigate Prediction 4, I would need a language-independent criterion to yield comparable and complete lists of lexical items relating to result, or at least two independently built lists of result words for each language.

Let me note that it is probable that, as a compensatory mechanism for its lack of focus on result, Portuguese is more concerned with the description of fairly complex temporal patterns that bring forth notions of disposition, fate, probability, or state of affairs, as opposed to individual actions shaping concrete events. If so, this would imply that the grammatical markers of such notions, in opposition to the result-related words, will be more frequent in original Portuguese than in Portuguese translations, but this goes beyond the scope of the present study.

The Empirical Study

In this section, the two sets of predictions outlined above are explored using the COMPARA corpus.

Looking at translation patterns involving the TMA devices

Study 1

Here we concentrate on the 170 instances of PPC identified in COMPARA: Table 12.6 provides a quantitative overview of how the PPC is rendered in English ($f = 78$), and which English tenses give rise to PPC in Portuguese translation ($f = 92$).

Table 12.6 seems to indicate rough comparability in the distribution of tense use as the English present perfect is the overwhelmingly preferred translation of PPC in 62% of cases (48/78), and also the most common origin of the PPC in translation (in 57% of cases, 52/92). However, a closer look at the data demonstrates that we must distinguish here

Table 12.6 PPC translation patterns from and into English

<i>English tense correspondence</i>	<i>Translation from Portuguese into English (from PPC)</i>	<i>Translation into Portuguese from English (into PPC)</i>
Present perfect	48	52
Present perfect progressive	9	10
Present perfect progressive – PPC prog	3	17
Present perfect – PPC prog	0	1
Progressive	1	8
Present	4	2
Past simple	4	0
Pluperfect progressive	0	1
Pluperfect	1	1
Rewriting	3	0
Total	78	92

between stative and eventive predicates. In fact, of all the 52 translations of the present perfect using the PPC in Portuguese, 31 are statives.⁶ Of the remaining instances, 11 verbs have arguments with a plural number and 5 mass ones (which is also a kind of plurality), therefore allowing for a plausible iterative reading. In three additional cases, the repetition meaning was made clear by other devices, as illustrated in Table 12.7.

Table 12.7 Translations of present perfect with adverbials

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
He gives me the burdened sigh I’ve heard <i>all my life</i> meaning that I’m too obstinate for my own good.	Ele solta o mesmo suspiro sofrido que tenho ouvido toda a minha vida, querendo significar que para meu mal sou demasiado teimoso.
‘I’ll come up <i>every hour</i> ,’ Robert said, ‘as I’ve done since he got ill.’	– Passo por cá de hora a hora – disse Robert –, como tenho feito desde que ele adoeceu.

Table 12.8 Vagueness in the English source and possible translation errors

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
You have not realized how I have developed .	Não compreendeu como eu me tenho desenvolvido .
Fergus has made Gina feel a freak.	O Fergus tem andado a fazer a Gina sentir-se um monstro.
'I hope everyone is coming to the party,' says Polly, who has sat up half the night cutting out paper hearts for decorations.	– Espero que venham todos à festa – diz a Polly, que tem passado metade das noites acordada, a recortar corações de papel para a decoração.

Differences conveyed by the texts in the two languages are highlighted in Table 12.8. Of special interest are the possible translation weaknesses resulting from the apparent similarity of the present perfect and the PPC and the vagueness of the English source. While English as source asserts *one* result, the Portuguese translation expresses a repetition of small events of 'developing' and 'making', which are not stated in the original two first sentences. Likewise, the third example illustrates the choice made by the translator between several nights and a single last night, something not clearly specified in the English original.

When considering translations in the opposite direction, that is from Portuguese into English – translating PPC into the present perfect – it is interesting to note that a mere five cases are statives in Portuguese, which shows that PPC is mainly put to use to describe (repetitive) actions. When additional temporal information is included in Portuguese, such as an adverbial phrase that makes the iteration explicit, as in Table 12.9, the English translation has no loss of information.

But given the very specific import of this Portuguese tense, and the more general import (and set of uses) of the present perfect, it is not surprising to find instances where matters explicitly expressed in Portuguese remain vague, or at most implicit, in English, as in Table 12.10.

The first example in Table 12.10 refers clearly in Portuguese to different occasions, whereas the translation could describe a case where

Table 12.9 Presentation of meaning of PPC with co-occurring adverbs

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
– Tenho ouvido dizer <i>muitas vezes</i> o que é, senhor Simão. . .	'I have heard <i>many times</i> what it is, Simão'.
– Tenho pensado em você <i>todos os dias</i> .	'I've thought about you <i>every single day</i> .'

Table 12.10 Explicitly repeated events in Portuguese with unspecified repetition in translation

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
É aí que tenho feito muitos conhecimentos.	I have made many acquaintances there.
– Eu também me tenho sacrificado , Pôncio ...	'I've made sacrifices too, Pontius ...'
– Tenho visto seu nome nos jornais.	– I've seen your name in the papers.
Não lhe tenho escrito por certos motivos particulares, etc.	I have not written you because of some very special reasons, etc.

all the many acquaintances had been made on the same occasion. In the next case, and owing to a possible existential interpretation of the English sentence, there is nothing that anchors the statement in an ‘extended now’, up to the present, as is conveyed in Portuguese. Finally, where the third and fourth Portuguese sentences clearly convey a repeated experience of seeing, and a repeated case of ‘not writing’, the English translations could refer to a single occasion of seeing, as well as to the accumulated absence of writing respectively.

On the other hand, a situation was identified in the corpus data in which the Portuguese PPC and English present perfect seemed to be fairly equivalent, namely in relative clauses whose head is a plural count or a mass noun (10 occurrences), as shown in the first three examples in Table 12.11. The fourth example indirectly shows, however, by the addition of the progressive that if the head of the relative clause is a singular countable noun, a repeated meaning can no longer be inferred, and a bare present perfect English translation would fail to convey the original meaning.

Study 2

Having looked at translations of the Portuguese PPC into English, as well as at translations from English using the PPC, we now move on to the present perfect in English. Given that the potential number of occurrences in COMPARA was too large to inspect manually, a random sample of 500 potential occurrences of the present perfect was selected by identifying instances of *has* or *have* followed by a past participle. After eliminating infinitives or cases preceded by modals, 214 occurrences were left: 136 occurrences in English source texts; 78 occurrences in English target texts. As 78 seemed too few, all occurrences from Portuguese to English ($N = 316$) were then investigated. Table 12.12 displays the translation patterns observed.⁷

Table 12.11 Influence of the mass/plural character of the head of relative clauses

Source text	Target text
– Aqui, se alguém deve chorar sou eu; mas lágrimas dignas de mim, lágrimas de gratidão aos favores que tenho recebido de si e de seu pai.	'If anyone should cry here, it should be me; but tears worthy of myself, tears of gratitude for the favours I've received from you and your father'.
– Os sacrifícios que Mariana tem feito e quer fazer por mim só podiam ter uma paga, embora mos não faça esperando recompensa.	'The sacrifices you've made for me and that you want to make for me could only have one legitimate form of payment, even if you don't make them expecting recompense.'
É inacreditável o que se tem construído de então para cá.	'You wouldn't believe the construction that's gone on since then.'
'Tome, aqui estão suas pedras preciosas e fique tranqüilo que não direi para a polícia qual o método que vocês têm usado para contrabandeá-las para o exterior'.	'Here, take your precious stones and rest assured that I'll say nothing to the police about the method you've been using to smuggle them abroad.'

Table 12.12 shows clearly that it is *not* the Portuguese PPC, but the Perfeito which is the default translation equivalent for the English present perfect, even though by far the most frequent translation equivalent of the Perfeito into English is the past simple (cf. Santos, 2004).

So which particular Portuguese structures *are* translated by the present perfect? Why does present perfect appear at all in the English translation, if it is meant to convey a result *not* present in the Portuguese? First, I looked for how many of these present perfect instances applied to stative verbs in English, but only 22 cases were found. One thing that became clear was that several Portuguese verbs in the Perfeito were *Mudanças* (see Figure 12.1), with a clear meaning that a change has occurred, while many of the English verbs employed as translations were accomplishments or acquisitions; the fact that the event has been completed must be expressed in English with the perfect. This appears to cover most of the cases of the translation of Perfeito into the present perfect, as the three first examples in Table 12.13 show. The two last cases, featuring *Obras* instead (something that happens in an extended interval), are particularly interesting because they are somehow the converse of the cases discussed above: they both describe a number of situations fully occurring in the past (thus Perfeito) but seen as 'summed up' (thus present perfect). Finally, the second verb in the last example, *habituou*, a *Mudança*, is particularly interesting because it is very hard to

Table 12.12 Present perfect translation patterns from and into Portuguese

<i>Portuguese tense correspondence</i>	<i>Translation into Portuguese of English present perfect</i>	<i>Translation from Portuguese into English present perfect</i>
Perfeito	82 (7 <i>já</i>)	184 (7 <i>já</i>)
PPC	14 (4 prog)	14 (1 prog)
Presente	11 (3 prog)	55 (3 prog)
Presente Progressivo		4 (4 prog)
Infinitivo Composto	8	7
Mais que Perfeito	4 (1 <i>já</i>)	4 (1 <i>já</i>)
Presente Conjuntivo	3	8
Futuro Conjuntivo	3	1
Imperfeito Conjuntivo	1	3
<i>acabar de</i> (Perfeito)	3	1
Particípio Passado	3	10
Imperfeito	2	2
Rephrasing	2	14
Total	136	316

'Prog' indicates present perfect progressive. Figures in parenthesis are *not* additional to those shown i.e. of 14 translations of Perfeito into the English present perfect, 1 is present perfect progressive.

translate into English, as it depicts a change into one of several kinds of Portuguese states. Its translation usually requires a gradual accomplishment (cf. Santos 1996: 229–230 for further discussion).

The data also reveal that a good many cases of the Portuguese Presente (52 simple, 3 progressive) were rendered by the present perfect, only 8 of which included *há* ('for', 'ago') and even fewer (3) *desde* ('since'). The most notable pattern seems to be a timeless generalisation (or 'truth') in Portuguese being turned into a summing up of previous events in English, as in Table 12.14.

A number of cases of aspectual class change in Portuguese–English translation could also be identified. The first three examples in Table 12.15 describe a state that can be related to a previous event, and how such an event is expressed by the English sentence in translation. The last three

Table 12.13 Perfeito translated into present perfect

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
Tirou os óculos ray-ban para mostrar que tem olhos azuis, e é um cafajeste.	He has taken off his Ray-Ban glasses to show he has blue eyes, and he is a scoundrel.
A pintura escureceu muito, mas ainda dá idéia de ambos.	The paint has darkened with time, but it still gives a good idea of both.
– Herdou o orgulho do pai! murmurou Estácio.	'She has inherited her father's pride!' murmured Estacio.
Por esta mesma via escrevemos ao Sr. Manuel Pedro da Silva, a quem novamente prestamos contas das despesas que fizemos com o sobrinho.	At this time we are also writing to Mr. Manuel Pedro da Silva, to whom we once again submit our accounts of the expenses we have incurred on behalf of his nephew.
Tantas vezes Ariela conduziu um cliente masculino pelo corredor, tantas portas de apartamentos abriu para dar passagem a um homem, e nem assim se habituou a um protocolo que considera humilhante.	So many times Ariela has led a male client down the hallway, so many doors to apartments opened to make way for a man, and even so she has never become accustomed to a protocol she considers humiliating.

examples illustrate cases where the lexically corresponding translation has different aspectual properties (Aquisições – vague between inception and state – in Portuguese, accomplishments in English).

Translation errors are a wonderful window on language differences, as the next example shows: while in the Portuguese the adverb *hoje* (which can mean 'nowadays', or 'today') reflects a permanent or essential property, the translator has read it as referring to a particular day.

Finally, the seven cases with *já* did not reveal any clear pattern. See dummy Table 12.16.

Table 12.14 Translation of timeless truth Presente into present perfect

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
Os poetas exageram muito!	The poets have exaggerated greatly.
A história registra inúmeros casos de roubos de caravanas inteiras de peregrinos, e de crimes horríveis cometidos contra os viajantes solitários.	History has recorded innumerable cases of robbery of entire caravans of pilgrims and of horrible crimes committed against lone travelers.

Table 12.15 Translation of states by the event that caused them

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
A indústria não gostaria com certeza, estão ali investidos milhões,	Why, Industry wouldn't like it, millions have been invested in the project,
– Digo-te que tens uma raiz de má erva no coração; esta é a cruel verdade.	I tell you that a poisonous herb has taken root in your heart. This is the cruel truth.
Acabei agora mesmo de saber que a polícia tem informação de dois casos de cegueira súbita,	I've just been told that the police have been informed of two cases of sudden blindness
E começo a observar que, nas suas frases de quando em quando interrompidas, aparecem agora também (...) palavras incoerentes	I have started to notice that his frequently broken sentences are interspersed now and then with incoherent, disconnected words,
Preserva Mara uma vivacidade juvenil que ainda me espanta, ao fim de todos estes anos.	Mara has maintained a youthful vivacity that still amazes me.
L. (...) embarcou num dos destroços da arca de Noé, a que chamamos carruagem;	L. (...) embarked in one of those refugees from Noah's Ark that we have called carriages

Moving on to the translation of the present perfect in English source texts, only 11 statives among the present perfects could be found, 4 of which were rendered as the PPC. So, here we would expect either a loss of meaning of the English original, or some kind of compensation using *Mudança* verbs in the translation and hence an aspectual class shift. In fact, in the majority of cases, the result or resulting state is implicit and is not expressed in any way in the Portuguese translation. Let us look at a few cases where the verbs in the Portuguese translation are *Obras* (taking time, no result) as shown in Table 12.17.

Table 12.16 Timeless truth turned into a single event

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
assisti pasmado à aurora daquela inteligência que os senhores vêm hoje tão desenvolvida e lúcida.	In amazement I assisted at the dawn of that intelligence which you gentlemen have seen today so well developed and lucid.

Table 12.17 Present perfect rendered by Obras in Perfeito

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
What legitimate rights had been recognized, according to the 'standards of Western civilization' our white governments have declared themselves dedicated to preserve and perpetuate?	Que direitos legítimos tinham sido reconhecidos, de acordo com os 'padrões da civilização ocidental' que os nossos governos brancos declararam comprometer-se a conservar e perpetuar?
The wisest doctors of our Church for many centuries have examined every verse of the Holy Scripture just as Herod's soldiers searched for innocent children, and they have found no chapter, no line, no phrase wherein there is mention of the woodworm.	Os mais sábios doutores da nossa Igreja examinaram durante muitos séculos todos os versículos da Sagrada Escritura, com a mesma atenção com que os soldados de Herodes procuraram os inocentes, e não encontraram nenhum capítulo, nenhuma linha, nenhuma frase que fizesse menção do caruncho.
In explanation of some portions of this narrative, wherein I have spoken of the stowage of the brig, (...)	Para mais fácil compreensão dalguns pontos deste relato, no qual <i>tanto</i> falei da arrumação da carga do brigue, (...)

In the first example, one may detect in the English source a continuing obligation that is lost in the Portuguese translation; in the second, if the present perfect carries the implication that the doctors are still examining the scriptures, referring to an 'extended now', the translation does not reflect this, although the English could be interpreted as a present relevance case. The third example is vague between expressing total amount and simply present relevance. Total amount is conveyed explicitly in the Portuguese translation by the addition of the indefinite pronoun *tanto* ('so much').

In fact, close inspection of every present perfect occurrence in the English source text (Table 12.12) leads to the conclusion that the factor 'plurality' alone (as in the relative clause examples in Table 12.11 above) does not entail repetition of events or states, and while plurality calls for the present perfect in English, this meaning alone may not license the PPC in Portuguese, as the following example in Table 12.18 shows.

Further evidence for the claim that the present perfect is vague between (i) expressing a combination of several factors (a total amount) and (ii) a temporal sequence (a possibly unfinished repetition stretching into the present) is the fact that one may consider the translation of the following sentences in Table 12.19 as correct or incorrect respectively.

Table 12.18 Plural present perfect whose translation into Portuguese cannot employ the PPC

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
While Morris Zapp is working on this problem, we shall take time out to explain something of the circumstances that have brought him and Philip Swallow into the polar skies at the same indeterminate (for everybody's watch is wrong by now) hour.	Enquanto Morris Zapp labora no problema, aproveitamos para explicar um pouco as circunstâncias que o colocaram , a ele e a Philip Swallow, nos céus polares à mesma (visto que neste momento não há ninguém com o relógio certo) hora indeterminada.

Table 12.19 Present perfect sentences showing either a 'total amount' or a 'temporal sequence' interpretation

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
Their bleedings and leakages, their lumps and growths, (...) the mere mention of such things makes him wince and cringe, and lately the menopause has added new items to the repertory: the hot flush, flooding, and something sinister called a bloat.	As hemorragias e corrimentos, inchaços e caroços, (...) a simples menção de tais coisas fá-lo estremecer e encolher-se, e ultimamente a menopausa acrescentou novas rubricas ao reportório: afrontamentos, hemorragias, e uma coisa sinistra chamada intumescimento.

Finally, the translation of the present perfect as applying to a state that was not rendered by the PPC in Portuguese allows an interesting generalisation: when the situation displayed in English cannot apply to the present moment, Portuguese uses (marked) *Perfeito* with states, as in the examples in Table 12.20.

The cases where the present perfect is translated by *já*, on the other hand, do not display a regular pattern, as noted earlier for the cases where *já* is translated by the English present perfect. Some three cases could be interpreted as rendering an existential meaning, two an 'according to plan' inference, that is, *já* marking the new event as expected. The single most general meaning, 'near the present' (but not in the sense of hot news), seems to be operational in other cases, as shown in Table 12.21.

It appears that *já* is an idiomatic addition here, not determined by the use of the perfect in the English original; it is a discourse marker that

Table 12.20 Present perfect translated by *Perfeito* applied to states

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
I want you – you who have heard his last words – to know I have been worthy of him. . .	Quero que o senhor – o senhor, que ouviu as suas últimas palavras – saiba que fui digna dele...
'It means that every other child Sam has been in contact with – '	– Isto significa que todas as outras crianças com quem Sam esteve em contacto. . .
(...) she recognised the greeting of someone who has been away and signals his return.	(...) ela reconheceu a saudação de alguém que esteve fora e assinala o seu regresso.

Table 12.21 Translation of present perfect by *já* in the sense of 'near the present of the utterance'

<i>Source text</i>	<i>Target text</i>
There are many moralities here in Spain, you have seen that with your own eyes, you have seen that the old conservative view and the new liberal view do not live easily together, that there is still so much (..)	Aqui em Espanha a moral é muito rígida, <i>já viu</i> isso com os seus próprios olhos, <i>já percebeu</i> que as velhas ideias conservadoras e as novas ideias liberais não coexistem com facilidade, que ainda há muitas coisas (..)
I see I have missed my train.	Vejo que <i>já perdi</i> o comboio.

provides an explicit link to the speech event (or the previous event mentioned). Without *já*, the link would be lost in Portuguese.

Study 3

Analysing separately the 70 occurrences of *já* followed by *Perfeito* in COMPARA (34 in original Portuguese texts and 36 in translated texts), a new use was identified: *já* is often employed to mark a final (or summation) point of a gradual (or additive) situation, as shown in Table 12.22.

Furthermore, the use of *já* with verbs of reporting is strikingly frequent: 26 occurrences of 70, relating what is being said to what had been previously said.

Finally, Table 12.23 displays the overall correspondence between *já* and *already* in translation, showing that while 76% (516/681) of the occurrences of *already* correspond to *já* in translation into Portuguese,

Table 12.22 *Já* with Perfeito conveying a final point (or summation)

Source text	Target text
– Qual... pois se eu também já cantei tudo que sabia.	Aww... I might've already sung everything I know.
Você, que já comeu cinco mil mulheres, podia me esclarecer se isso é verdade.	Come to think of it, you're the one who's had five thousand women, you should be able to set me straight on that.
– Olhe que já bebeu bastante, papá!	You've had enough already, Daddy.

Table 12.23 Translation between Portuguese *já* and English *already*

Status of text	<i>já to already</i>	<i>já</i>	<i>already to já</i>	<i>already</i>
Source text	369	1054	153	202
Translated text	156	840	363	479
Total	525	1894	516	681

only 28% (525/1894) of the occurrences of *já* are rendered in English by *already*.

Study 4

Here we examine the claim that aspectualisers cover some of the same ground as the PPC in Portuguese. Table 12.24 shows a first quantitative overview, which apparently does not support my claim that temporal specification is more fine-grained in Portuguese. In fact, and except for the *ir* graduality marker and *ficar* (Santos, 1996: 231–232), all other aspectualisers are more frequent in translation from English than in the original Portuguese. A possible explanation here is that English is more concerned with temporary states and progressive aspect than Portuguese, a language that gives at least as much attention to permanent states. As this is not related to the question of result, it must remain a question for future study.

Acabar de, the standard translation of *just*, is interesting because of its other meaning of finishing something, which leads to vague utterances where both meanings can be conveyed. Its translation pattern into English is displayed in Table 12.25. A careful analysis shows that, in translation from English, *acabar* is overwhelmingly used in the 'just' or recency sense, while in original Portuguese *acabar* is very often vague between the two senses (I counted 14 cases), is more frequently used in the 'finish' sense (21 cases), and is quite often mistranslated.⁸

Table 12.24 Aspectualisers in COMPARA in original and translated Portuguese*

<i>Aspectualiser</i>	<i>Original Portuguese</i>	<i>Translated Portuguese</i>
<i>andar a</i> infinitivo	15	66
<i>andar</i> gerúndio	18	1
<i>ir</i> gerúndio	280	134
<i>estar a</i> infinitivo	95	750
<i>estar</i> gerúndio	561	257
<i>acabar de</i> infinitivo	96	110
<i>acabar</i> gerúndio	41	10
<i>ficar</i> gerúndio	148	14
<i>ficar a</i> infinitivo	31	51

*The absolute frequencies are comparable because the number of words in both subcorpora is almost the same, cf. Table 12.1

Table 12.25 Correspondence of *acabar de*

<i>English correspondence</i>	<i>Translation into Portuguese from English (into acabar de)</i>	<i>Translation from Portuguese into English (from acabar de)</i>
just	62	41
recency adverbs	20	5
<i>finish</i> and other verbs	4	21
Ø	24	24
one other (unrelated) construction	0	5
Total	110	96

Study 5

Finally, we turn to lexical features, contrasting original with translated Portuguese in Table 12.26, which shows the frequency of result-related words or constructions in Portuguese, selected on the basis of introspection and dictionary inspection. It is striking that every one of these words (except for *sair* 'end up') is more frequent in the translations into Portuguese than in the original Portuguese, lending some weight to the

Table 12.26 Result words in COMPARA in original and translated Portuguese, choosing only the result-related senses

<i>Portuguese word or phrase</i>	<i>Original text</i>	<i>Translated text</i>
resultado	30	44
consequência	11	36
resultar	19	22
levar a*	15	42
dar origem a	3	77
dar em*	4	8
redundar	1	2
culminar	–	2
derivar*	–	3
fazer com que	19	35
resultante	3	6
sair*	5	1
Total	105	278

*All senses of these verbs (as well as related idioms and connotations) that are not connected with result have been omitted

claim that English is a more result-oriented language, assuming that the Portuguese translations are influenced by the English source.

Concluding Remarks

It is notoriously difficult to obtain objective semantic data. One way of approaching this problem is to test predictions derived from hypotheses using translations in a parallel corpus of texts, here in Portuguese and English. The present contribution aimed at corroborating the hypothesis that the Portuguese language gives little attention to result compared to English, while on the other hand encoding more complex distinctions or temporal patterns in the stative realm.

The corpus analysis presented here provides contrastive and monolingual frequency data on such tense and aspect devices as *já* and the PPC in Portuguese, using a publicly available resource, COMPARA, so that further analyses by other scholars are encouraged, and our studies may be replicated and either validated or reinterpreted (Santos & Oksefjell, 1999). It also provides an illustration of the methodology for contrastive

semantics put forward in Santos (2004), by taking into account contrastive vagueness, as well as the existence of different aspectual classes in different languages, and by using translation mistakes and translationese to pinpoint complex differences.

In this chapter, we have helped to disentangle the intricate relations between 'components' of meaning such as the 'extended now', result, relationship with the present time, repetition, plural participants in events, relevance, and kinds of states, in Portuguese and English, with the help of a corpus of human translations.

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Notes

1. Throughout the chapter I use the term 'components' of meaning, instead of 'shades', to indicate that I believe in distinct units adding up to a (molecular) meaning. This can be compared to what Lyons (1977: 317) calls 'sense-components' in his description of the componential analysis of the lexicon.
2. Moens (1987: 73–76) considers, following Comrie, universal perfect, existential perfect, stative perfect (or perfect of result) and hot news perfect, while perfect progressive is given another analysis. Sandström (1993: 120–124) reduces perfect to an ambiguous category with two meanings (one for states, one for events). And so on.
3. A very common interpretation of *já* with Presente is the one that implies immediacy, like in the standard *Já vou!* (I'm coming!). *Já* is also known to destroy any habitual Presente or Imperfeito connotations, when co-occurring with these tenses.
4. Campos (1984: 541–542) notes that, in sentences like *O João já tinha lanchado quando o Rui chegou* ('J. had already eaten when R. arrived'), *já* marks unambiguously that the event in *Mais que Perfeito* precedes the one in *Perfeito*. Otherwise, a simultaneous interpretation of the events eating and arriving could not be excluded.
5. As Johansson (1998) points out, carefully designed bilingual corpora allow several kinds of contrastive studies.
6. Notwithstanding statements like Moens' (1987) that the perfect is rarely applicable to stative predicates.
7. The mismatch between the numbers in Table 6 and Table 12 is due to different ways of identifying the present perfects. In Table 6 this was done manually, while for Table 12 it was done semi-automatically.
8. Incidentally, the tense distributions in the two translation directions are also significantly different: for example, the English–Portuguese direction presents

25 cases translated using *Mais* que Perfeito and only 9 using Imperfeito, while in the other direction the opposite trend can be observed.

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