

Chapter 12: The present perfect and its rendering in Portuguese

In this chapter, the English present perfect will be studied, as well as its translation into Portuguese, in order to conclude on the relevance of such a category in this latter. After identifying its possible counterparts, I present a detailed investigation of *já*, *acabar de*, and Pretérito Perfeito Composto (PPC). Interestingly, these are some of the matters of most concern in the recent linguistics literature in Portuguese. *Already* will also be discussed in passing.

12.1 A first description of the translations of perfect

The present perfect is probably the most studied tense and aspect device of English, because of its complexity. Here, I will not try to make justice to the research that has been carried out on the subject (see e.g. McCoard's (1978) book), since I am concerned only with its translation. I will therefore simply take up Sandström's (1993:120-125) formulation and proceed by describing how the various uses could be rendered in Portuguese by simply translating them.

I will try to keep this first discussion simple, using only Sandström's examples and definitions.

a) resultative perfect -- which "ascribes to a present time a property which is the result of some past event" (Sandström, 1993:120)

He has arrived -> já chegou

I've had dinner -> já jantei

In its most prototypical examples, the resultative perfect is clearly translated by *já* + Perfeito. This happens in the past perfect, too, cf.:

He had had dinner -> já tinha jantado

b) existential/experiential perfect -- which "indicates that a given situation has held at least once during some time in the past leading up to the present" (Comrie, 1976:58)

He has been to Paris -> já esteve em Paris

I have read War and Peace for five times -> (já) li a Guerra e Paz cinco vezes

Já also signals indefinite, at least once, experience, as in the first example. However, *já* can only be used if it also implies present relevance. Thus: *Já viste a exposição?* ('Have you seen the exhibition?') can only be uttered if the exhibition is still there to be seen. If it no longer is, *já* is not felicitous. This parallels the well-known contrast present perfect / past simple in this respect, see e.g. McCawley (1971).

A different case is the second example, where *já* can only be used if the focus is not on the actual number of times, but on what can the whole number mean (in particular, how much I like War and Peace). If only the once or the five times were at stake, then simple Perfeito would have to be used.

Já is also used with *Mais que perfeito* in an experiential reading, in cases where English

would probably use the adverb *before*, cf.

Já tinha comido caracóis -> I had eaten snails before. (uttered during a meal of snails)

Finally, Sandström mentions that processes also accept an experiential perfect, even though they do not have a result state nor a preparatory process, cf.:

Mary has worked in the garden -> A Mary já trabalhou no jardim or Já houve um tempo em que a Maria trabalhou no jardim

c) perfect of recent past or hot news perfect -- "used for a past event that occurred very recently" (Sandström, 1993:121)

He has just arrived -> acabou de chegar or acaba de chegar

Here one is tempted to consider that the recency is due to the adverb *just*, being thus a particular instance of the resultative perfect. In fact, Comrie has noted that "while present relevance does not imply recentness, recentness may be a sufficient condition for present relevance" (Comrie, 1976:60).

Sandström (1993:123) notes that unique events only accept the perfect of recent past, cf. *My sister has given birth to her fourth child -> A minha irmã acaba de ter o seu quarto filho*, which, according to her, can only be felicitously uttered close enough after the birth.

There seems to be a straightforward correspondence between recent past in English and the aspectualizer *acabar de* in Portuguese.

One puzzling fact related to recency is that, even though *já* does not seem to be related to *acabar de* in any way, *já* is used to express recency in the future: *já vou, já faço, já leio, já durmo* (respectively 'I'm coming', 'I'll do it in a minute', 'I'll read it in a minute', 'I'll sleep in a minute'). In this respect, *já* seems to be able to express prospective aspect (cf. Comrie (1976:64)).

d) universal perfect -- which describes "a situation which started in the past and continues until the present" (Sandström, 1993:121)

We've lived here for ten years -> vivemos aqui há dez anos

Relevant to the universal perfect is also the English preposition *since*, which defines an interval whose endpoint is now or a contextually defined time: *I have lived there since the war; I had given him money since he was 12.*¹ *Since* always requires the perfect, which is universal if the situation is stative, and existential if it is eventive, cf. *He has written a book since he arrived.*

Even though the most (if not uniquely) cited translation of the English universal perfect into many languages uses the present tense, as in the example above, I should note that, if a frequency adverbial occurs, it is the *Perfeito* which is used in Portuguese, cf.:

He has never been to Italy -> Nunca foi a Itália

He has always had good grades -> Sempre teve boas notas

In the cases where the adverbial does not express an extended now, because it is discontinuous, the English present perfect conveys yet another semantic value, which may be

¹ The opposite adverbial, *until*, defines an interval whose endpoint is the complement of *until*, and has no explicit beginning, except if through a *from*-PP, cf. *from the day I met you until you left me.*

close to that of PPC: iteration. Actually, with frequency adverbials of this sort it is questionable whether an universal or existential perfect is at stake:

*he has often arrived late -> chegou várias vezes atrasado;
tem chegado atrasado com frequência*

e) perfect progressive (Sandström includes it under the universal perfect, but I separate it as most authors do)

We've been reading this book -> temos estado a ler este livro

In this case, there is a relatively straightforward correspondence between the perfect progressive and the PPC progressivo. But note that, in the cases of stative predicates, there is a correspondence between the perfect progressive and the simple PPC, cf.:

We've been living here ever since -> temos vivido aqui desde essa altura

In fact, the corresponding progressive would also be possible in Portuguese, but I believe it is considerably more marked, as well as expressing more temporariness, than its English counterpart.

After a first description of the English perfect uses and the corresponding translation devices into Portuguese, I will discuss some parallels in the factors invoked in the description of the devices involved. In particular, I will address the relationships between the resultative, existential and hot news perfects with *já* in Sections 12.2-5, and between the universal perfect and the PPC in Section 12.6. Finally, I will analyse the aspectualizer *acabar de* in Section 12.7.

12.2 Some parallels between the monolingual descriptions of *já* and the perfect

Sandström explains the distribution of the resultative perfect in the following way: in addition to being usable with all events having a result state, the perfect is appropriate to the extent that the event "was foreseen, planned, striven after, wished for, etc.; in sum, to the extent that it has a preparatory stage" (Sandström, 1993:122). This observation, I must emphasize, is extremely relevant to the description of the particles *já* and *ainda não*, which, in my view, have precisely this felicity condition in one of their uses (the other corresponds to the experiential perfect, marked in English by *ever/once*), cf. a former description of mine of *já* : "*Já*, for example, links an independent specified event to now: *Já chegou*, or to another point in the course of time, cf. *já tinha chegado*, *Quando ele acabar o curso, já ela acabou há muito tempo*, in addition to its other use, expressing merely an existence claim *Já vi um macaco, já fui a Goa.*"

Já is essentially a relational device. (By "relational" I mean simply that it relates two different situations, cf. also Comrie's definition of the perfect: "the perfect [...] tells us nothing directly about the situation in itself, but rather relates some state to a preceding situation" (Comrie, 1976:52).) *Já* relates an event to a contextually defined time. In the case of *já* + *Perfeito*, it relates it to the present now.

As far as the experiential perfect is concerned, Sandström (1993:123) suggests that it constructs a result out of any kind of event, namely "an event of type E has occurred at least

once" (five times, etc.). This, as we have seen above, may also be the case of *já* in Portuguese, provided that there is some relevance to the present. For both languages as well, indefiniteness of localization is necessary.

Finally, one further similarity between perfect and *já* is also suggested by Comrie's (1976:108ff) description of a close relationship between perfect and inferential: one of the possible renderings of the English conjunction *given that* in Portuguese is precisely *já que*.

One seems thus to be in presence of a striking case of semantic correspondence between *já* and the English perfect (in its two first senses), given that not only the prototypical sentences are translated actually by these devices, but also (almost) the same concepts seem to play a role in the respective monolingual descriptions.

Two issues have, however, to be explained: the absence of *já* + *Perfeito* in Dahl's (1985) typological study, and the distribution of the actual translations of present perfect into Portuguese in real texts.

12.3 Dahl's perfect and the absence of *já*

While studying Dahl's (1985) book, it struck me that the most prototypical sentences representing Dahl's crosslinguistic category PCFT (perfect) in the questionnaire would require, in Portuguese, obligatorily the combination *já* + *Perfeito*. I therefore suspected that this study had been based on an uninformed choice of tense and aspect categories for Portuguese. In other words, had the combination *já* plus *Perfeito* been chosen as a category, Portuguese would have it rated high as an instance of perfect. (The actual category, ranked low in the list, was the *Pretérito Perfeito Composto* (PPC), but this fact is not significant, given that Dahl used both present perfect and pluperfects in the languages where these categories existed as different tenses of the same construction (1985:144), and 8 out of 12 were past perfects.)

However, Dahl² has told me that such an obvious aspect indicator would not have remained unnoticed (in fact, for other languages, e.g. Yoruba, the combination *already* + some tense had been used as a category), while confirming that the Portuguese informants were cultivated native speakers of European Portuguese, which discarded the possibility of the questionnaire to have been filled in by subjects either not having enough proficiency in Portuguese or speaking a different variant of Portuguese (e.g. Brazilian), where differences might be significant.

This indicates that the particle *já* did not occur -- at least significantly often -- in the answers to be taken into account, in spite of the fact that *já* would be actually obligatory in many prototypical sentences of perfect, e.g. Dahl's Q53, Q56, Q64, Q153, and preferential in e.g. Q42, Q136, Q37, in addition to involving many of the meanings attributed to the English present perfect. Therefore, an explanation is asked for.

The explanation more in line with the overall spirit of this dissertation, which highlights

² I am grateful to Östen Dahl for having discussed these matters with me.

linguistic relativity, is that the Portuguese informants simply did not understand that it was the perfect interpretation of the English bare verb which was at stake, because perfect in Portuguese is a covert category. Supporting data for this hypothesis is the fact that, barring grammatical "laws" (of the kind "use it with the adverbs *already, never, always, ever, lately* - or with *since* adverbials"), the (present) perfect is one of the most difficult distinctions for a Portuguese speaker to master in English, given that both present perfect and past simple are translated by *Perfeito*.³ I additionally assume that, if the words *already* or *ever*, for example, appeared in the questionnaire, then, even though the Portuguese informant would use *já* + *Perfeito*, the questionnaire researchers would take *já* as corresponding directly to *already*, which was, in a way, true, and would not be taken as "going together" with *Perfeito*.

Table 12.1

Rank no.	Number of languages	Number of sentences	<i>já</i> + <i>Perfeito</i>	<i>Perfeito</i>	<i>já</i> + MQP	MQP	others
1	31	1	1				
2	28	2	1	1			
4	27	2	2				
6	26	1				1	
7	25	4	2	1	1		
11	24	3	2	1			
14	23	3		2	1		
17	22	2			2		
19	21	6	2	1	2	1	
25		2	1	1			
27		2	1	1			
29		1	1				
30	17	2	1	1			
32	16	4	1	3			
36	15	3		3			
39	14	3	1	1		1(PPC)	
42	13	5		3	1		pres
47	12	2	1			1	
49	11	2		1			pres
51	10	2		1		1	
53	9	4		2			imp, ac
57	8	2		2			
59	7	6	1	4			imp

³ At least in the view of the man of the street, who compares tenses and not complex combinations of factors.

One way to check this hypothesis, i.e., that a covert category in Portuguese about which the English context in the questionnaire was not explicit enough, was simply unrecognized by a standard Portuguese speaker without enough mastery of English (or English-translation subtleties), would be to have an experienced English to Portuguese translator filling in the questionnaire again, and to compare the results.

As a replacement for that ideal situation, I filled the questionnaire myself, finding a somewhat different picture, that I display in Table 12.1, adding to Dahl's (1985:131) Table 5.2, the actual categories I used:

From the relatively comparable distribution of *já* (18+7) and absence of *já* (31+5), it is not easy to draw decisive conclusions. But one other issue that should be brought to attention here is the question of the linguistic bias.

I recall that Dahl's method used to elicit crosslinguistic data was a questionnaire in English to be translated into each language by the native informant. The fact that the questionnaire carried a linguistic bias is possibly unavoidable, but nonetheless significant (Dahl discusses the problem of the cultural bias, but I think the linguistic one is much more serious). In fact, the questionnaire is dependent on the English lexicon, which, of course, is crucially related to the distinctions done by grammar, discourse, etc. Let me present here some examples of questionnaire entries which fail to elicit Portuguese significant aspectual information, because they are tied to features of the English lexical system:

1. A large number of questionnaire examples (actually 23 cases out of the 67 criterial examples for the perfect) involved the English verb MEET, which belongs to a small class of verbs (acquisitions) which are particularly distinguishable through tense and aspect devices in English (and possibly all Germanic languages), but are typically translated into Portuguese (and possibly all Romance languages) by two lexical verbs of very different aspectual properties and associated patterns. Simply keeping account of the tenses and aspects used in the translations totally misses the point in these examples, cf. *have you met him?* vs. *I meet him often in the university* vs. *have you ever met him in the beach?*, respectively translatable by *Conhece-lo?* (verb CONHECER in Presente) -- or *Conheceste-o?* (verb CONHECER in Perfeito) if e.g. he is already dead--, *Encontro-o muito na faculdade* (verb ENCONTRAR in Presente), and *Alguma vez o encontraste na praia?* (verb ENCONTRAR in Perfeito).⁴ In other words, the aspectual distinction made through tenses and aspects in English is lexicalized in Portuguese, and thus, for example, the tense opposition that may be involved in the Portuguese translations is but one part of the rendering of the aspectual distinction.

2. One other instance is the verb SIT, which occurs only once in the questionnaire and is

⁴ The utterance *Já o conheces?* (for *Have you met him?*) would be more felicitous if 'he' were present. Likewise, *Já o encontraste na praia?* would be equally acceptable for *Have you ever met him at the beach?* I tried, however, to present examples without *já*.

therefore not so significant. If I note it here it is because the syntactic construction in which it occurs, typical of Swedish and possibly also acceptable in English, has no natural expression in Portuguese with two finite verbs, i.e., *he sat and read* can be rendered by *estava sentado a ler* ('he was sitting reading') or *estava a ler sentado* ('he was reading seated'). Only one of the verbs would be described by a finite tense. Now, an informant could have been led to produce the rather awkward sentences *ele estava sentado e lia* or *ele estava sentado e estava a ler*, which, if it was the case, would imply that Dahl got translationese and not Portuguese.

3. Finally, the answers to Q30 and Q31 involve in Portuguese two contrasting copular verbs: *ser* and *estar*, but the same formal markers of tense and aspect.

(Q.30) (The water is usually warm, but today) it BE cold. *Está fria*. (Verb ESTAR)

(Q.31) [Of a visible lake, what the water is usually like] It BE cold. *É fria*. (Verb SER)

Clearly, the reason to have included this minimal pair in the questionnaire is that it is the same lexical item in English, and there are languages which formally distinguish the two cases by tense and aspect devices. Now, this is a case where the notion of aspect plays an important role in Portuguese, so much in fact that it is expressed lexically. Should one classify the dichotomy *ser/estar* in Portuguese, or rather, the kind of copula, as an aspectual category? As this was not done in Dahl's study, if an universal on temporary versus permanent predications were investigated, Portuguese would in fact turn out to be defective on that regard!

In summary, I believe I gathered enough reasons to discard Dahl's conclusions regarding the existence or absence of the universal perfect category in Portuguese, namely

- the use of PPC+MQP as one category
- the use of the verb MEET with a high frequency
- the use of *already* (*still, yet, never*) in the English question
- the relatively even distribution of the answers to the prototypical perfect questionnaire sentences among *já* + Perfeito, bare Perfeito, *já* + MQP and bare MQP.

Dahl's study has thus proved inconclusive regarding the question whether *já* + Perfeito does correspond to the English present perfect (and regarding Dahl's quest whether Portuguese has an instance of the (crosslinguistically) universal perfect). Let us now look at the other source of doubt: the actual translations in real text.

12.4 Actual translation pairs

Even though Dahl's study did not prove that *já* + Perfeito was not the Portuguese realization of perfect, data from an independent source seemed to strongly suggest that this was indeed not the case: the translation relations between these two markers.

12.4.1 The translation of the English present perfect

I checked first the actual occurrences of the English perfect in texts and their corresponding translations. The results were demolishing: Of the 48 cases of present perfect occurring in the

English corpus, only two cases had a *já* translation, and were clear instances of existential perfect:

Kino has said so
Kino já disse
'Kino has already said'

I've heard a coyote pup cry like a baby.
Já ouvi o choro de uma lobazita que era tal qual o duma criancinha.
'I've already heard the cry of a small wolf which was exactly like the one of a small child'

Trying to save my generalization, I looked into whether this was due to the optionality of *já*. But, except for the following example

"You have heard of fool's gold," the dealer said
-- Ouviu falar da fortuna do louco? -- perguntou o comprador.
'"Did you hear talk about the madman's fortune?", asked the buyer.'

in which *já* would be felicitous -- and preferable if a statement had been used (I wonder why it was transformed into a question), cf. *Já ouviu falar*, the rest of the occurrences could not have been translated by *já* at all, even though they were clear cases of resultative perfect, i.e., they described actions whose result was relevant for, and present at, the (deictic) present moment, cf.

"The doctor has gone out," (= is out)
-- o doutor saiu.
'The doctor exited.'

The poison has gone inward and it will strike soon (= is in)
-- O veneno entranhou-se bastante e vai começar a actuar
'The poison penetrated a lot and is going to begin acting'

It has brought evil (= evil is here)
Ela trouxe o mal com ela
'It brought evil with it'

"The pearl is gone." (= is not here)
A pérola desapareceu.
'The pearl disappeared.'

I have come to see the baby (= I'm here)
vim ver o pequeno
'I came to see the baby'

You see what a great man he has become (= he is)
Vejam em que grande homem se tornou
'See what a great man he became'

"This pearl has become my soul," (= it is)
--Esta pérola tornou-se a minha alma.
'This pearl became my soul.'

now that you have become a rich man (= you are)

--*Agora, que és um homem rico.*
'Now, that you are a rich man'

This is actually even expressed in the last translation, where simple Presente is used.

However, I should note that some of these utterances are stylistically marked: the author wants to convey a somewhat archaic flavor in the language of his characters, and thus some utterances of the present perfect are not at all representative of actual American English usage:

*remember to give thanks, my son, to Him who **has given** thee this treasure*
*não deixes de agradecer Àquele que te **concedeu** esse tesouro*
'don't fail to thank Him who conceded you that treasure'

*It **has come** to me that thou **hast found** a great fortune*
-- *Consta-me que **encontraste** uma grande fortuna*
'I hear it said that you found a great fortune'

*"Oh, my brother, an insult **has been** put on me that is deeper than my life*
-- *Ó meu irmão, **fizeram**-me um insulto que é mais forte do que a vida*
'Oh my brother, someone made me an insult which is stronger than life'

*"The little one -- the first born -- **has been** poisoned by the scorpion,"*
-- *o menino, o nosso primeiro filho, **foi** picado pelo lacrau*
'the child, our first child, was stung by the scorpion'

Still, one may note that many examples do feature the typical perfect features nevertheless. For example, some cases, in addition to being resultative, could also be read as recent past, cf.:

*The thing **has gone***
*A coisa **fugiu***
'The thing escaped'

*I **have won** the fight*
Venci a batalha.
'I won the battle'

Still others seem to be best characterized as instances of hot news perfect:

*The baby **has been** stung."*
*o pequeno **foi** picado."*

*He **has found** the Pearl of the World*
--*Ele **encontrou** a Pérola do Mundo*

*Kino **has found** the Pearl of the World*
*Kino **encontrara** a Pérola do Mundo.*
'Kino had found the Pearl of the World'

This last example is interesting because the orality of the present perfect made the Portuguese translator choose a free indirect speech formulation.

Other cases represent an extended now, which is marked by *never*, *yet*, *ever*:

*It is a pearl such as one **has never seen***
--*É uma pérola como nunca se viu.*

--No price **has been** mentioned yet--They **have not come** to a price."
*Ainda não **falaram** em preço. Ainda não **chegaram** a acordo.*
'They have not yet talked about price. They have not yet come to agreement'

"No one **has ever seen** such a pearl."
--*Ninguém **viu** nunca uma pérola como esta.*
'Nobody ever saw a pearl such as this'

*That is a great deal of money, more than he **has ever seen**.*
*Já é um bom bocado de dinheiro. Nunca ele **viu** tanto dinheiro junto.*
'That is already a good piece of money. Never did he see so much money together'

or even *all our lives*, which gets an exact translation with PPC:

"If that is so, then all of us **have been** cheated all of our lives."
--*Se isso é possível, quer dizer que **temos sido** roubados toda a vida.*
'If that is possible, means that we have been stolen the whole life'

A few cases seem to be existential perfects, corresponding to an indefinite time in the past:

"I **have heard** our father tell of it."
--*Ouvi o nosso pai a falar nisso.*
'I heard our father talking about that'

"I **have heard** him make that sermon," said Juan Tomás.
--*Eu **ouvi**-o fazer esse sermão--disse João Tomás.*

"I **have heard** that there are cities in the north."
--*Ouvi dizer que há cidades para o norte.*

but which, interestingly, could not be rendered with *já*. This is because the emphasis is on that particular occasion and not on its simple occurrence, as opposed to the previously mentioned examples of the existential perfect, translated or translateable with *já*.

In English, one could perhaps distinguish the two cases by adding the word *once*. *Once* focusses on that time (although indefinitely located) and does not allow for a *já*; without *once* it may focus on its mere existence, and thus is felicitous (and probably advisable) to use *já* in the translation.

Finally, the present perfect indicates relative past time reference (cf. Comrie (1976:55)) in:

*When I **have sold** my pearl I will pay you," Kino said.*
--*Quando **vender** a minha pérola--respondeu Kino.*
"'When I will send my pearl", answered Kino.'

"Only until a day **has passed** and the new night **has come**.
--*É só por um dia, só até a noite **chegar**.*
'It's only for a day, only until the night comes.'

*and when they **have gone** past, you will go north to Loreto
e, quando eles **tiverem** passado, tu irás para o norte, para Loreto*

*And when they **are gone** away, go to Loreto."
Deixa-os partir e, depois, vai para Loreto.*
'Let them leave and, then, go to Loreto.'

Summing up, and even if the English source of present perfects is somehow marked, the following conclusions seem to be warranted: resultative perfects are not translated by *já* in Portuguese; even if the occurrences represent recent past, if that is not marked in the English text, it is not interpreted that way in Portuguese.

On the other hand, it seems that there are two kinds of existential perfect from the point of view of Portuguese, and only the more radical, which allows no reference whatsoever, can be marked by *já*.

12.4.2 The translation of *já*

On the other hand, 5 out of the 6 occurrences of *já* + Perfeito in Portuguese original text were rendered by the present perfect, two corresponding to an existence claim:

'para os que não tornam a reparar no que já leram'
*"for those who take no further notice of what they **have once read"***
'for the ones who do not notice again what they have already read'

e como já ficou dito
*as **has been** said.*
'and as already become said'

and three clear planned⁵ events, symptomatically in direct speech:

-- *E as flores, já vieram as flores?*
*"And the flowers, **have the flowers arrived?**"*
'And the flowers, the flowers have already arrived?'

-- *Os meus amigos velhos já morreram todos*
*"All my old friends **have already died"***

Eu já ceei em casa dela
*I **already** had my supper at her house*

I note that the two last translations could be rendered without English *already*, cf. *My old friends are all dead* and *I've had supper at her house*. In fact, in this last case this seems to me to be a far superior rendering, and the translation chosen a clear case of translationese.

The remaining example, whose English rendering, incidently, strikes me as strange, is in fact a case of *já* modifying *só* ('only'), which is not comparable to the above described cases:

já só lhe viu as plantas dos pés, que, claras, saltavam ao longe, fugindo
*he could **already** just make out the light-colored soles of feet leaping in the distance in flight.*
'he saw but the foot soles, which, light-coloured, jumped far away, escaping'

Six cases are, however, too few to generalize. Given that *Mais que perfeito* + *já* seemed to be somewhat similar to *já* + Perfeito -- it was also frequently used in my answers to Dahl's questionnaire --, I looked into the eight cases available as well. These, not surprisingly, were for the most part translated by the English pluperfect + *already*.

⁵ The word "planned" should here be read as encompassing also foreseeable but unchangeable courses of events, not dependent on human will, like human death.

One case, though, of indirect speech (past of *já* + *Perfeito*, thus) was interestingly not translated by *already*, but by *ever*:

*e ele disse que tu não acabavas nunca, porque tu eras um grande poeta, um dos maiores que **já** tinha havido no mundo*
*he said that that you would never wear out, because you were a great poet, one of the greatest that had **ever** existed in the world*
'and he said that you never finished, because you were a great poet, one of the greatest who had already existed in the world'

which seems to indicate that there are (at least) two *já*'s in Portuguese, the existential one not being translated by *already* but by the English present perfect + *ever*.

In two other cases, the predictability of the event, marked in Portuguese by *já*, gets lost in the English translation:

*meio encostado à parede, cuja cal **já** se **esvaíra** havia muito*
*half leaning against the wall whose whitewash **had** long since **faded***
'half leaning against the wall, whose lime had already faded a long time ago'

*E **já** refeito, saboreando a roupa em ordem*
And, recovered now, relishing having his clothes in order
'and, already recovered, relishing the clothes in order'

In conclusion, it seems that *já* + *Perfeito* relates the event to the present in different ways

- by making reference to a planned course of events; or
- by stating the existence of one event in the past; or
- by denoting an extended now (a temporally unbounded interval open to the left)

In addition, *já* added to *Mais que perfeito* helps to signal the temporal sequence of two events and thus disambiguate the past-in-the-past versus a pure stative interpretation. In this it seems similar to English *already*, cf.:

***já** tinha pago adiantado uma parte do trabalho*
*he had **already** paid in advance for part of the work*

*E **já** se esquecera das suas saudades musicais, quando fora agradavelmente surpreendida por um programa directo*
*She had **already** forgotten her musical nostalgia when she had been pleasantly surprised by a live program*

*Quando o fuminho subia nos ares, ele, que **já** observara quem tinha morrido, e conhecia do defunto os mínimos hábitos, ficava logo à espera...*
*When the thin trail of smoke rose in the air, he, who had **already** noted who had died and knew his least habits, began to wait....*

*Muitas vezes ouvia os habitantes da aldeia (que ele **já** conhecera como antepassados deles mesmos*
Often, he heard near him the villagers (whom he knew as their own ancestors
'Many times he heard the habitants of the village (who he had already met as their own ancestors'

despite this not having been transmitted in the last translation, which I believe would be better

translated by the English pluperfect.

12.4.3 The present perfect as translation

I investigated, then, in which (additional) cases had a present perfect been used in English, when translating a Portuguese text -- after all, there were 44 cases of present perfect in the English translation.

Let me start by looking at the cases of *ainda não* ('not yet'), which, strictly speaking, should be classified together with those of *já* in the previous section, since from the point of view of Portuguese they are its negative. *Ainda não* was rendered by the present perfect in two out of four cases, cf.:

*A Cristina **ainda não** voltou?*
*Hasn't Cristina **returned** yet?*

*Ó Conceição, **ainda não** ouvi chegar a Cristina.*
*"Conceição, I **haven't heard** Cristina come in yet."*

For the two remaining cases the translator chose the pluperfect, in the first to mark perspective (reflection), and the second possibly because of indirect speech.

*Claro que **ainda não** veio.*
*Of course, she still **hadn't come**.*
'Obviously she did not come yet'

*E eu disse que tu **ainda não** acabaste e que logo acabas*
*And I said that you **had not yet finished** but would soon do so*
'And I said that you haven't yet finished and that you are finishing soon'

Then, a fair number of cases expressed, again, obvious relevance to the current situation, i.e., a resultative perfect; cf. e.g.:

*Saulo, tu **transferiste** para a religião o teu entusiasmo apaixonado.*
*Saul, you've **transferred** your impassioned enthusiasm to this religion.*
(= you have)
'Saul, you transferred to the religion your passionate enthusiasm'

-- *Alguma coisa te **ficou**, bem que eu dizia, de quando eras filósofo.*
*"As I said, you've **retained** something of the philosopher you once were.*
(= you are)
'Something remained in you, well did I say, of when you were philosopher'

*se ninguém lembra já o que mais de quarenta anos de Império **tornou** vulgar*
*if no one remembers any longer what after more than forty years of Empire **has***
***become** common knowledge,*
(= it is)
'if nobody remembers already what more than forty years of empire made common'

*Mas o lume **apagou-se** e vou descer à vizinha a pedir-lhe lume.*
*But the flame **has gone** out and I have to go downstairs to the neighbor and ask*
her for some fire.
(= is out)
'But the fire extinguished and I am going down to the neighbour asking her fire'

*Erros meus, má fortuna, amor ardente, em minha perdição se **conjuraram***
*My errors, ill fortune, fiery love, together **have conspired** for my perdition*
(= are responsible now)
'Errors of mine, bad fortune, ardent love, in my perdition conjured'

-- *É, é um desses senhores que **vieram** morar para ali defronte.*
*"Yes, he's one of those gentlemen who've **moved** in across the street."*
(= live now)
'Yes, he is one of those sirs who came to live there.'

*Aqui mesmo, ao virar da esquina, até **puseram** casa para essas coisas.*
*Right here, just around that corner, they've even **set up** a house for such things.*
(= there is)
'Right here, round the corner, people even set up house for those things'

*Por isso te **perdoei**.*
*For that I've **pardoned** you."* (= you are in this good situation)
'Because of that I forgave you.'

Another common reason to choose the present perfect in the translation is the case of durative *haver*, in the sense of *since*. As it describes an extended now, it must be rendered by the present perfect, which was the case in all four instances in the corpus (note, incidentally, that in the next example the translator chose to disregard the fact that it was indirect speech):

*E ele disse que o amo estava muito arreliado contigo, que **havia** mais que muitos meses que tinha feito a encomenda*
*And he said that his master is greatly vexed with you, for it **has been** more than many months since he commissioned them*
'And he said that the master was very annoyed with you, for there was more than many months he had done the commission'

*Mas também **há** quase setenta anos que me **aturo***
*"But then, it's **been** almost seventy years I've **had** to put up with me*
'But also there are almost seventy years since I suffer myself'

-- ***Há** quantos anos!*
*"It's **been** so many years!*
'There are so many years since!'

The same happens with *nunca* ('never') in seven cases (one even in Presente in the Portuguese original) and preposed *sempre* ('always') in one case; cf. e.g.:

*Certa noite, e eu **nunca** contei isto a ninguém,*
*One night, and I've never **told** this to anyone*

*Marco Semprônio, tu **sempre** meditaste nisso [...] ?*
*Marcus Sempronius, **have** you always **thought** about this [...] ?*
'Marcus Sempronius, did you always meditate on that [...] ?'

*A mim a Senhora Sant'Ana **nunca** me desampara*
*Saint Anne **has** never **failed** me*

'To me Saint Anne never forsakes'

In the next example, an extended now is again involved, albeit not through any explicit grammatical markers:

E, à hora da morte, a gente conta o que ainda lembra ou fez entretanto
*Then, in the hour of our death, we tell whatever we still remember or **have done***
meanwhile

'And, at the time of death, people tell what they still remember or did meanwhile'

It seems that the "doings" are to be placed "from the last confession until now (the hour of death)", expressed by *entretanto*. This is possibly also the interpretation of:

Se [...] não mostrasses como és um homem arrependido da má vida que teve
if you hadn't [...] demonstrated that you are a man repentant of the bad life he's
led

'If [...] you did not show how you are a man sorry for the bad life he had'

The most interesting cases, though, are those of Presente rendered by present perfect:

*E a comadre Joaquina deu-me este pastel que aqui **trago***
*And your godmother Joaquina gave me this pie I've **brought***
'And your godmother Joaquina has given me this pie I bring here'

Está tão escuro já que vou acender a candeia.

*It's **gotten** so dark that I'll light the lamp.*

'It's so dark already that I'm going to light the lamp.'

where the Portuguese text talks of the present moment while the English rendering is concerned with the process that brought about the present state of affairs.

The opposite case is also present in one example:

*nós só procuramos aquilo que, no fundo dos nossos corações, já **havíamos***
encontrado.

*we only seek that which, deep in our hearts, we **have** already found.*

'we only look for what, deep in our hearts, we had already found.'

where *Mais que perfeito* with *já* marks the time of the finding as anterior to the search, where the alternative formulation with *Perfeito* (perfectly grammatical) would make the rule more connected to the present time.

As for the cases translating PPC, one uses the present perfect progressive and two the present perfect only:

*Que **tens feito**?*

*What **have you been doing**?"*

'What have you been up to lately?'

*E eu disse [...] que **tens trabalhado** muito e até **tens estudado** com o Padre*
Manuel para que as palavras santas fiquem todas certas e nos seus lugares.

*And I said [...] that you've **worked** much and **have even studied** much with Padre*
Manuel so that the holy words would come out right and in their proper places.

'And I said [...] that you have worked a lot lately and have even been studying
with Father Manuel so that the holy words get all right and in their place.'

It is thus not surprising that all the cases feature some translation loss: while in the first one

I believe that the English progressive conveys more recency than implied by the Portuguese text, the two last cases, simply omit the information that the period in question goes until the present moment. Note that one could continue the English sentence, but not the Portuguese one, with "but now you're over with it".

The aspectualizer *acabar* in Perfeito is also translated into the English present perfect with the adverb *just*, as predicted:

E tu próprio, só porque falaste, acabaste de confessar isso mesmo.
And you yourself, merely by speaking of it, have just confessed precisely that.
'And even you, just because you spoke, have just confessed exactly that'

Finally, an archaistic/regional form, *haver* + past participle, which seems to match perfectly the English present perfect, is found in:

Haveis-me entendido, haveis gostado?
Have you understood me and have you liked what you heard?"
'Have you understood, have you enjoyed?'

Summing up, when translating from Portuguese, the English present perfect is found in sentences describing an extended now, be it expressed by positive (*há, sempre*) or negative (*nunca*) expressions, or by a tense (PPC) which conveys it exactly.

In addition, it was used in cases where the result of the action had obvious relevance to the present moment: so much so that at times it was even expressed simply by the Presente in Portuguese.

Finally, it was confirmed that planned (or, at least, foreseen) actions, marked in Portuguese by *já* or *ainda não* were clear candidates for the use of the present perfect in English.

12.4.4 The cases translated by *já* + Perfeito

To be perfectly symmetric, this study should now consider the cases also translated by *já* + Perfeito which did not correspond to a present perfect in the original English, but there were none.

12.5 The meaning of *já*

The analysis of the data above imposes a reformulation of the meaning of *já*, and therefore also of the way it is translationally related to the English present perfect.

12.5.1 Actualization

In order for *já* to be felicitously used, it is not the result that is at stake, as is the case with the English perfect. Rather, it is necessary that this result be planned, and therefore *já* has an "actualization" quality. This explains in a straightforward manner the case of *Ele já chegou* ('He has arrived'): there was the plan or expectation, which is asserted to have become actual. As far as the case *já comi* ('I have eaten') is concerned, the fact that it is pragmatically used to refuse an invitation to eat has to do with the (world) knowledge that one does not eat twice in a row. This can be seen clearly if we note that *já comi há muito tempo* ('I have eaten a long time ago') is, on

the contrary, a felicitous utterance to accept an invitation to eat (again), and not a description of a result state. The felicitousness of both sentences does in fact result from the fact that people eat ordinarily at meal times, which occur periodically separated by "not so long" times.

This explains why all resultative perfects of the previous section, not having been planned, could not take a *já* in their translation. On the other hand, while *already* is incompatible with universal *since*, as described in Mittwoch (1989:209), cf. **I've already been in Boston since 8.00*, *já* is perfectly felicitous with the corresponding Portuguese sentence, *Já estou em Boston desde as oito*.

In addition, it suggests that there are two kinds of "hot news" from the point of view of Portuguese: those which correspond to the immediate accomplishment of a planned event, and which can be uttered with *já*, and those which, even though "hot", are unexpected. This last reason is why they are "hot" in the first place, and those sentences cannot take *já*. Cf., respectively:

Atenção estúdio: O presidente do partido já chegou ('The party's leader has arrived!')

Atenção estúdio: C.S. acaba de cair e partir uma perna! ('C.S has just fallen down and broken a leg!')

I would now like to consider a common analysis of *já* in terms of presuppositions: Campos (1984b:544) suggests, referring to Vet's (1980) analysis of French *déjà*, that *já* presupposes that the event is situated earlier in time than what had been supposed. This is, in my opinion, at most a pragmatic implicature of the use of *já*, and, in fact, in the example presented, *a criança já dorme* ('the child is already asleep'), what I think is important is the plan that the child should sleep, and that this plan turned real before now.⁶

12.5.2 The existence claim

One apparently separate meaning of *já* is that of existence claim, related to counting: *já* states an indefinite existence claim, which may be contextually determined, and can thus correspond to a small interval, or span one's entire lifetime.

(Desde que cheguei ao Jardim Zoológico,) já vi um macaco. ('Since I came to the zoo, I've seen a monkey')

O David já viu um macaco ('David has seen a monkey')

Formally, there is a time included in an interval Int before now such that ver (e.david, macaco). Between the two sentences above, the only difference is what is Int: a short interval in one day (the time elapsed since the arrival to the zoo) or a lifetime.

Any event can be existentially placed before now, in the existential reading. So, my formalization of *já li a Guerra e Paz quatro vezes* ('I've already read War and Peace 4 times') states that there is an event of reading a given book four times, which is located before now.

⁶ But note that this example falls outside, strictly speaking, of the subject under discussion, since it concerns *já* + Presente in Portuguese (or French), on which more will be said in Section 12.5.3 below. Note also the interesting correspondence between *já* + Presente and English *already*.

Note that what is described here is the count over eventualities. This is demonstrated by the fact that one can answer to existential *já* questions with number of times; cf. -- *Já foste à Índia? -Três vezes* ("Have you ever been to India?" "Three times"); -- *Já fizeste algo de que te arrependesses? - Uma vez* ("Have you ever done something you repent?" "Once").

Now, to explain why the sentence *Beethoven já escreveu nove sinfonias* ('Beethoven has written nine symphonies') is *unfelicitous*, it is enough to note that there is no relationship to now, because this is a permanent fact. (Since B. is dead, the situation can no longer be changed.)

This may be the place to raise a possible objection to my category *já* + *Perfeito*. Why not talk about *Perfeito* as ambiguous? This has in fact been the road taken by Lohse (1993), who claims that *Perfeito* is deictically ambiguous. What is interesting, however, is that the only evidence in his paper for the claim that *Perfeito* is a non-past perfective tense form is his example (15), *Já duas vezes saíste da sala* ('You've left the room for two times now'), which crucially involves *já* (and, what more, explicit quantification).

12.5.3 *Já* + *Presente*

Another interesting question is the use of *já* with result states proper, which actually sometimes seems more appropriate in Portuguese than with the events themselves, cf. *já estou na ilha* ('I am already on the island') vs. *já cheguei à ilha* ('I have arrived to the island'), *já tenho quatro filhos* ('I have already four children') vs. *já tive o meu quarto filho* ('I've had my fourth child'). Even though the result states are stative, *já* clearly presupposes an event that made them true (cf. the notion of border invoked by Campos (1984a,b)).

This was evident in the previously mentioned example:

Está tão escuro já que vou acender a candeia.
It's gotten so dark that I'll light the lamp.
'It is so dark already that I am going to light the oil-lamp.'

As for the only two other cases of *já* + *Presente* in the whole corpus, I note that the implications that all of us will eventually lie (in the cemetery) as well, and that "I" grew old, respectively, are absent from the translation:

Rir-se do que já cá está.
Laughing at those lying here.
'To laugh at whom is already here.'

Sou velho já para ir convosco.
I am too old to go with you.
'I am old already to go with you.'

Herweg (1991a:1001) states that "*already* presupposes the existence of an earlier phase of the opposite state as well", to explain the impossibility of *his car is already new*. However, one can observe that *new* itself has rather peculiar properties given its inherently temporal meaning. Still, it is important to note that *já* is not felicitous with any permanent state, i.e., it must be used with a temporary state, cf. the impossibility of applying *já* without implying a different (new) entity in *O meu relógio é de ouro* ('My watch is gold'), *O meu namorado é alto* ('My boyfriend is

tall'), *A minha casa é na Lapa* ('My home is in Lapa').⁷

Before leaving the subject of *já* + Presente, let me just mention a remark (done actually about another kind of the English perfect, the universal). Comrie (1976:60) notes that *I've been waiting for three days* is rendered in German and Russian by (the corresponding particles meaning) 'already'. In Portuguese, one can have *Estou à espera há três dias*, or *Já estou à espera há três dias*, the (subtle) difference being that the formulation with *já* turns the waiting period into an event, emphasizing the result (and therefore the possible use in a complaint⁸).

In spite of the scattered remarks above, I decided not to dwell on the subject of English *already* in this chapter, among other reasons because its presence in the English text translated from Portuguese looked to me very often suspiciously due to interference from Portuguese.

12.6 The extended now

To explain the universal perfect in English, many researchers have proposed the concept of extended now, basically, a continuous interval from some point of time till the present. It is in the case of the extended now that the English perfect seems not to be so universal: Cf. Comrie's (1976:60, my emphasis) description of the universal perfect, "one use of the English perfect, indeed one that seems to be characteristic of English, [...]". Paradoxically, it is also in that case that it approaches more straightforwardly Portuguese PPC. I.e., Portuguese only has a perfect tense for the universal perfect case, even though Presente is often also used to express some uses of the English universal perfect, as we have seen above.

Often, the universal perfect is described in connection with statives, therefore conveying homogeneity, continuity up to the present. However, if we restrict our analysis to statives, there are many other tenses which approach the extended now formulation. For example, Martin (1971:106), cited in Campos (1984a:30f), analyses the value of the French passé composé in the sentence *il a fait beau jusqu'ici* ('The weather has been fair until now') in the same way. Incidentally, the Portuguese translation would use only PPC, *o tempo tem estado bom*.

As far as the PPC is concerned, it must be stressed that its application is not restricted to statives, and, while it merely adds a value of temporariness (and closeness to now) to statives, it is certainly in its eventive uses that its semantic import is more original, namely, that of indefinite iterativity. In fact, PPC does always refer to an extended now, even though having, crosslinguistically, idiosyncratic properties.

Maybe its most interesting feature is the one aptly described by Boléo (1936:5, my translation): "what renders this tense expressive in its conciseness and Portuguese character is exactly the ability to express duration or repetition of an action (or state...) without a single

⁷ The corresponding sentences with *já* would mean that I have now a (new) watch which is a gold watch, that I have a new boyfriend who is tall (and that was planned, or strived for), and that I moved and live now in Lapa (according to my previously expressed wishes), respectively.

⁸ E.g., *já estou à espera há três dias* can pragmatically mean "this is enough to complain/leave/give up", or simply "this explains my behavior". *Já* can thus be read as "this is the turning point".

additional word", i.e., without any supplementary device.

However, if the paradigmatic examples of the English universal perfect are statives and progressives (according to Sandström (1993:121), "the universal perfect is always a perfect of a state predicate"), there have been other cases described in the literature, cf. Comrie's (1976:60) example *I've shopped there for years*, Leech's (1971:34) *I've always walked to work* (described as "Habit in a period leading up to the present") and Mittwoch's (1988:209) *John has played the piano since he was five* (and purported to be stative because it reports an "habitual activity").

This suggests that the universal perfect and the PPC have many, if not most, points of contact, a fact that is usually overlooked by both researchers on English and Portuguese. In fact, the "habit in a period leading up to the present", or, rather, in my view, continued iterativity, is exactly the core meaning of PPC, which only differs from English in that it does not require further specification of the period involved.

Therefore, I must agree with Lohse (1993) in his refutation of the essentially Portuguese character of PPC, even though my analysis of it as part of the Portuguese tense and aspect system is rather different from Lohse's.

Let me now look at some particular questions raised in the literature about the PPC, and which the analysis presented here explains straightforwardly:

1. The combination *já* + PPC in Portuguese does not include the present moment, and therefore means the existence of an iterated sequence of events even in otherwise continuous cases (as noted in Campos (1984a:45)), cf. *Ele já tem estado doente* ('He has been sick before'). The explanation for this fact is that *já*, in its existential use,⁹ conveys an (indefinitely located) event before now, and that event, therefore, must not overlap with now.

2. Campos (1984a:45f) also notes the neutralization of the opposition Perfeito/PPC in sentences like

O rapaz já tem estado doente. ('the boy has been sick before')

O rapaz já esteve doente várias vezes. ('the boy has been sick several times')

which, she claims, represent the same temporal profile, i.e., by explicitly mentioning an indefinite plural number of events (*várias vezes*), occurring before now (*já* + Perfeito), one can replicate the indefinite repetition (conveyed by the PPC) in an interval up to now. What she fails to notice, though, is that the two sentences are pragmatically very different, i.e., they receive the two following distinct interpretations:

a) *O rapaz já tem estado (várias vezes) doente* (=já sabe o que isso é; já está preparado para isso, 'he knows what it is to be sick'), *donde não há razão para preocupações* ('so there is no need to worry')

b) *O rapaz já esteve várias vezes doente* (=isto parece-me demais, 'this seems to be too much'), *é altura de ir ao médico* ('it's time to call the doctor')

This is due to the different propositions which are input to *já*: a state of indefinite repetition

⁹ For pragmatic reasons, no plan can be invoked for being ill, so only existential *já* can be at stake.

in a) and a set of events / temporary states in b).

3. Finally, let me mention a rarely discussed subject, namely the PPC with frequency adverbials, more specifically *sempre* ('always') and *nunca* ('never'). While in English the present perfect with *never* or *always* can be considered both an extended now or a case of repeated iteration, it is interesting to note that *sempre* ('always') and *nunca* ('never') can only be used with the PPC with a mutually known and independent individuation criterion, i.e., they can never describe an extended now, cf. *Ele tem sempre comprado peras* ('he has always bought pears', implying "in all occasions we are talking about") and *Ele nunca tem comprado peras* ('he has never bought pears, in the occasions we are talking about'). When *sempre* ('always') is not implicitly quantifying over occasions, only the Perfeito is felicitous, as mentioned in Section 12.1.

This is distinct from English, where *he has never bought pears* may be understood universally as well. This highlights, in fact, the intrinsic connection of the PPC tense with the extended now interval, and distinguishes it from the situation in English, where the present perfect seems to be merely compatible with it, and, therefore, the extended now is generally independently specified.

12.7 *Acabar de*: the most interesting Portuguese aspectualizer

Connected with hot news, there is the Portuguese aspectualizer *acabar de*. While it is similar to French *venir de*, it has the peculiarity of also meaning *finish*, not only as a main verb but also as an aspectualizer. I.e., *ele acabou de pôr a mesa* can mean *He has just laid the table*, or *He finished laying the table*. Campos (1985) argues at length for two different senses of *acabar*, with a considerable number of arguments which I summarize below (*acabar de*₁/finish, *acabar de*₂/just):

1. *acabar de*₁ is only felicitous with accomplishments or activities, i.e, durative events, while *acabar de*₂ co-occurs with any aspectual class (for the more arguable class of states, she presents the following example: *O Rui acaba de estar doente e já está doente outra vez* 'Rui has just been ill and is already ill again');

2. *acabar de*₁ occurs in all tenses, while *acabar de*₂ is not possible in the simple future nor in the PPC;

3. *acabar de*₁ co-occurs with localizers, not so *acabar de*₂, except for the redundant *agora* ('now') or localizers including it: *hoje, neste momento, esta tarde*;

4. *acabar de*₁ co-occurs with *já*, *acabar de*₂ never;

5. negation of *acabar de*₁ is ordinary negation, negation of *acabar de*₂ is negation of mention, or metalinguistic negation, cf. *ele não acabou agora de escrever o livro, já o escreveu há dois anos* ('It is not true that he has just written the book, he wrote it two years ago');

6. with *acabar de*₂, Presente and Perfeito are intersubstitutable, while that is not the case with *acabar de*₁. In fact, I disagree with this claim, in my opinion, *acabar de*₂ with Presente is as much an historical present as *acabar de*₁.

She also mentions an adjective/past participle derived from *acabar de 2*, as in *está agora acabadinha de pintar* ('it has just been painted'). I presume she would claim that the corresponding form after *acabar de 1* would be only possible in passive with *ser*, *esta janela foi acabada (?inha) de pintar às três da tarde* ('this window has been finished to be painted at 3 o'clock').

Aware of this distinction, I have also put forward two different formalizations in my previous work, see Santos (1992a). However, Campos's (1985:1) remark about the possible unnoticed ambiguity of cases such as *ele acabava de fechar as persianas quando entrei* ('He was finishing closing/had just closed the Venetian blinds when I entered') raised my interest in finding a common core in the two uses.

Of course, the two *acabar de* are related in that, in the cases where *acabar de₁* is felicitous, *acabar de₂* implies *acabar de 1*: if someone has just laid the table, s/he has finished to lay the table. Conversely, if *acabar de₁* is stated in *Perfeito*, we know that *acabar de₂* can be used in a short interval after, i.e., *acabar de₂* is enabled by *acabar de₁*.

But other similarities can be invoked. For example, in the example above, both interpretations place the event of entering near the end of the event of closing the Venetian blinds. In one interpretation, it is a little before the completion, in the other, a little after. One seems thus to be in presence of another device in Portuguese where temporal order is irrelevant: *já* and *acabar de* can relate to previous or future situations.

Another possible way to invoke a common meaning is to consider *acabou de* as invoking an extended now, in which the event is placed near the end, just as in *acabou de pôr a mesa* ('He has just laid the table') can be put in the end of the interval defined by *pôr a mesa* ('lay the table'). In one case, the interval whose end is being mentioned is situation internal, in the other the interval is situation external and bound by the utterance, i.e., deictic.

Now, how can all this be related to English *just*, or the perfect? In fact, it seems that recency is prototypically described in English by *just*, even though this device may be less frequent than *acabar de* in Portuguese. (I have no data in either device, though.) Recency, on the other hand, may be also one ingredient of the resultative perfect -- most results are more visible immediately after than a long time after. Result persistency can thus be the explanation of why *my sister has had her fourth child* is only felicitous one or two weeks after the birth (the same, incidently, happens if *just* is explicit). The other (permanent) result, the fourth child, is not linguistically a result of the birth, and *my sister has four children*, or the NP *my fourth nephew/niece* is the natural way of describing it.

I will not try to decide here whether the two perfects, resultative and hot news, are actually independent in English; it suffices to show that they are more closely interrelated than the other perfect uses. In fact, the present perfect may be analysed as rendering resultativeness, and, if the recency per se is important, *just* is additionally used. Nevertheless, the tendency of American English to use *just* with the simple past should be mentioned, since it shows that the marking of

recency can be done independently, thus approaching the way Portuguese works.

Unfortunately, only one example of both *just* and the aspectualizer *acabar de* could be found in the corpus, repeated here for convenience:

*E tu próprio, só porque falaste, **acabaste de** confessar isso mesmo.
And you yourself, merely by speaking of it, have **just** confessed precisely that."
'And even you, just because you spoke, have just confessed exactly that'*

12.8 Summing up

Facts seen from the viewpoint of the present moment is, I believe, the most encompassing characterization of the English present perfect. This relationship with the present can be due to (i) relevance of result; or (ii) presence in an interval up to now, either a definite number of times (existential), an indefinite number (English habit), or continuously (state up to now).

What I want to discuss here is whether the category "facts seen from the viewpoint of the present" makes sense in Portuguese as well. Surely, there is a tense category which, against all odds, encompasses the two last English cases, namely the PPC. On the other hand, there is a frequent grammatical marker, *já*, which, when associated with *Perfeito*, seems to have precisely the function of relating something to the present. So, I am forced to conclude that present relatedness is not a covert, but an overt, category in Portuguese.

However, it is equally clear that there are important pieces of the meaning of the two devices which are not covered in the other language: For one, the notion of resultativeness, responsible for most uses of the present perfect in the English texts studied, does not exist in Portuguese. This is demonstrated by the fact that *Perfeito* is both well used when describing resultative or non-resultative events, i.e., events whose results are important for the present moment or irrelevant.

On the other hand, planned versus surprise events, a key feature marked by *já* in Portuguese, is not distinguished in English, either.

The clearest commonality in meaning between *já* and the present perfect is the indefinite existence (definitely quantified). This seems, however, to be a quantitatively rare phenomenon in both languages. Indefinite existence only, i.e., expression of location somewhere in the past, which is conflated with this phenomenon under the label 'existential perfect' by researchers on English, does not belong to the same category in Portuguese, and *já* cannot simply be used.

Finally, recency is distinguished by the two languages with *just* and *acabar de*, and should therefore be considered a separate category, even though it may overlap, at least partially, with the English (resultative) perfect.

12.9 Final remarks

This chapter is the least empirical in this dissertation, both due to the lack of relevant data in the corpus and to the amount of theoretical literature on most subjects mentioned.

The method followed in this investigation, in fact, was -- contrary to the other chapters -- a

contrast of the theoretical descriptions of some related phenomena in the two languages, which I then tried to verify in the corpus and in Dahl's (1985) typological data.

I would thus contend that the main contribution of this study is to demonstrate that many concepts are common to different languages (or to their description, at least), but, in fact, very often the same distinctions are made in different places. The result is that there are no corresponding devices, but only corresponding subtle distinctions in different parts of the system.