The English present perfect and simple past tense*

YoungEun Yoon

(Ewha Womans University)

Yoon, YoungEun. 2012. The English present perfect and simple past tense. *Linguistic Research* 29(3), 485-513. As is well known, the English present perfect incorporates temporal anteriority as part of its meaning. However, such conflicting phenomena like the 'definiteness effect' and the 'lifetime effect' are observed, along with the pastness of the perfect. In this context, a variety of theories utilizing concepts such as 'indefinite past,' 'perfect state,' and 'extended now' have been proposed as major theories on the perfect among others, but not without theoretical defects. Recently, Meyer-Viol and Jones (2011) also propose a formal account of the English present perfect and simple past tense, based on the notions of 'reference time,' 'event time,' and 'speech time.' They account for the definiteness effect and the lifetime effect by analyzing the perfect to have its reference time at the speech time, while the simple past tense to have its reference time at the event time, in line with Reichenbach (1947). Given this, it is proposed in this paper that these previous theories and observations including Meyer-Viol and Jones's generalizations are met with numerous counterexamples, and that the difference between the English perfect and simple past should be accounted for by classifying the English perfect into the three uses, i.e., Experientials, Resultatives, and Universals. In addition to the semantics of the three uses of the perfect, pragmatic competition between the perfect and simple past is proposed to play a role in deciding which of the two constructions should be chosen, in line with Schaden (2009). **(Ewha Womans University)**

Key words present perfect, simple past tense, definiteness effect, present perfect puzzle, lifetime effect, reference time, event time, speech time, Experientials, Resultatives, Universals

1. Introduction

As the following examples indicate, the English present perfect contains temporal anteriority as part of its meaning.

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(1) a. My grandpa has passed away.
    b. I have been to the Galapagos Islands before.

In (1a), the event time of the grandpa's passing away is located before the speech time. Similarly, the event of the speaker's visiting the Galapagos Islands also happened before the speech time in (1b).

However, as observed by many linguists, the perfect does not occur with a definite past time expression, unlike the simple past tense. This so-called 'definiteness effect' or 'present perfect puzzle' is illustrated in (2). The perfect in (2a) cannot occur with the definite past adverbial *yesterday*, whereas the simple past tense in (2b) can.

(2) a.#My grandpa has passed away yesterday.
    b. My grandpa passed away yesterday.

The following pair of examples, (3a, b), illustrate another contrast called the 'lifetime effect,' which shows that when the subject is no longer alive, the present perfect is awkward. If the following sentences are uttered now, Einstein is not alive and (3a) is awkward, whereas (3c) is natural with *Princeton* as its subject.

(3) a.#Einstein has visited Princeton.
    b. Einstein visited Princeton.
    c. Princeton has been visited by Einstein. (Chomsky 1970)

In the following sequence of utterances, it is also observed by Michaelis (1994: 143) that the second and third present perfects are awkward after the first present perfect.

(4) Hayward police have arrested the prime suspect in last week's string of laundromat robberies. #Two off-duty officers have confronted the suspect as he left a local 7-11. #A back-up unit has been called in to assist in the arrest.

In (4), all the three sentences describe the same events, but the second and third

ones become acceptable if they change into simple past tense sentences. Meyer-Viol and Jones (2011: henceforth, MV & J) call this the 'presuppositional' constraint of the present perfect.

Another interesting phenomenon is observed in the perfect as follows. Mittwoch (2008) argues that as noted in Michaelis (1994: 151), the so-called Resultative perfect as in (5) and (6) cannot occur with all kinds of manner adverbs.[1]

(5) a.#She has sealed the window quickly.
   b.#You've corrected the proofs too slowly.
(6) a. She has sealed the window hermetically.
   b. The fragments of the manuscript have been skilfully joined together.

It is generally argued that the meaning of the Resultative perfect is two-fold: one is the 'event' component of the verb's meaning and the other is the 'result state' component. For example, in both (5a) and (6a), the event meaning component is such that she sealed the window, whereas the result state meaning component is such that (as a result of the event,) the window is sealed. However, the manner adverb *quickly* in (5a) modifies the event component, while *hermetically* in (6a) modifies the result state component. That is, according to Mittwoch, the manner adverb in the Resultative perfect should modify the result state component as in (6a, b), not the event component as in (5a, b).

In brief, the English perfect and simple past tense both contain pastness as part of their meaning, but they behave differently in quite a few respects, as observed above. To account for the similarities and differences between the English perfect and simple past tense, various theories utilizing concepts such as 'indefinite past,' 'perfect state,' and 'extended now' have been proposed on the perfect among others, but not without theoretical defects.

Recently, MV & J also propose a formal account, based on the notions of 'reference time,' 'event time,' and 'speech time.' They account for the definiteness effect and the lifetime effect by analyzing the perfect to have its reference time at the speech time, while the simple past tense to have its reference time at the event

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[1] It is commonly accepted that the English perfect has three main uses, namely, Experiential, Resultative, and Universal. These three uses of the perfect will be discussed in more detail in section 5.

time, in line with Reichenbach (1947).

Given this, it is proposed in this paper that these previous theories and observations including MV & J's generalizations are met with numerous counterexamples, and that the difference between the English perfect and simple past should be accounted for by classifying the English perfect into the three uses, i.e., Experiential, Resultative, and Universal. In addition to the semantics of the three uses of the perfect, pragmatic competition between the perfect and simple past is proposed to play a role in deciding which of the two constructions should be chosen, in line with Schaden (2009).

This paper is organized as the following. In the next section some major theories of the perfect will be discussed, and in section 3 MV & J's analysis will be presented. In section 4 some counterexamples to the previous theories and observations of the perfect will be discussed, focusing on MV & J's analysis. In section 5 a new analysis will be proposed, and section 6 will conclude this paper.

2. Previous theories of the perfect

In this section, some important previous theories of the perfect will be discussed briefly. These theories are intended to account for the temporal anteriority of the perfect and the interesting characteristics discussed above that contrast the perfect with the simple past tense.[2]

2.1 Indefinite past

One approach views the time at which the past event described by the sentence of the perfect occurred is not particularly important, whereas the time signified by the tense of the sentence is important. For example, in the following present perfect, the time point of John's losing his wallet is not important, while the time marked by the present tense of the sentence, i.e., the moment of speech, is important.

(7) John has lost his wallet.

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[2] For more detailed discussions on the primary and secondary previous theories of the perfect, please refer to Portner (2011).

This so-called indefinite past approach has been proposed and developed by Reichenbach (1947), Montague (1973), Inoue (1979), Klein (1992, 1994, 2000), Giorgi and Pianesi (1998), and Katz (2003), among others. Especially, Reichenbach (1947) comes up with some useful terms for the analysis of the perfect: speech time (S), which is the time at which the sentence is uttered; event time (E), which is the time of the event or state described by the sentence; and reference time (R), which is the time described by the tense of the sentence. Based on these terms, Reichenbach proposes the following:

(8) a. In the present tense, R coincides with S.

    b. In the past tense, R precedes S.

    c. In the future tense, R follows S.

    d. In the perfect aspect, E precedes R.

    e. In non-perfect aspect, E coincides with R.

Given (8), in a present perfect sentence, the speech time and the reference time coincide, and the event time precedes the reference time. Klein uses TU (time of utterance), TT (topic time), and $TSit$ (time of situation) instead of Reichenbach's S, R, and E, respectively. TU and $TSit$ are just different names of S and E, but TT is a new concept that refers to the time about which a claim is being made. Hence, in the perfect, $TSit$ (E), which is different from TT, is not the time about which a claim is being made. In the simple past, however, TT and $TSit$ concur, and $TSit$ is the time about which a claim is being made.

Based on this, Klein attempts to account for the definiteness effect. First, he argues that intuitively, in the perfect, $TSit$ is indefinite and less significant than TT. He also proposes that no definite temporal specification can be assigned to $TSit$ or TT. In the present perfect, TT concurs with TU (S). Hence TT is definite, and $TSit$ cannot be definite. This explains why no definite temporal adverbial can be used in the present perfect.

And yet, Portner (2011) discusses that Klein's proposal is unable to explain the contrast with the past perfect, as in (9). According to the above reasoning, in the past perfect, both $TSit$ and TT should be indefinite. Therefore, it should be further assumed that the past tense is not definite. But then, the pronoun-like quality of the past tense is quite generally recognized as an indication that the past tense is

definite.

(9) My grandpa had passed away the day before.

Furthermore, the indefinite past approach claims that the Universal (=Continuative) use of the present perfect is merely a subcase of its Experiential (=Non-Continuative, Existential) use. However, as also pointed out by Mittwoch (1988), it will be shown later that this claim also runs into problems.

2.2 Perfect state

Another important approach proposes that the meaning of the perfect is two-fold: one is past event and the other is perfect state. This perfect state holds at the time marked by the sentence's tense. In the case of the present perfect, it holds at the speech time. According to this view, the perfect in (10) displays that John does not have his wallet now after the event, i.e., John's losing his wallet. This so-called perfect state approach is advocated by numerous linguists such as Moens and Steedman (1988), Parsons (1990), Smith (1992), Kamp and Reyle (1993), ter Meulen (1995), Spejewski (1997), de Swart (1998), Musan (2001), Nishiyama and Koenig (2004), and Schaden (2009), among others.

(10=7) John has lost his wallet.

The perfect state approach has also been developed into numerous versions. One version views the perfect state as the result of the past event (Moens and Steedman 1988, Smith 1992, Spejewski 1997). Another version by Nishiyama and Koenig (2004), Nishiyama (2006), and Schaden (2009) argues that the identity of the perfect state is not constrained semantically. Consequently, at least these two versions of the approach crucially rely on pragmatic constraints in identifying the perfect state. All past events have some result states, so that the existence of the perfect state does not differentiate the perfect from the simple past tense. Hence the perfect state is proposed to be pragmatically constrained.

Portner (2011) points out, however, that most versions of the perfect state approach do not provide a detailed explanation concerning the pragmatic constraints

on the perfect state, and do not seem to clearly account for the data across the board. For one thing, they do not account for the lifetime effect, only with the existence of the perfect state. Some additional constraints are needed. They also need to resort to secondary constraints to account for the definiteness effect of the perfect. Furthermore, this approach also treats the Universal perfect as a pragmatically-decided subcase of the Existential perfect, which also leads to similar problems facing the indefinite past approach discussed above.

2.3 Extended now

The extended now approach views the perfect to imply that the event expressed by the perfect sentence took place within an interval of time which starts at a certain past time and ends at the speech time. That is, the following example (11) means that Andy's eating lunch took place within an interval which ends at the speech time and extends into a certain past time. This certain past time of the extended now is argued to be determined by adverbials or context, or to be left unclear.

(11) Andy has eaten lunch.

The classic version of the approach considers the speech time to be included in the extended now. However, Portner (2011) discusses that recently, some theories propose different perspectives on the relationship between the speech time and the extended now. That is, according to a view proposed by Spejewski (1997) and Rathert (2004), the extended now does not include the speech time, but abuts it. Another view proposed by Stump (1985), Pancheva and von Stechow (2004), and Rothstein (2008) proposes that the extended now could properly precede, abut, or include the speech time, but not follow it. According to this view, the term 'extended now' should be changed into a different name, since the speech time is not included in the interval.

The extended now theory is also unable to account for the definiteness effect on its own. Its classic version can explain why past adverbials cannot modify the extended now, since the extended now includes the speech time. On the other hand, past adverbials could be appropriately used when they modify the event, as in the case of the past perfect.

(12=9) My grandpa had passed away the day before.

Consequently, Portner (2011) points out that in order to account for the definiteness effect, the extended now approach should be modified with other secondary factors of meaning.

2.4 Competition

Linguists like Stump (1985), Pancheva and von Stechow (2004), and Schaden (2009) propose that the definiteness effect can be accounted for by the competition between the present perfect and simple past tense. According to them, the English present perfect is morphologically more marked than the simple past tense. Hence, if the present perfect is used instead of the simple past, then there should be a ground for that choice.

For example, Stump (1985) argues that if the indefinite past meaning of the present perfect is joined with a definite past adverbial as in (13a), it becomes equivalent to its simple past tense counterpart. Therefore, (13b) should be used instead of (13a).

(13=2)   a.#My grandpa has passed away yesterday.
         b. My grandpa passed away yesterday.

This analysis based on the concept of competition is supported by the absence of the definiteness effect in the past perfect and tenseless perfects, as illustrated by the following:

(14)   a. We had finished the day before.
       b. Having finished the day before, we are ahead of schedule.

Schaden (2009) also proposes in a similar vein that the definiteness effect does not occur, for example, in German, since the simple past tense is more marked than the present perfect in German. In other words, he argues that in languages like German, in which the markedness relation between the perfect and simple past is reversed, the definiteness effect is not observed.

3. MV & J's analysis

Recently, as a version of the indefinite past approach discussed in section 2.1, MV & J propose a formal account of the English present perfect and simple past tense. Some of the basic ideas of their proposal are borrowed from Reichenbach (1947). That is, following Reichenbach, they argue that the perfect has its reference time (henceforth, R) at the speech time (henceforth, S), whereas the simple past tense has its R at the event time (henceforth, E). As for R, Reichenbach views it as a time point or an interval, but he did not give it a clear definition. On the other hand, MV & J view it as a 'perspective' at which four constraints should be satisfied. They also point out that their notion of R is similar to Klein's (1992) TT (topic time), which indicates the time point at which a claim is being made.

MV & J propose that the four constraints satisfied at R in the perfect and the simple past each will be able to explain both the identical and different aspects between the two. The first constraint is such that positional temporal adverbials must be either functions from S to R like *yesterday* and *last year*, or must be predicates on R like *at two* and *at noon*. MV & J argue that this constraint accounts for the definiteness effect. That is, R and S coincide in the perfect, so that the constraint prevents past adverbials from being used with the perfect.

The second constraint is a presuppositional constraint. According to MV & J, S and R are presupposed in both the perfect and simple past. Hence, in the perfect, E is not presupposed, while in the simple past, where R and E coincide, E is presupposed. Based on this constraint, MV & J try to explain examples like the following. According to them, the perfect cannot predicate a past event whose time point, i.e., E, is presupposed. Both the first and second perfects in (15a) describe the same event. And yet, the second perfect is not acceptable, since its E is already given by the first perfect.

(15) a. John has died in Paris. *His death has been witnessed by his landlady.
      b. John has died in Paris. His death was witnessed by his landlady.

The third constraint is proposed to explain the lifetime effect. This constraint requires both the perfect and simple past tense to have a referent at R. According to

linguists like Smith (1997), the lifetime effect is defined in such a way that the grammatical subject of the sentence in the perfect should be alive at *R*. However, according to other linguists like McCawley (1971), the grammatical subject should be replaced by the topic of the sentence in the definition. That is, if the sentence stress falls on *Einstein* as in (16a), *Princeton* is the topic and (16a) is acceptable, while if the stress is on *Princeton* as in (16b), *Einstein* is the topic and (16b) is not acceptable.

(16)   a. Eínstein has visited Princeton.
          b.#Einstein has visited Prínceton.

Inoue (1979: 576) further proposes that (17) could be acceptable if the three men, *Einstein*, *Yukawa*, and *Friedman*, create a reference to a set, for example, a set of Nobel Prize winners or great scholars, which still exists at *S*.

(17) Einstein has visited Princeton, Yukawa has, Friedman has. . .

With the following McCawley's (1971: 106) examples, MV & J discuss that (18c) is unacceptable, since Frege does not exist as a person who is able to be frightened. On the other hand, in (18a, b), Frege can be a referent at *S* as a scholar through his work.

(18)   a. Frege has contributed a lot to my thinking.
          b. Frege has been denounced by many people.
          c.*Frege has been frightened by many people.

The fourth constraint they propose is that "there is always some matter to be settled" or "choice to be decided" at *R* (MV & J, 224). That is, they argue that the so-called 'current relevance' of the perfect can be explained by the concurrence of *R* and *S* of the perfect.

MV & J formalize the basic ideas of their theory, and the following are their formalizations of the perfect and simple past.

(19)   a. $Perf(\Phi)_n =_{df} \{m\}: m < n : \Phi_m$

      b. $Pret(\Phi)_n =_{df} \{\ \}: n < m : \Phi_n$

(20)   a.

$$Perf(\Phi)_n = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline m \\ \hline m < n \\ \Phi_m \\ \hline \end{array}$$

b.

$$Pret(\Phi)_n = \begin{array}{|c|} \hline \\ \hline n < m \\ \Phi_n \\ \hline \end{array}$$

In (19) and its DRT version (20), *Perf* refers to the perfect and *Pret* refers to the preterite, i.e., the simple past tense. Φ indicates a tensed formula, and n represents R. S is the $<$-last element, and E is "the unique temporal variable that is updated with the non-temporal formula" (MV & J: 240).

To recapitulate, in the perfect, i.e., (19a) and (20a), n is S and R at the same time, and m is E. Hence the formalization represents that in the prefect, S and R coincide, and that E precedes R. Furthermore, $\{m\}$ in (19a) and the m above the line in (20a) show that in the perfect, E is newly introduced, i.e., not presupposed. In the simple past tense, i.e., (19b) and (20b), m is S, and n is E and R at the same time. As for $\{\ \}$ in (19b) and the blank above the line in (20b), they indicate that in the simple past tense, E is not newly introduced, i.e., presupposed.

According to MV & J, these formal representations well account for the differences between the perfect and simple past tense. For one thing, the 'presuppositional' constraint illustrated in the following example is explained by the difference in the formalizations. That is, E is not presupposed in the perfect, so that the same event cannot be asserted in the same perfect form. The second sentence should be described in the simple past, in which E is presupposed.

(21=4) Hayward police have arrested the prime suspect in last week's string of laundromat robberies. #Two off-duty officers have confronted the suspect as he left a local 7-11. #A back-up unit has been called in to assist in the arrest.

The definiteness effect is also accounted for as the following. According to MV & J, a temporal adverbial like *yesterday* is represented as a function from S to R, so that as in (22a), which is in the simple past tense, it is represented as a function from m to n. On the other hand, in (22b), where S and R coincide, it is bound to

be represented as a function from S to S, which leads to its infelicity in the perfect.

(22)　　a.
　　　Yesterday $(Pret(\varPhi))_n$ =

$$\frac{\quad\quad\quad\quad}{\begin{array}{c} n \prec m \\ \text{Yesterday}(m) = n \\ \varPhi_n \end{array}}$$

　　b.
　　　Yesterday $(Perf(\varPhi))_n$ =

$$\frac{m}{\begin{array}{c} m \prec n \\ \text{Yesterday}(n) = n \\ \varPhi_m \end{array}}$$

　　In sections 2 and 3, some major theories of the perfect and simple past tense including MV & J's analysis have been discussed. These theories observe such phenomena like the definiteness effect and the lifetime effect as some of the differences between the perfect and simple past, and try to account for them. It will be shown, however, in the next section that these theories based on the observations are met with numerous counterexamples, which should be accounted for from a different perspective. In the following section, for convenience, I will discuss some counterexamples to MV & J's analysis, which should also apply to the theories of the perfect discussed in section 2. Furthermore, in section 5, I will present a new analysis which accounts for the difference between the English perfect and simple past by classifying the English perfect into three uses.

4. Counterexamples to MV & J's analysis

　　As discussed above, MV & J propose that the perfect has its R at S, while the simple past tense has its R at E, based on Reichenbach (1947). They further propose R as a perspective at which four constraints must be fulfilled. In the following

paragraphs, I will take each of these four constraints into consideration and discuss its problems.

First, consider the constraint that positional temporal adverbials must be either functions from S to R or predicates on R. Concerning this definiteness effect, linguists like Stump (1985), Pancheva and von Stechow (2004), and Schaden (2009) argue that it is not accounted for by the semantics or the syntax of the language, but it is merely a strong tendency that could be explained by the 'competition' between the perfect and simple past tense, as discussed in section 2.4.

To further support his proposal, Schaden (2009: 124) presents the following examples that are "attested in trustworthy sources."[3]

(23) a. We *have received* information on F.S. from you *on the 22nd of September last*.
   b. Thank you, the point which Mr *has made yesterday*, I think will continue to make [*sic*].
   c. In the event my Lord, erm, that er your Lordship felt that further guidance was required, there are the two routes that I'*ve indicated* to your Lordship briefly *yesterday*, [. . .]

He adds that although it might be argued that the above attested examples are from particular dialects or sociolects, i.e., different from the standard English, all the sources are from formal situations of speaking or writing.

On top of these examples, numerous counterexamples to the definiteness effect are found.[4] The following are some of those counterexamples.[5]

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[3] For (23a, b, c), Schaden footnotes the sources as the following:

   i) (23a): example taken from Maurice (1935), cited from McCoard (1978: 129)
   ii) (23b, c): found in the British National Corpus, http://www.natcorp.ox.ac.uk [11-09-2007]. Query: "has_yesterday."

[4] All the following counterexamples in this paper have been searched through the Naver corpus and BNC on the internet. Due to technical difficulties related with search keywords and to limit the amount of data, I searched through the corpora with the following 20 keywords:

I have / I have have / have visited / have ago / have last / have already ago / have visited have been to / have been / have been to / have been debated / have been debated have been debated / have worked / have worked have / have lived / have known / have seen yesterday / have visited last summer / have helped / have made / have passed away yesterday

(24) a. We *have visited* Iraq *twice in 2004, in May and December*.

b. During this Parliament we *have visited* Iraq *in June 2006, July 2007 and June 2008*.

c. The Commission for Health Improvement *has visited* 34 hospitals *between 1 January and 29 June 2001*.

d. The Prime Minister: I *have visited* Malaysia *in April 1985, August 1988 and October 1989*.

As you can see, all the above four sentences with the present perfect violate the first constraint by including a temporal adverbial predicating on E instead of R. All of them could be interpreted as the so-called Experiential or Existential perfect with the same verb *visit*.

The English perfects in the following examples are also used with a temporal adverbial that is a function from S to E instead of S to R, violating the first constraint.[6] Again, all the following examples could be interpreted as the

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The collected data have also been classified into the three uses of the English perfect for analysis. And yet, some of the examples were found to be ambiguous and hard to be judged as one specific use. Hence only clear examples were selected for this paper. In this selection process, I consulted the sources of the examples and examined the context of use. Although the amount of the collected data was limited, it seems apparent that the number of the counterexamples is statistically significant in view of the number of the given data. It should also be admitted, however, that a further study with extensive data is called for to come up with more comprehensive and well-balanced generalizations.

[5] All examples in (24a-d) are cited from *Hansard*, which is the official report of the proceedings of the British Parliament. Their sources each are as follows:

i) (24a): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200405/cmselect/cmdfence/290/ 29003.htm (*Hansard*: Feb. 10, 2005)

ii) (24b): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmdfence/982/ 98204.htm (*Hansard*: July 22, 2008)

iii) (24c): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo010703/ text/10703w21.htm (*Hansard*: July 3, 2001)

iv) (24d): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199091/cmhansrd/1990-11-19/ Writtens-1.html (*Hansard*: Nov. 19, 1990)

[6] The sources of examples (25a-e) are as follows:

i) (25a): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmhansrd/vo051121/text/ 51121w40.htm (*Hansard*: Nov. 21, 2005)

ii) (25b): http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/thereporters/markmardell/2008/01/is_there_a_euro pean_islam_1.html (*BBC*: Jan. 21, 2008)

iii) (25c): http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/jobs/5159773/Make-the-decision-and-

Experiential perfect with a verb *visit* or a conventionalized expression like *have been to*.

    (25) a. The Prime Minister: I *have visited* Hertfordshire *twice in the last year*.

          b. I *have been to* Tirana *2 years ago*.

          c. I *have been to* some interviews *last year*, but still no job.

          d. The course will be staffed by two of our most experienced and popular trainers, Margaret Charlwood and Jean Parmiter, who *have visited* Norfolk *in the past* to teach at training days and at rallies.

          e. I am conscious that I *have visited* somebody *a while ago* and noticed the name of somebody in the book in which rang very loud alarm bells in my mind.

The following Experiential perfects with a variety of verbs, also violate the first constraint, being used with a temporal adverbial that is a function from S to E instead of S to R.[7]

    (26) a. It is just a reaffirmation of what we *have said 10 years ago*.

          b. Parton *has been* a victim of similar rumors *in the past*.

          c. In his seven years as a playing member of the team, Bates *has twice helped* Britain gain promotion to the World Group, *in 1985 and again last year*, and *has once*, *in 1987*, *had* the disappointment of being relegated.

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leave.html (*The Telegraph*: Feb. 13, 2012)

  iv) (25d): http://bnc.bl.uk/BNCbib/KA.html#KAA
    (*British National Corpus*: *Medau News*, 1980)

  v) (25e): http://bnc.bl.uk/BNCbib/JA.html#JA9
    (*British National Corpus*: Local Government Ombudsman office, 1993)

7 The sources of examples (26a-c) are as follows:

  i) (26a): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200203/cmselect/cmenvaud/98/
    3032604.htm (*Hansard*: Mar. 26, 2003)

  ii) (26b): http://www.foxnews.com/story/0%2C2933%2C410042%2C00.html
    (*Fox News*: Aug. 25, 2008)

  iii) (26c): http://bnc.bl.uk/BNCbib/CK.html#CKL
    (*CKL Tennis World*: *Sussex Presswatch*, 1993)

Taking the limited amount of the data collected for this analysis into consideration, as discussed in footnote 4, the number of the Experiential counterexamples to the first constraint could be regarded as quite a few.

The following examples with *already* and various verbs show that there exist not only Experiential perfects but also other uses of perfects which violate the first constraint. Although (27a) seems to be interpreted as an Experiential, all the others seem to be ambiguous between an Experiential and a Resultative.[8]

(27) a. After all, he *has already used* nerve gas against his own people, in Halabja *10 years ago*.

b. The details of a reformed system of party funding *have already been thrashed out* between the parties, *months ago*.

c. Boris Johnson *has already proposed* a solution to our government funding problems - *just a couple of days ago*.

d. But they *have already bought* that gas, *6 months ago*.

e. In effect, he (Felos) *has already confined* her to the grave *a long time ago*.

On the other hand, examples (28a, b), which also violate the definiteness effect, seem to be interpreted as Resultatives only.[9]

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[8] The sources of examples (27a-e) are as follows:

i) (27a): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmhansrd/vo980210/debtext/80210-04.htm (*Hansard*: Feb. 10, 1998)

ii) (27b): http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/may/27/nick-clegg-a-new-politics (*Guardian*: May 27, 2009)

iii) (27c): http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/columnists/borisjohnson/3563749/Why-Gordon-Brown-the-manic-meddler-had-to-take-such-a-massive-gamble.html (*The Telegraph*: Mar. 24, 2012)

iv) (27d): http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1112209/Our-gas-bills-soaring---sell-supplies-cheaper-Europe.html (*Daily Mail*: Jan. 12, 2009)

v) (27e): http://www.foxnews.com/story/0%2C2933%2C152047%2C00.html (*Fox News*: Mar. 31, 2005)

[9] The sources of examples (28a-b) are as follows:

i) (28a): http://www.imsdb.com/scripts/Bourne-Identity%2C-The.html (*Internet Movie Scrip*: *Bourne Identity*)

ii) (28b): http://www.bbc.co.uk/blogs/nickrobinson/2009/07/government_not_2.html (*BBC Blogs*: 2009)

(28)   a. I'm terrible sorry to have to tell you this, but Monsieur Kane *has passed away almost two weeks ago*.

   b. We *have seen only yesterday* how little the Government cares about our low income workers.

As illustrated above, there exist quite numerous examples of the Experiential perfect violating MV & J's first constraint. Comparing to this, Resultative counterexamples are found to be much rarer. Furthermore, no examples of the Universal perfect are found from the data. In brief, although Universal counterexamples are scarce, quite a few Experiential and Resultative counterexamples do exist and this phenomenon should be accounted for semantically and/or pragmatically.

Second, consider MV & J's presuppositional constraint that *S* and *R* are presupposed in both the perfect and simple past. According to this constraint, two consecutive present perfects predicating the same event are not acceptable. However, examples like the following are observed.[10]

(29)   a. I *have visited* the Baltic states, and *have been to* Lithuania on two occasions.

   b. Every time I *have visited* China, I *have been to* a school: to see those young people's enthusiasm for learning English is fantastic.

   c. We *have been to* the female prison and we *have passed through* it but we have not really visited the young offenders.

   d. I *have lived through* many elections, and I *have heard* those men and that woman advocate their particular political philosophy.

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[10] The sources of examples (29a-d) are as follows:

   i) (29a): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmhansrd/vo981027/debtext/81027-31.htm (*Hansard*: Oct. 27, 1998)
   ii) (29b): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm081015/halltext/81015h0004.htm (*Hansard*: Oct. 15, 2008)
   iii) (29c): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmniaf/118/7070402.htm (*Hansard*: July 4, 2007)
   iv) (29d): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo011218/debtext/11218-28.htm (*Hansard*: Dec. 18, 2001)

In all of the above examples, the first and second present perfects predicate the same event. For example, in (29a), Lithuania belongs to the Baltic states, so that the two perfects describe the same event. Each pair of perfects in (29a-d) could also be interpreted as Experientials.

More counterexamples to the second constraint are observed, as the following, but this time, each pair of the perfects could be understood as Resultatives.[11]

(30) a. We *have had* a good debate, but it *has been* a debate about a debate.

  b. If the Labour Government's mantra of "education, education, education" *has worked*, it *has worked* in Hartlepool and we are seeing fantastic results.

  c. It *has worked*, and people tell me that it *has worked* well.

  d. The rule of law in Sri Lanka *has been seriously eroded*: in the past three years, over a dozen lawyers *have been murdered* because of their involvement with human rights cases and at least 20 others *have been forced* to flee the country after receiving death threats.

Counterexamples to the second constraint are found much more frequently in consecutive Universals than Experientials or Resultatives. Some of the Universal counterexamples are as follows:[12]

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[11] The sources of examples (30a-d) are as follows:

  i) (30a): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200102/cmhansrd/vo020522/
    halltext/20522h01.htm (*Hansard*: May 22, 2002)
  ii) (30b): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmpubacc/
    uc402-i/uc40202.htm (*Hansard*: Mar. 14, 2007)
  iii) (30c): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm081030/
    halltext/81030h0008.htm (*Hansard*: Oct. 30, 2008)
  iv) (30d): http://bnc.bl.uk/BNCbib/A0.html#A03
    (*British National Corpus*: *Amnesty*, 1991)

[12] The sources of examples (31a-f) are as follows:

  i) (31a): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmselect/cmchilsch/memo
      /teactrai/tetr1102.htm (*Hansard*: Jan. 29, 2009)
  ii) (31b): http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-1148753/Secretary-called-whore-boss
      -scrub-mens-lavatories-wins-9-000-payout.html (*Daily Mail*: Feb. 18, 2009)
  iii) (31c): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmhansrd/vo970704/
      debtext/70704-06.htm (*Hansard*: Jul. 4, 1997)

(31)   a. ACT *has worked* closely with CitizED since 2002 and *has enjoyed* a positive working relationship.

   b. I *have worked* in virtually all-male environments most of my working life and my male colleagues *have treated* me with great respect.

   c. Young people *have been cast aside* and they *have had to live* in the absence of hope.

   d. I *have been very fortunate*; I *have lived* a varied, sometimes difficult, life, but it *has always been fascinating and interesting*.

   e. I *have lived* in England the last few years and *have always paid* my taxes.

   f. I *have owned* narrow boats for over 17 years, and *have lived* on my boat as my main and principal home since 1991.

Third, consider the constraint that requires both the perfect and simple past tense to have a referent at *R*. According to this constraint, as far as a referent of the subject or topic of the sentence can be created at *R* regardless of whether the referent exists physically at *R* or not, the perfect can felicitously be used. This constraint based on Inoue's (1979) analysis does not seem to have problems in accounting for the data related with the lifetime effect.

Fourth, let us consider the constraint that there should always be some matter to be settled or some choice to be decided at *R* in every utterance including the perfect utterance. Have a look at the following examples.

(32)   a. John has lived in Paris. (Declerck 1991: 322)

   b. John has arrived. (Comrie 1976: 56)

According to MV & J, (32a) is, for example, to settle the issue whether John is a man of the world. In a Resultative like (32b), Comrie (1976: 56) analyzes that a

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iv) (31d): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199798/cmhansrd/vo970627/ debtext/70627-08.htm (*Hansard*: Jun. 27, 1997)

v) (31e): http://www.thesun.co.uk/sol/homepage/sport/motorsport/429908/Hamilton-Im- no-tax-dodger.html (*The Sun*: Nov. 6, 2007)

vi) (31f): http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmselect/cmenvfru/345/ 7041610.htm (*Hansard*: Jul. 31, 2007)

result at *S* is implicated by "a past situation predicated by the perfect," and the result of (32b) might be that John is here. Following Declerck (1991: 325), MV & J argue against Comrie's argument that a sentence could have numerous resultative interpretations, and that there could be implicatures that are not results at *S*.

The concept, the settlement of some matter or the decision on some choice, however, also seems to be nebulous. Have a look at the following example.

(33) A: Did you get a promotion last month?
       B: A promotion? I have worked hard for this company for the last
          five years, and all I get is this poor treatment.

As for the Universal perfect in (33B), the speaker's having worked hard should lead to some implicature that settles some issue at *S*, according to MV & J. It might be argued that an implicature that B deserved to get a promotion is obtained, but it is not clear what issue is settled at *S* by this implicature.

Have a look at another example.

(34) A: (Out of the blue) I've been to Tuscany in Italy.
       B: Oh, you have?
       A: It was beautiful and I had a wonderful time there.

In (34), it is not clear what implicature could be derived from the Experiential and what choice could be decided at *S* by what implicature.

In brief, MV & J's concept of the settlement of some issue or the decision on some choice seems to be as vague as the concept of the result implicature of the Resultative perfect. Hence I propose that it is neither clear or sufficient enough to help define the meaning of the perfect.

To summarize, in this section, some counterexamples to the previous theories of the perfect and simple past have been discussed by focusing on MV & J's analysis. Based on this discussion, in the next section, I will present a new analysis which complements the problems of the previous theories.

5. A new analysis

It has been observed above that a considerable number of counterexamples are found to question the previous theories of the perfect including MV & J's analysis. It has also been observed that the three main uses of the English present perfect seem to behave differently with respect to the long-noticed characteristics of the perfect including the definiteness effect and the presuppositional effect.

Given these, although the three variations of the English perfect have been assumed to be mostly pragmatic, as pointed out by Portner (2011), it will be proposed in the following paragraphs that the different meanings of the three uses and other pragmatic factors better account for the distinction between the English perfect and simple past tense.

First, the informal definitions of the three main uses of the English perfect proposed by Yoon (2011), which is a modified version from Mittwoch (2008), are given in the following:[13]

(35) a. Experiential: There is at least one repeatable event of the type denoted by the base sentence in the interval (=XN) terminating at the perfect evaluation time (=PEpt).
b. Resultative: One unique event of the type denoted by the base sentence is completed in the interval terminating at PEpt and close to PEpt.
c. Universal: A state of affairs holds throughout an interval terminating at PEpt.

In (35), 'XN' indicates 'extended now' in line with McCoard (1978), and 'PEpt' indicates "Perfect Evaluation point."[14] PEpt for a main clause present perfect is usually S. (35) displays that the key points of the meanings of the three uses of the English perfect are: the repeatable event experientiality for Experientials; the event uniqueness, completion, and closeness to PEpt for Resultatives; and the state

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[13] For more detailed discussion on how the modified definitions in (35) are derived, refer to Yoon (2011).

[14] More specifically, XN, 'extended now,' indicates the interval of time that starts at a certain past time and ends at S.

continuity for Universals.

These informal definitions of the three uses of the English perfect could roughly be formalized as the following, in line with Mittwoch (2008).

(36)   a. Experiential: $\lambda P.\lambda t.XN(t_c, t)$ & $\exists e[\tau(e) \subseteq t_c$ & $P(e)]$
     where P is a variable over properties of events, t over times, e over events, τ is the running time of e, t_c is the XN determined by the context c, and t is the final point of t_c.
   b. Resultative: $\lambda P.\lambda t.XN(t_c, t)$ & $\exists !e[\tau(e) \subseteq t_c$ & $P(e)]$
     where τ is the running time of e, e denotes a telic transition, the target state of e holds at t, and e occurs close to t.
   c. Universal: $\lambda P.\lambda t.XN(t_c, t)$ & $\exists s[\tau(s) = t_c$ & $P(s)]$
     where s is a variable over states and τ is the running time of s.

In (36a), the existentially quantified event variable indicates the repeatable event experientiality for Experientials ($\exists e$). On the other hand, in (36b), the event variable is uniquely quantified ($\exists !e$), which leads to its singularity interpretation. Besides, the event in a Resultative should be a telic and should occur close to the XN t_c's final point t. In contrast, in (36c), the existentially quantified s indicates a continued state τ which is maintained throughout an interval t_c.

Given these, the first constraint related to the definiteness effect is relatively well explained. First of all, the scarcity or lack of existence of Universal counterexamples from our data is accounted for by the state continuity throughout the interval until *S*, due to which a Universal cannot be modified by a past adverbial. That is, a Universal does not describe an event that occurs at a certain time point, but it describes a state that holds throughout an interval from a certain past point to PEpt. Therefore, it is awkward to be used with a definite past time expression.

In contrast, Experientials describe repeatable past experiences in many cases, so that quite a few Experiential counterexamples are found. That is, repeatable experiences occur at certain past points so that it is not awkward for an Experiential to be used with a definite past time expression.

As for Resultatives, although they describe events that happened in the past, similar to Experientials, the events are construed to happen just 'close to PEpt' with the specific past time point left unspecified to emphasize the closeness. As a result,

to use an adverbial which indicates a specific past time is inferred to be quite awkward. Therefore, Resultatives with a past adverbial are rarely found.

And yet, concerning the Resultative counterexamples observed above, I propose that this phenomenon is explained by Schaden's (2009) pragmatic account based on the notion of competition between the perfect and simple past tense. That is, in the context, the language user is trying to decide on which construction to use between the two. If he wants to focus not just on the occurrence of an event in the past, but on its completion close to *S*, then he uses the perfect without a past adverbial, which interferes with his focus on the closeness to *S*. However, for example, if he wants to use a past adverbial as an addendum which indicates a time point close enough to *S* so that it does not seem to hinder the focus on the closeness to *S*, then he sometimes, but rarely, uses the perfect with a past adverbial, as in the following.[15]

(37)　A: Have you finished your term paper yet?
　　　 B: I have already finished it－in fact, yesterday.

I further propose that depending on the context, the emphasis could be put more on the completion of an event rather than on its closeness to PEpt, and that a specific past completion time point of the event, which is regarded as being close enough to PEpt, could be added. There could also exist other pragmatic factors that play a role in deciding which construction should be selected and which modifier should be used.

Moving on to the second constraint related with presupposition, it has been observed in the previous section that much more counterexamples are found in consecutive Universals than either Experientials or Resultatives. I propose that the inability of Universals to be replaced by the simple past tense accounts for this phenomenon. Contrary to Experientials and Resultatives, Universals cannot be replaced by the simple past tense without any meaning change, as illustrated in the following.

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[15] It should be pointed out, though, that the "closeness to *S*" is a quite pragmatic concept which heavily depends on the context. For example, we have observed with (28a) in section 4 that a past adverbial like "almost two weeks ago" can also be interpreted as being close to *S* in the given context.

(38) a. Kurt has lived in Florida for five years.
      b. Kurt lived in Florida for five years.

That is, one reading of (38a) indicates the continuity of a state of Kurt's living in Florida for five years until *S*, whereas (38b) indicates the continuity of a 'past' state of Kurt's living in Florida for five years.[16] That is, the present perfect and the simple past do not mean the same thing. A Universal describes a state which continues throughout an interval terminating at PEpt, and not just one time point but every time point of the interval counts. Hence it is irreplaceable by a simple past. Although consecutive Universals predicate the same event, all of them are required to represent the state continuity throughout the interval until *S*, as in (31a-f).

On the other hand, as for Experientials and Resultatives, which are replaceable by the simple past tense without any basic meaning change, less consecutive ones were observed than Universals, which are irreplaceable by the simple past. That is, as for Experientials and Resultatives, subsequent ones (i.e., the second, third, . . . Experientials or Resultatives) could be redundant, whereas for Universals, subsequent ones are necessary to maintain their meanings. For consecutive Experientials and Resultatives, I propose that the pragmatic process of competition is also involved. A subsequent Experiential is used to emphasize its repeatable event experientiality, whereas a subsequent Resultative is employed to stress the event completion close to *S*, given the context.

When it comes to the third constraint that requires both the perfect and simple past tense to have a referent at *R*, there does not seem to exist much difference among the three uses of the English perfect, as illustrated by the following examples.

(39) a. Einstein has visited Princeton, Yukawa has, Friedman has. . .
      b. Frege has been denounced by many people. (MV & J, 228)
      c. Albert Schweitzer has been greatly respected by many people even
         after his death.

First, with (39a), MV & J argue that although Einstein does not exist at *R*(=*S*), it is acceptable if a reference to a set of, say, 'Nobel Prize winners' or 'great

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[16] The other reading of (38a) is such that Kurt's living in Florida for five years ended before *S*.

thinkers' could be created at *R*. MV & J further argue that if *Frege* in (39b) refers to 'Frege's thinking' or 'Frege's works,' (39b) is acceptable. Also for (39c), which is my example, although Schweitzer died in 1965, if Schweitzer remains as one of the great men in people's mind, it could work as a referent at *S* and (39c) is acceptable.

Based on the meaning differences in (35), (39a) could be interpreted as an Experiential, while (39b), as either a Resultative or an Experiential. As for (38c), it could be read as a Universal. And yet, no difference among the three uses of the perfect is observed with respect to the third constraint. Concerning this, I propose that the three uses of the perfect do not behave differently with respect to the PEpt relevance of the referent, since all the three uses assume an interval terminating at PEpt as part of their meaning. That is, a perfect describes a state or event relevant to the referent which occurs in the interval, 'extended now,' terminating at PEpt, so that the PEpt relevance of the referent should be satisfied in all the three uses of the perfect. This PEpt relevance of the referent is part of the basic common meaning of all the three uses of the English perfect, and it helps differentiate the perfect from the simple past.

Lastly, consider the fourth constraint that there should always be some matter to be settled or some choice to be decided at *R* in every utterance including the perfect utterance. As discussed above, MV & J's concept of the settlement of some issue or the decision on some choice is as nebulous as the concept of the result implicature. Since both the concepts are pragmatic in nature, their fulfillment cannot always be guaranteed.

Concerning Mittwoch's (2008) proposal that the result inference of a Resultative is a conventional implicature, Yoon (2011) shows that the result inference is not a conventional implicature but a conversational implicature, which is cancellable. In a similar vein, as discussed in the previous section, MV & J's concept is a pragmatic one based on implicature, which is cancellable any time.

Furthermore, consider the following example.

(40)   A: Let's go out for lunch.
       B: I've eaten.

According to MV & J's argument, B's utterance in (40) would derive an

implicature that B is not hungry, which would decide at $R(=S)$ that B is not going out for lunch.

However, concerning (41B), MV & J would argue that B's utterance settles an issue at $R(=E)$ whether B ate or not.[17]

(41)   A: Let's go out for lunch.
        B: I ate.

And yet, both B's utterances in (40) and (41) seem to derive the same implicature that B is not hungry so that B does not want to go out for lunch. That is, (40B) and (41B) provide similar answers to A's invitation and settle the same issue. Nevertheless, MV & J argue the difference between the perfect and simple past tense as the settlement of different issues at different R's, i.e, the past in the simple past and the present in the present perfect.

As for the difference between (40B) and (41B), it is proposed that in line with Schaden's (2009) theory, a competition is rendered in the context between the perfect and simple past, and that if the speaker wants to emphasize the completion of the event and its closeness to PEpt, the Resultative perfect is chosen. That is, although both (40B) and (41B) function as equally acceptable answers to the same invitation, (40B) attaches the meaning of the event completion close to PEpt to the default meaning.

On the other hand, in the case of a competition between an Experiential perfect and a simple past, the Experiential wins over the simple past if the meaning of repeatable event experientiality is emphasized.

However, a Universal perfect cannot be replaced by a simple past tense. As discussed above, a Universal indicates a state continuity throughout the interval, i.e., XN, so that a simple past cannot displace it without any meaning change.

To summarize, the discussion in this section has started from the counterexamples to the previous theories of the perfect and simple past presented in the previous section. As pointed out above, the counterexamples were obtained from

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[17] MV & J (2011: 231) argue a similar point with the following example:

 i) A: Why is Chris so cheerful these days?
    B: Well, he won a million in the lottery.
    B': Well, he has won a million in the lottery.

the data collected from the internet corpus searched with the twenty keywords. Although the collected data was limited in the amount, the multiplicity of the counterexamples justifies the analysis of this paper. Furthermore, the observed different behaviors of the three uses of the English perfect with respect to the four constraints including the definiteness effect and the lifetime effect led us to account for the phenomenon based on the different meanings of the three uses of the perfect and the pragmatic process in line with Schaden (2009). Although the analysis of this paper provides a new and persuasive perspective on the observed semantic and pragmatic phenomenon, it is expected that a further study in the future with extensive data will help provide more positive evidence to the analysis.

6. Conclusion

In this paper, it has been shown that previous theories and observations on the perfect and simple past including MV & J's generalizations are met with numerous counterexamples. It has been proposed that these counterexamples reveal the need to account for the differences between the English perfect and simple past tense by classifying the English perfect into the three uses, i.e., Experientials, Resultatives, and Universals. In addition to the semantics of the three uses of the perfect, pragmatic competition between the perfect and simple past is proposed to play a role in deciding which of the two constructions should be chosen, in line with Schaden (2009).

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YoungEun Yoon
Department of English Language and Literature
Ewha Womans University
52 Ewhayeodae-gil, Seodaemun-gu
Seoul 120-750, Korea
Email: yeyoon@ewha.ac.kr