

‘Hot news’ and perfect change: mirativity and the semantics/pragmatics interface*

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Abstract

This paper proposes an analysis of the hot news Present Perfect (PP) building on Nishiyama & Koenig's (2010) analysis of the perfect as denoting a perfect state introduced by a variable that needs to be pragmatically enriched. Pragmatic meaning is analysed extending Rett & Murray's (2013) representation of mirative meaning as the target state of a learning event, which I take to be the speaker's reaction of surprise more generally. The analysis is considered in the light of non-canonical uses of the PP in Australian English narratives and police media reports. I argue that hot news usage is at the basis of such extensions and propose representations for uses in sequences of clauses expressing temporal progression and in clauses containing a definite past time adverbial. The paper concludes by discussing the present analysis in the light of previous research and its implication to our understanding of the grammaticalization of perfects.

Keywords: present perfect; hot news; mirativity; semantic and pragmatic change

Resum. «*Darrereres notícies*» i el canvi del *perfet*: la mirativitat i la interfície semàntica/pragmàtica

En aquest article es proposa una anàlisi del *perfet* de passat recent o *hot news* basada en l'anàlisi de Nishiyama & Koenig (2010) on s'analitza el *perfet* com una categoria que denota un 'estat *perfet*' introduït per una variable que necessita ser pragmàticament enriquida. El significat pragmàtic s'analitza ampliant la representació del significat miratiu de Rett & Murray (2013) com un estat meta d'un esdeveniment d'aprenentatge, el qual considero que, en termes generals, es tracta de la reacció de sorpresa del parlant. L'anàlisi es porta a terme atenent els usos no canònics del *perfet* en anglès australià en passatges narratius i articles de la policia dels mitjans de comunicació. Argüixo que l'ús del *perfet* de passat recent o *hot news* es troba en la base d'aquestes extensions i proposo representacions pels usos en seqüències de clàusules que expressen progressió temporal i en clàusules que contenen un adverbial temporal definit de passat. L'article conclou tractant la present anàlisi considerant les investigacions prèvies i la seva implicació al nostre coneixement de la gramaticalització dels *perfets*.

Paraules clau: *perfet*; *hot news*; mirativitat; canvi semàntic i pragmàtic

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1. Introduction

The perfect is commonly regarded as giving rise to four distinct readings, the universal perfect (1), the experiential/existential perfect (2), the perfect of result (3) and the perfect of recent past or ‘hot news’ perfect (4) (McCawley 1971, 1981; Comrie 1976):

- (1) Amanda has lived in Sydney for ten years (and currently lives there).
- (2) I’ve eaten kangaroo meat (at least once before).
- (3) Max has broken his ankle (his ankle is broken).
- (4) The Eagles have won!

In (1) the universal perfect denotes the state of living in Sydney and asserts that it holds throughout an interval of time that lasts up to the present. Such a reading requires both a stative Verbal Phrase (VP) and a durative adverbial. The experiential/existential perfect in (2) presents the eventuality described by the VP as having occurred at least once in an interval lasting up to the present. The perfect of result in (3) describes the state that obtains as a result of Max having broken his ankle (the ankle is broken) and asserts that this state holds at the time of utterance. According to Mittwoch (2008) such a reading requires ‘strong resultative’ VPs, denoting a change of state and its result state. Finally the hot news in (4) is used to describe a recent event that is news to the speaker/hearer.

The hot news perfect has been the subject of less attention in the literature than other types of perfects, as it has often been assimilated to another type (see section 2). Nonetheless, hot news perfects have been discussed in the context of historical change: the PP is typically unstable and tends to evolve into a past perfective tense/aorist. The present paper examines more closely the hot news PP and proposes an analysis of its meaning building on Nishiyama & Koenig’s (2010) notion of ‘perfect state’ as well as Rett (2011) and Rett & Murray’s (2013) analysis of mirative meaning (section 2). The paper then examines extensions in the meaning and uses of the PP in a corpus of Australian English narratives and argues that the hot news function of the PP is at the basis of such usage (section 3): the PP is used to convey surprise and recency, the latter not in relation to the actual moment of utterance but to a metaphorical one, the local story ‘now’. While previous accounts of the

changes that lead perfects to become past perfective tenses have often suggested that hot news uses played a role, they have typically assumed a gradual extension via degrees of remoteness. Here, I argue that the path illustrated in Australian English points to a different mechanism albeit still involving hot news readings. While mirativity can be conveyed by other tenses than the PP (and other linguistic and paralinguistic means), I argue that the PP lends itself to such function particularly well, especially in narratives where events are presented as succeeding each other in time quickly: the reference time in each clause is located *after* the event described by the VP (by the semantics of perfects generally) and before the next event or its perfect state is introduced. It is presented *as if* it was the time of speech as the *present* perfect is used (vivid narrative present tense). Thus it is easy to enrich the perfect state pragmatically to signal the speaker's reaction of surprise at the reference time. The paper concludes with a more general discussion of the role of mirativity in the evolution of perfects (section 4).

2. Hot news, perfect change and mirative meaning

This section reviews previous analyses of the hot news PP starting by a discussion of its role in the grammaticalization of perfects (section 2.1) as data examined in the present paper concern such changes, albeit from a synchronic perspective. As a result, a more detailed discussion of how hot news meaning has been variously characterized follows (section 2.2), leading to the analysis of the meaning of mirative expressions generally before proposing a framework that combines perfect and mirative meanings to account for hot news effects (section 2.3).

2.1. Hot news and the grammaticalization of perfects

Discussions of the frequent path of evolution of PP into perfective past tenses have often highlighted the importance of the role played by hot news (McCawley 1971) or recent past (Comrie 1976) uses. This type of perfect is characterized by the fact that the event denoted by the VP is deemed relevant at the Time of Utterance (TU) because of its temporal proximity to it. Indeed, there has been much discussion about the evolution of perfects via temporal remoteness distinctions, from hot news contexts to hodiernal ones and then further extending to more remote times (see e.g., Comrie 1976; Bybee et al. 1994: 101-102; Fleishman 1989). A famous example is found in French where extensions in PP usage were said to follow the '*règle des 24 heures*' ('24 hours rule') in the 17th Century. One could argue however that this rule was in some way artificial and perhaps did not reflect actual usage (see e.g., Fournier 2004, for a discussion). More recently, Schwenter (1994) argued that hot news uses of the PP also played an important role in the early stages of grammaticalization of perfects in Peninsular Spanish. In his corpus Schwenter (1994) found increased frequency of the PP used as a hodiernal past and proposed that it was more frequent uses of hot news PP that led to such an extension. He hypothesised that frequent hot news usage had led the PP to be reanalyzed by speakers as a marker of recency. In his view, the link between event

and TU in hot news usage is more ‘tenuous’ than with other types of perfects as the situation is presented “for its own sake and not in relation to another situation” (Schwenter 1994: 1003). Because of their increased focus on the situation itself, hot news perfects are thus more similar to past perfective tenses. Further work on Spanish varieties however did not confirm Schwenter’s initial hypothesis. Schwenter & Torres Cacoulios (2008) analysed naturally occurring speech data in Peninsular Spanish and found that the PP is becoming the default past perfective form, not because hodiernal uses have gradually extended to hesternal contexts and further extended from there, but rather because the form is used frequently in temporally indeterminate past contexts. Such contexts include narratives where the PP is used “...to express discrete and sequential foregrounded past events comprising the main story line, which is the typical cross-linguistic (past) perfective function.” (Schwenter & Torres Cacoulios 2008: 25). Connective adverbials such as ‘then’ or ‘later’ are also found in such contexts. These findings are similar to those discussed in Ritz & Engel (2008) in Australian English narratives (see below for further discussion).

It is nonetheless clear that temporal proximity effects have a role to play. In Schwenter & Torres Cacoulios’ (2008) data the Peninsular Spanish PP is near categorical in hodiernal contexts. In other languages, perfects that have grammaticalized into past perfective tenses are also compulsory in hodiernal contexts and contexts where a deictic adverbial (e.g., ‘yesterday’) is used. Kratzer (1998) had already observed that in German there are restrictions on the uses of the Simple Past (SP) tense which do not exist in English. This is also true in French. Schaden (2008: 10) provides the following examples:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (5) [Archimedes in his bath] | (6) [Kasparov to Deep Blue] |
| a. I found it! | a. I won! |
| b. ¡Lo encontré!
it found | b. ¡Gané!
won |
| c. #Ich fand es!
I found it | c. #Ich gewann!
I won |
| d. #Je le trouvai!
I it found | d. #Je gagnai!
I won |

Schaden argues that it is “...the presence of immediate repercussions of the event with respect to the moment of utterance” that favours the use of the perfect form over a SP in these languages. He further remarks that the SP of German and French are inadequate to express hot news whereas English and Spanish SPs may have such a function. The difference according to him depends on which tense is the default: if it is the perfect as in French and German, the marked form (SP) does not have a perfect state (as defined in Nishiyama & Koenig 2004, see below). Thus choosing a SP leads to the pragmatic inference (via Grice’s quantity maxim) that the event described has no tangible consequences at TU. Schaden’s examples

also illustrate the fact that hot news meaning is not a property of the PP but can be expressed by past tenses as well.

2.2. *The meaning of hot news perfects*

There has been some discussion in the literature regarding the question of how hot news meanings of the PP can be characterized. The hot news perfect has often been assimilated to others, making it a variant of either the experiential perfect (McCoard 1978; McCawley 1981) or the resultative perfect (Fenn 1987; Michaelis 1994; Kiparsky 2002). Assimilation to the experiential type supports Schwenter’s (1994) view that the link with TU is more ‘tenuous’, as do combinations with adverbials of recency (such as ‘just’), which locate an event in the past of TU. Viewing the hot news PP as a sub-variety of the resultative type on the other hand emphasizes the connection between the event and TU: in “The Eagles have won!”, the consequences of the winning event are in force at TU precisely because the event only just occurred and is newsworthy. However, assimilating hot news perfects to either experiential or resultative perfects raises further questions. Mittwoch (2008: 344) comments that while hot news perfects are closer to Resultative perfects, “in the absence of a definable result state I regard them as *sui generis*.” Hot news perfects have also been shown to differ from experiential perfects in that experiential perfects are quantificational and can involve plural events; hot news perfects are used to describe unique events (Mittwoch 2008). Unlike experiential perfects, hot news perfects do not involve the constraint that the event type should be repeatable/able to re-occur (Kiparski 2002). In this respect, it is worth noting that (7) (from our Australian English corpus, see details in section 3) is totally acceptable in standard English varieties even though perfects are subject to ‘lifetime effects’ constraints (see e.g., Portner 2003, for a discussion):

- (7) A man **has died** in the Northern Territory after a policeman accidentally drove over him while he was sleeping. (7.2.2004, 92.1 FM radio, Perth)

Glasbey (2005) comments that “for some reason the TTI [Topic Time Interval]¹ is allowed to go “just beyond” the end of his life in this case. We currently have no explanation of why this should be so.”

Depraetere (1996) distinguishes ‘hot news’ from ‘recent past’. He argues that the hot news PP does not necessarily refer to a recent event, as also discussed in Comrie (1976). Comrie offers (8) as an example where an event that is in objective terms not recent can still be presented in the PP and have a hot news effect:

- (8) The second world war has ended. (Spoken to a person on a desert Island who has been cut off from any source of news since 1944) (Comrie 1976: 60)

1. The term here is borrowed from Klein (1992) who defines Reichenbach’s Reference Time as a pragmatic notion, the time under discussion.

Thus, the hot news PP conveys something the speaker knows about and presumes the hearer does not know about (Depraetere 1996: 598). However, Fenn (1987: 130-131) comments that “There is something illogical ... in the idea that the [hot news] perfect is used for information conveyed to a listener assumed not to be in possession of that hot news perfect’s knowledge. Obviously, any item of information is given in the belief that its contents are unknown, no matter which tense is used.” Nonetheless, languages frequently express a distinction between new and old information through particular expressions (e.g., indefinite NPs introduce an entity that is discourse new while definite NPs one that is discourse old).

Binnick (1991: 99) also argues against the view that hot news perfects are specialized to convey recent information. He proposes that such uses are not about temporal proximity at all but are rather used to convey surprise. He explains that many languages have forms that convey indirect experience also used to express that “... the consequences of an event are represented as having been unexpected by the speaker.” He adds that recency is not necessary in such cases although a speaker is unlikely to be surprised by an event that is not recent. In other words, mirativity can be expressed by perfect forms/inferentials cross-linguistically and the fact that the event is recent is only a by-product of its unexpectedness.

2.3. *Mirativity*

According to de Lancey (2001: 369-370), mirativity is “...the linguistic marking of an utterance as conveying information which is new or unexpected to the speaker.” (de Lancey 2001: 369-370). He discusses the connections between perfects, evidentiality and mirativity, and agrees that present relevance of a past event provides an easy path for the evolution of perfects into inferential evidentials. Furthermore, he points out that there is in such cases also a connection to mirativity, and explains: “[a]n expected event is expected on the basis of previous knowledge or perception of a chain of events leading up to it - a fact which one knows only when one sees secondary evidence for it is necessarily unexpected to some degree” (de Lancey 2001: 378). Ritz (2010) finds that non-canonical uses of the PP in past contexts in Australian police media reports also give rise to mirative effects in particular when events not directly witnessed by the police are reported:

- (9) Police have released the name of the man involved in a fatal traffic crash which occurred on Ranford Road [. . .] The Holden Commodore sedan, which had been stolen earlier in the night, had been involved in a pursuit with Police which had been aborted. It appears that as the vehicle was being driven south-east on Ranford Road the driver has then been ejected from the vehicle and has come to rest by the side of the roadway. The vehicle came to a stop on a narrow median island a short distance away. Police attended at the scene after the crash and rendered first aid. (Ritz 2010: 3409)

Ritz (*ibid*) comments as follows: “since there was a witness at the scene when police arrived, we understand that police found out about the sequence of events (i.e. those presented in the PP) after they arrived at the scene of the accident—presumably even after taking care of the victim. Thus, from the point of view of recency of information, as far as the police are concerned, the events that have led to the death of the man are indeed the ones they found out about most recently. In this sense, we can view the use of the PP here as a type of ‘hot news’ perfect usage.”

De Lancey (2001: 379) also comments that “[i]f an event is already over, and the speaker was aware of it when it happened, it is likely to have already begun to lose its novelty in the speaker’s mind, and thus its eligibility for mirative marking. A past event will typically qualify for mirative marking only if the speaker has only recently become aware of it, which implies that the speaker has only indirect or secondary evidence of it.” However, Ritz (2010: 3410) suggests that mirative effects can be found in narratives where a speaker expresses surprise even at their own past actions. In such cases, the speaker is highlighting the unexpected nature of the event at the time, which, I will argue, contributes to the foregrounding effect of the PP used as a narrative tense more generally.

(10) I’d done enough, and she said ‘Can you sign this?’ and I said ‘Oh, okay, one final signing, I promise, and will you go away?’ and she said ‘Yeah, yeah’. So I’ve got a texta,² I’ve held her head straight and I’ve written on her forehead ‘Hi Mum, I’ve tried drugs for the first time.’ (Triple J radio Sydney, 29.02.2000)

Indeed, the expression of surprise does not need to be restricted to situations where the speaker has just found out about an event *indirectly*. I can witness my friend parking in front of my house and exclaim:

(11) Alex has a new car!

And as seen with Comrie’s second World War example, absolute recency (i.e., temporal proximity to TU) is not a requirement for mirative effect either.

So how can mirative meaning be represented? An interesting proposal can be found in Rett & Murray (2013), where mirative meaning is analysed as involving a ‘recency restriction’, although not directly on the temporal location of the described event itself. More specifically, the authors propose that all mirative constructions require for their interpretation “a close temporal proximity between the speech event and the event of the speaker’s learning the at-issue content.” (Rett & Murray 2013: 453). Mirativity is analysed as an illocutionary mood. The proposition expressed by the sentence is thus added to the Common Ground. Mirativity is represented as an illocutionary operator called E-FORCE, following Rett (2011). This operator is defined as follows:

2. Australian English word for a thick felt-tip pen.

E-FORCE(p), when uttered by s_C , is appropriate in a context C if p is salient and true in w_C . When appropriate, E-FORCE(p) counts as an expression that s_C had not expected that p . (Rett 2011: 429)

Thus, a speaker s in context C including a world w_C utters a proposition p which is salient in w_C . The set of worlds E of the speaker's expectations is provided by the context C and so for a sentence to convey mirativity, p must not belong to E . The set of expectation E is also located at some salient time, namely a time before the time of p .

So the proposition expressed by a sentence can serve as an input to E-FORCE. Let's consider the case of PP sentences (not examined in Rett & Murray's paper), such as a "The Eagles have won!". The proposition p asserts that there is a perfect state that obtains at TU (see below for further detail). E-FORCE means that at a salient time $t < TU$, p was not in the expectation set of the speaker s . By this, it is not meant that the speaker expected the team to lose of course (a counter-expectation), but rather that they did not know what the outcome of the game was going to be. Moreover, the mirative effect only obtains for a short time after the speaker learns that p . However, as discussed above, the hot news PP can be used when the situation is no longer new to the speaker but is news to the hearer. In this respect, Rett & Murray's (2013: 464) recency constraint is particularly interesting as they formulate it as follows:

It seems like the recency restriction cannot be characterized simply in terms of immediate temporal precedence; rather, what counts as recent seems to vary from context to context. In particular, it seems as though a speaker can utter an exclamation like *Bill has a new car!* at different times to different interlocutors, as long as p is relevant and **as long as the time of utterance is the first opportunity the speaker has to express surprise to that interlocutor** that p . (my emphasis)

As emphasized in the above quote, the concept of recency is relative. The speaker may have several opportunities to re-tell a story where unexpected events occurred and may then each time convey linguistically an element of surprise –as long as it is the first opportunity to convey their surprise to a specific individual in each case. Such an explanation is useful to understand manipulation of tenses in narratives, and in particular of the PP as we will see in section 3. Given such constraint, Rett & Murray propose to characterize the recency restriction aspectually, via the relation between the speech event and the target state of the learning event. They borrow the concept of target state from Parsons (1990) who differentiates it from a result state, the former being temporary and the latter permanent. Parsons (1990: 235) illustrates by saying that "[i]f I throw a ball onto the roof, the target state of this event is the ball being on the roof, a state that may or may not last for a long time." By contrast, in Parson's view, the 'resultant state' that a perfect denotes is a permanent state (the ball will always have been on the roof at some time). For Rett and Murray, the target state of a learning event is temporary as it represents a change in the speaker's knowledge. With mirative expressions, the speaker did not expect that p and so the target state of the learning event e_l will not

last beyond the speaker’s surprise. In summary, a sentence conveying mirativity involves the following:

- the proposition p expressed is added to the Common Ground (CG);
- the speech event (e_s) is part of the target state of the learning event (e_l) which implies that p was not in the Expectation set (E) of the speaker at the time of the learning event:
 - $e_s \in (\text{TARGET}(e_l)) \rightarrow p \notin E_i^{\tau(e_l)}$

I take a sentence in the perfect to refer to a ‘perfect state’, following Nishiyama & Koenig (2010), who argue in favour of an analysis of the English perfect as a stativizer on the following grounds: (i) the perfect auxiliary *have* occurs in the present tense, which is incompatible with non-stative predicates in English; (ii) analyses that view the perfect as denoting a time-interval posterior to the eventuality denoted by the VP, for example Klein’s (1992, 2000) notion of Topic Time (TT), require something to assert in the said interval –an eventuality of some sort, in this case a state is a good candidate. Importantly, Nishiyama & Koenig do not restrict the meaning of the perfect state to a result state but rather view it as a variable whose specific meaning is the result of pragmatic enrichment in a given context. It is precisely this possibility of enrichment that makes their theory attractive and useful for the present analysis: it provides a basis for the characterization of the perfect state of hot news PPs, which is not addressed in these authors’ paper. Nishiyama & Koenig use Discourse Representation Theory (DRT) (Kamp & Reyle 1993; Kamp et al. 2011) to represent the meaning of perfect clauses, and a Discourse Representation Structure (DRS) for “Ken has broken his leg” is provided below (DRS 1). They propose that all perfect states need pragmatic enrichment but do not discuss the hot news type, just mentioning that McCawley assimilated it to an existential PP and so they treat it as such. Building on Nishiyama & Koenig’s (2010) definition of a perfect state, I propose to add to it a distinct pragmatic component defining hot news PPs by including their mirative illocutionary force, also building on Rett & Murray (2013).

DRS (a): “Ken has broken his leg” (Nishiyama & Koenig 2010: 108)

$\exists e \exists s[\text{Ken_break_his_leg}(e) \circ X(s) \circ \tau(e) < n \circ \tau(s) \circ n]$

The above provides the definition of a perfect state for all types of perfects. It states that a perfect sentence introduces an event e and a perfect state s . The run time of e is located prior to the time of utterance n , and the run time of s overlaps with n (for *present* perfects, otherwise s overlaps with a past or future reference time depending on tense). The perfect state is semantically introduced by the perfect form as a free variable X , which needs to be further defined by the hearer via pragmatic inferences. Such inferences are explained through Levinson’s (2000) I-principle. Thus, a speaker will use the maxim of minimization by not providing more information than necessary; the hearer will enrich the meaning of the sentence with a more informative proposition depending on the context, as illustrated in (12):

(12) Ken has broken his leg.

- a. Ken has broken his leg and Ken's leg is broken. (= p)
 - b. Ken has broken his leg and Ken is behind in his work. (= p')
- (Nishiyama and Koenig 2010: 622)

So let's turn to hot news meaning, considering (4) repeated here as (13):

(13) The Eagles have won!

- a. The Eagles have won and the Eagles are the winners. (=p)
- b. The Eagles have won and the target state of the speaker/hearer's learning event overlaps *n*, which implies that the perfect state denoted by the sentence was not in the expectation set of Speaker/Hearer at some salient earlier time. (=p')

In this way, recency effects can be explained by the illocutionary force of the PP in hot news uses: the PP sentence does not semantically require the event denoted by the VP to be recent, but the learning event needs to be. The target state of this learning event is what the perfect state pragmatically conveys. The fact that the perfect state was not in the expectation set of a speaker/hearer at an earlier time implies a change in informational status. It also highlights the event itself as bringing about a change of state –here from not having won to having won. Such increased saliency of the event may explain Schwenter's comment that hot news PPs are felt to present an event whose link with TU is more 'tenuous' (see further discussion in section 3). As I hope to show further below, the semantics of the PP lends itself very well to a re-interpretation of the perfect state (via pragmatic enrichment) as a target state of a learning event (thus conveying mirativity).

3. Mirativity and extensions in the use of the present perfect in Australian English narratives

In this section, I examine representative examples of non-standard uses of the PP in Australian English oral narratives and police media reports. Oral narratives were collected from radio chat show programs where listeners are solicited to contribute personal stories relevant to a given theme. Data collection specifically targeted stories containing non-canonical perfects (see examples below; see also Ritz & Engel 2008 for more details about the corpus). Police media reports are written narratives providing details of incidents such as theft, car crashes and so forth. They were collected online and reports containing non-standard PPs were selected (see Ritz 2010 for a description of the corpus).

Considering the representative examples discussed, I will argue that Australian English speakers use PPs in a non-canonical way to convey their surprise about the past occurrence of an event to a hearer who is presented with the story for the first time. This is possible due to the semantics of the canonical PP. More specifically, a canonical PP (i) denotes a post-state, filling a temporal gap between the event time

and the reference time; the said post-state can then be re-interpreted/pragmatically enriched to include another state, that of the speaker’s reaction of surprise; (ii) a canonical PP also has its reference time coinciding with n : when transposed into a past time-sphere n becomes a metaphorical TU or a local ‘story now’. Let’s use n' for such a local time, which is constantly updated in discourse just like the actual time of utterance is constantly moving forward. Some examples clearly show that the PP is being used as a narrative/historic present tense, in a way much similar to uses of the narrative present. Example (14), describing an episode in which the speaker was a school student and was impersonating his teacher who had gone out of the classroom for a while, illustrates such usage. The segment shows that the (progressive) present is used to depict a backgrounded state, while the PP depicts events that happened just before the current reference time:

- (14) I **looked**³ over my shoulder, *he’s standing* right behind me. He’s walked in, y’know the doors that separate the classrooms, he’s come in the one behind me, they all **started** laughing. (Triple J radio, Sydney, 28.02.2000)

It is clear in (14) that the story is about a past time as the SP is used first. I follow the principles that states include their reference times while events are included in them, after Kamp & Reyle (1993), Smith (1991), Kamp et al. (2011) and others. Thus, the narrative present describes a state in progress, ‘he’s standing’, that includes the reference time introduced by ‘I looked’. The two PP clauses ‘he’s walked in’ and ‘he’s come in’ describe an event that is viewed retrospectively from the perspective of this reference time. Thus the perfect state (“he’s in”) overlaps the reference time, which is a local ‘now’, or n' . The speaker also expresses his surprise at discovering that the teacher is behind him. He did not witness the teacher actually walking back into the classroom, only the result of him doing so. In this case the learning event is indeed recent in relation to n' . The speaker is thus using a hot news PP, except that the present is not a real present, just a metaphorical one. DRT enables us to represent temporal relations between eventualities in discourse, bringing together information from lexical and grammatical aspect as well as tense. Thus the SP –PP sequence in (14) has been represented by DRS (b) below, where s represents the perfect state of ‘he walk in’:

DRS (b): “*I looked over my shoulder. [...] He’s walked in.*”

$[t \ n \ n' \ e1 \ x \ e2 \ s \ | \ t \prec n, \ e1 \subseteq t, \ e1: \text{look}(I), \text{'he = the teacher'}(x), \ t = n', \ e2: \text{walk in}(x), \ X(s), \ e2 \prec n', \ s \circ n']$

The narrative present clause “he’s standing right behind me” has not been included so as to leave DRS (b) simple; as explained above, it is a progressive state that overlaps the time of the *looking* event, t . Because it is a narrative present, it signals that t needs to be re-interpreted as a local time of utterance n' , shown

3. In this section’s examples, verbs in the SP have been bolded, verbs in the present italicized and verbs in the non-standard PP underlined.

in DRS (b) as being the same as the time t in which the *looking* event is located ($t = n'$). The perfect state s of the *walking in* event overlaps n' .

The variable X can be further specified as follows:

- (i) s is the state of 'being in' at n' (perfect state);
- (ii) the target state of the speaker's learning event e_l overlaps n'

(ii) is intended to capture the fact that the speaker is conveying his surprise as he felt it *at the local time of the story, n'* . The speaker cannot be surprised at the time of utterance since the episode took place in his childhood –rather the listener is invited to regard the event 'walk in' as recent in relation to n' . Thus the speaker presents his discovery of the fact that the teacher had walked back into the room (the learning event e_l) as recent in relation to n' and the effects of e_l /his surprise (the target state) as obtaining at n' .

We wouldn't call the instances of the PP in (14) non-standard, they are very much on par with the use of the narrative present. The example shows that present tenses in general, including the *present* perfect, lend themselves to narrative uses. Both narrative present and PP can be used to convey a mirative effect. The narrative present may be used to convey the speaker's surprise at the current story time n' and invites the hearer to view the state as if it was going on right now, at TU. The PP conveys the speaker's surprise at n' , but this time regarding events that are viewed retrospectively, as having just occurred at n' .

Example (15) below is somewhat similar although the sequence SP – PP at the end of the first paragraph as well as the other uses of the PPs are not considered to be acceptable for speakers of standard English varieties –here the PP itself introduces n' and is directly following a SP. The story was part of a chat-show radio programme where listeners were invited to contribute similar stories following an incident where the singer Justin Timberlake had accidentally caused one of Janet Jackson's breasts to be exposed on the stage.

- (15) F. Oh it's a bit of fun park terror. I **went** down a [?] with my sled and **was** on the space probe and gone up in my singlet not thinking much more of it, so the ride **dropped** you know it **was** all fun and games **got** off the ride, and **noticed** a crowd of sort of feral old men standing around where the photo's come out.
 B. Oh yeah
 F. And I've walked down and they've put your whole photo on a screen, and there *I am*, frozen on the screen in all my glory and one of the kids⁴ has popped out. (Nova 93.7 FM radio Perth 7. 02. 2004)

The first PP, "where the photo's come out" establishes the narrative present tone, signaling to the hearer that the information is noteworthy (see e.g., Fleischmann 1989). At the time under discussion, the photo is on the screen and so the perfect state is current at n' . Next another perfect state overlaps an updated

n': after having walked down, the speaker **discovers** that a photo of herself has been put on the screen where her breast has popped out. So the speaker's breast ("one of the kids") is described as being in the state of having popped out at the time when the speaker found out; the speaker wasn't expecting to see this and was embarrassed. Here we follow the perspective of the speaker –the photo was there with her on it and her exposed breast before she found out. We follow her discovery step by step, her learning events, which are clearly temporally included in the perfect state of each event.

As shown in Engel & Ritz (2000) and Ritz & Engel (2008), we find further extensions in the uses of the PP in Australian English narratives. Example (16) illustrates a case where past events following temporal progression are described with clauses in the PP:

- (16) Kenny Rogers, big fan we all are, he's actually [...] being sued for US 2 million by one of his fans. What **happened** was, at a show late last year in America he **was** up on stage and he **was** being a little bit, y'know, frisky, and for - god knows why - he's thrown a frisbee off the stage while *he's performing* in Dallas Texas. What **happened** was, it was inside a big hotel and *there's* a lot of chandeliers kinda hanging around on the roof, the frisbee's hit a chandelier, broken part of it, and it's landed down on a guy *who's sitting* in the audience. (Triple J radio, Sydney, 28.02.2000)

In (16), the speaker is a radio presenter who has learned about the story indirectly (he wasn't there at the time). The SP makes it clear that the episode is in the past; the narrative present is used for states to depict the background –it introduces a metaphorical present time. This local 'now' is updated with the use of the PP reserved for the chain of events that are unexpected –starting with the singer throwing a frisbee off the stage. The speaker presumes that his listeners have not heard about the story and highlights the unexpected events. Considering the events that make the backbone of the narrative and are all presented in the PP, we have the following:

He's thrown the Frisbee off the stage (e1)
 The frisbee's hit a chandelier (e2)
 [the frisbee's] broken part of it (e3)
 It's landed on a guy (e4)
 $e1 < e2 < e3 < e4$

This is a clear narrative sequence, each of the events presented by the PP being related to the previous one by the discourse relation of NARRATION. As a result we infer a temporal sequence between the events themselves (see Ritz 2007, following Asher & Lascarides 2003) with no significant temporal gap between them (poststate and prestate overlap). Given this tight temporal connection between events, we get an effect of quick succession between them and the state denoted by the perfect is clearly temporary. The perfect state of each event is quickly replaced by another one, contributing to the sense of quick succession. Listeners learn about each event

via its perfect state and so the learning event e_l and its target state overlap the updated reference time. Again, viewing the reference time of each clause as being a metaphorical ‘now’ (n) that the perfect state of each event overlaps, the effect is much like that of a hot-news perfect. In sum, the speaker uses the PP to present unexpected events to his audience and conveys his sense of surprise.

Example (17) also uses PPs in sequences of clauses expressing temporal progression, this time to depict events that the speaker witnessed himself at the time. The story is about Dean, a listener who contributed a story to the chat show theme “unusual things people do for a living”. Dean feeds sharks in the Sydney aquarium and tells about an episode when he started his job and nearly got bitten by the biggest one:

- (17) And at the same time *there’s, it’s* School Holidays, *there’s* a thousand little kids stuck to the, the glass in the tunnel. And umm, I’ve ducked under and I’ve looked back and, and she’s gone past and I’ve gone, “Okay, that, that was all good.” Another one’s come down, I’ve thrown this fish out, and he’s started snapping on it, and *I’m like*, “Ohh, thank god for that.” And then I’ve looked at at the tunnel, at the kids, and all the little eyes *are* just like Christmas, and the, the tour guide in the tunnel’s just like lost it, *she’s just throwing* her hands in the air.

The PP clauses depict events that we feel again happened in quick succession, as we move from perfect state to perfect state. We infer the completion of each event and their temporal ordering via NARRATION. In other words, there is close temporal proximity between each perfect state and the event it follows and this state doesn’t last long - it is replaced by another one in the following clause. The effect is again very similar to that of a hot news PP. We follow the perspective of the speaker. It is not so much that the events themselves are unexpected but more that the speaker was learning how to feed sharks and did not know at the time what to expect –thus none of the events can be said to have been in his expectation set at the time, and this is what he is conveying. The episode was not recent in the speaker’s mind when he told the story on air, as by then he said that he was training others to do the job. So it is clear that the speaker is sharing his discoveries *at the time*, and the PP as a tense of the present is well suited to this.

Given that in many cases speakers tell a story where they witnessed the events directly as in (17) and even where they were the agent of the action presented in the PP themselves as in (10), the term ‘learning event’ is perhaps not entirely appropriate in this context. Aikhenvald (2004: 197) comments that “[w]hile the requirements of mirative markers differ from language to language (for instance, some require a lack of control on the part of the speaker), they all signify ‘a more or less spontaneous reaction to a new, salient, often surprising event.’” In view of this general characterization, I will instead talk about the *speaker’s reaction* to a salient and surprising event and note it e_{react} . When speakers use a PP in past narratives, e_{react} is presented as included in the perfect state of the event –it does not coincide with the event itself since the clause is not about this event but rather its results. In other words, the speaker’s reaction of surprise is presented as occurring

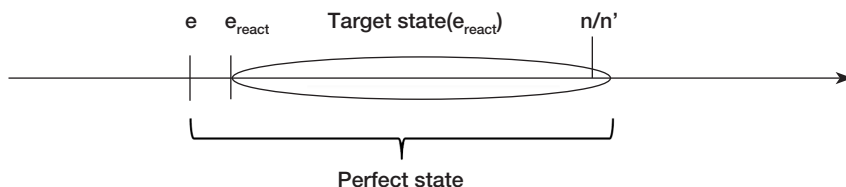


Figure 1. Hot news PP.

later than the event itself. The delay between the two events can mean that the speaker only found out about the event via its results or that it is *as if* they did: if the speaker performed the actions themselves, the effect of surprise conveyed can be paraphrased as “I did not expect I would do X but I have done X!”.

Figure 1 is a diagrammatic representation of the above analysis of hot news PPs used either as standard PPs or in a narrative context (hence the choice of *n* or a local *n'*). It shows that the target state of the event of the speaker’s surprise/reaction, *e_{react}*, is included in the perfect state of the event denoted by the VP. As a result, the pragmatic interpretation of the perfect state is one where mirative meaning is prominent. Viewing such meaning as a target state can also account for the fact that hot news PPs are well suited to be used in narrative contexts as target states are temporary. As we have seen, in sequences of PP clauses related by NARRATION each target state is replaced by another target state with an impression of quick succession of the events described.

Turning now to another extension of PP usage in Australian English police media reports, where the PP is combined with definite past time adverbials such as specific dates and/or precise times, I suggest that vivid narrative usage of the PP has paved the way for such usage. It is very likely that the authors of these reports also use the non-standard PP when telling stories orally. The difference between written reports and oral narratives is that the former is a formal genre and as a result, the PP may also sound ‘formal’ (see Cox 2005, for a discussion of a similar usage by New Zealand police officers). As discussed in Ritz (2010), modification of the Event time with a past adverbial occurs frequently in written police media reports. In this genre, the PP is used alongside the PS with no instances of historic/narrative present –as can be expected in written genres, the narrative present being a feature of spoken discourse. Reports are written as narratives, and the PP is used in them to describe salient events, perhaps to make them appear more vivid to the reader as police are often appealing to potential witnesses. As discussed in Ritz (2010), events are also recent and noteworthy since they are typically road accidents or criminal offences. It is fair to say that such events are unexpected in the sense that they break some norm: we don’t expect a car to crash, and we don’t expect to be threatened with a gun.⁵

5. Of course, one could argue that police officers do in fact expect to deal with these types of events. Nonetheless, they are generally not the norm, and are referred to as ‘accidents’ for this reason. They are presented to an audience, for whom these events are not expected.

Example (18) illustrates uses of the PP both in narrative sequence and with a definite past time adverbial.

- (18) It will be alleged that *on October 20, 2005* the woman has stolen the man’s vehicle and has then been involved in a traffic crash in the car park of the Phoenix Shopping Centre in Spearwood. The vehicle has then crashed into another vehicle, with the woman fleeing the scene on foot. (Ros Weatherall, WA Police Media, 4.11.2005)

Ritz (2010: 3414) argues that when the PP is combined with a past adverbial, “the consequences/results of the event are now understood to be the consequences of the event having occurred at a specific past time, and they are relevant to now.” The genre, of course, explains why the time of the event is relevant: it is important for such reports to provide very specific information about incidents described. In terms of the analysis of hot news perfects proposed in the present paper, both the perfect state and target state of the reaction event overlap the actual time of utterance. While specification of two times flouts Grice’s maxim of quantity (along the lines of Klein’s (1992) argument that two definite times are infelicitous) hearers make an inference as a result: while the event time is clearly located in the past, its effects are relevant at utterance time. What is salient here, I have argued, is the target state –the pragmatic meaning of the perfect state. Given that the reaction event follows the event denoted by the VP and is not located in time, one could argue that there is no pragmatic clash *per se*: the police officer who wrote the report is signaling that the stealing event that occurred on October 20, 2005 is to be regarded as unexpected. The events that follow, being involved in a traffic crash and then crashing into a car, are also described with the PP. Unlike with oral narratives, it is clear that the officer is not re-setting a metaphorical ‘now’ here, but rather continues to highlight the fact that the events following the stealing are also salient at utterance time. Figure 2 diagrams the relations between events, the reaction event and the time of utterance.

Diagram 2 shows that each event, although presented in the PP, is included in its reference time in order to account both for the combination with definite past time adverbial of e_1 and temporal progression between $e_1 - e_3$. Each event is also presented as being salient by the writer and this has been represented as it being followed by a reaction event included in the perfect state of each event denoted

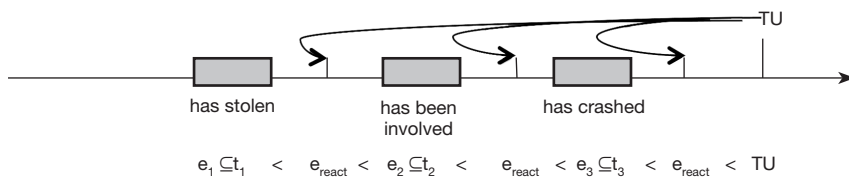


Figure 2. Diagrammatic representation of events in relation to TU in (18).

by the VP. Each reaction event is followed by a target state that overlaps the time of utterance.

While I have suggested that a reaction event is also involved when police officers report incidents, it could be argued that by the time of writing, its target state is no longer current. Nonetheless, each of the reported incidents is indeed recent and I suggest that the reader interprets the mirative effect as they would in oral narratives. As a result, the use of the PP is useful in attracting attention to specific parts of the reports.

In summary, I argue that non canonical uses of the PP in both oral narratives and written media reports in Australian English are still very much a pragmatic phenomenon arising out of the fact that some speakers/writers are manipulating the meaning of this tense to draw the attention of a hearer/reader to particular events that are considered to be salient. The hot news PP is particularly well suited for this as it is normally used to signal that an event was not in the Expectation set of the speaker at a prior time. Speakers are thus flagging their surprise reaction and drawing their interlocutors' attention to something that is unexpected, either at time of utterance or at a metaphorical, local 'now'.

The perfect is thus still considered semantically to denote a perfect state, as defined in Nishiyama & Koenig (2010):

$$\exists e \exists s [(e) \circ X(s) \circ \tau (e) < n \circ \tau (s) \circ n]$$

Pragmatically, adapting and extending Rett and Murray's analysis of mirative meaning, $X(s)$ is enriched as follows:

- $s =$ perfect state, $e =$ event denoted by VP, $e_{react} =$ reaction of surprise event and $s' = TARGET(e_{react})$
- $e < e_{react} \circ e_{react} < n/n'$
- introduce s' to the Common Ground, where:
 - $\tau (s') \subseteq \tau (s) \circ \tau (s') \circ n/n'$
 - $\tau (s') \circ n/n' \rightarrow s \notin E_i \tau (e_{react})$

Thus the target state of the reaction of surprise event follows the event denoted by the VP and its target state overlaps the local or actual time of utterance, n/n' . We understand that the perfect state of the event denoted by the VP was not in the expectation set E of the speaker/writer at a time i , prior to the reaction event. In the case of police reports, the news are recent and thus it is the first opportunity for the writers to share the information with the public.

The above is intended to capture hot news meaning generally, as well as its manipulation by speakers/writers in discourse. In canonical uses of the perfect, the target state overlaps TU. In non-canonical uses explored here, there are two possibilities corresponding to what I consider to be two stages of grammaticalization of the PP: (i) the target state overlaps a local, metaphorical 'now' and the speaker conveys their reaction towards key events in a narrative; (ii) the target state overlaps TU, just as in canonical uses, however the PP is either modified by a past adverbial

or part of a past context where temporal progression can be expressed. It seems that in this latter case the speaker/writer wants to highlight salient events at TU. This is clear in police media reports where the information provided is particularly relevant at time of writing. The case of (ii) seems to be more advanced than that of (i) since no narrative present is used and temporal adverbials are frequent.

As we saw in section 2, Schwenter (1994) argued that with hot news PP, the link between the event and TU is more ‘tenuous’. This can be explained by the fact that the state that is most relevant at TU is not the perfect state itself but rather the target state of another event, the reaction of surprise of the speaker. While I have presented this target state as being included in, or equal to, the perfect state, its pragmatic status is more prominent at TU. As a result, the event denoted by the VP is itself in some sense ‘detached’ from TU. Since this event also signals a change in the information state of the hearer, it is also salient. Consequently, it shares characteristics with perfective past tenses. Similarly, the present analysis proposes an answer to Glasbey’s (2005) question as to why hot news perfects may be allowed even when the subject of the sentence is no longer alive (see section 2): the target state of the reaction event at TU is what the sentence is pragmatically about, and so the perfect state applied to the deceased individual is backgrounded.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, I have proposed here an analysis of the hot news PP that views it on par with other perfects as denoting a perfect state following Nishiyama & Koenig’s (2010) proposal. Pragmatically, I have analysed the hot news perfect as a marker of mirativity and I have built on Rett & Murray’s (2013) analysis of mirative meaning, adapting it to perfects. I have argued that what is prominent at TU is not so much the perfect state itself but rather the target state of another event, the speaker’s reaction of surprise. I have represented this event as being included in the perfect state of the event denoted by the VP, and so as being distinct from the latter. I have shown how this meaning of the PP can be manipulated by speakers to give rise to non-canonical uses of the PP in some Australian English narratives and police media reports. While change of tense itself can be viewed as a mechanism to highlight important events in a narrative (see e.g., Fleischmann 1989, about the narrative present in past narratives), the data analysed here shows that there is a place for introducing another tense of the present, the PP, especially in its hot news meaning. In terms of recency, the speaker’s reaction to an event having occurred is temporally close to TU, but in oral narratives I have analysed it as being close to a metaphorical TU, the local story ‘now’. Given that the SP is the unmarked tense in narratives, a mirative effect couldn’t be brought about by use of this tense alone (other indicators are needed such as intonation or additional expressions conveying surprise). And given that the narrative present describes an eventuality as occurring at the reference time, it produces a different effect than the narrative PP, arguably less saliently one of surprise as this tense does not introduce a post-state or temporal gap that can be reinterpreted as the post-state of a learning event.

While it appears that in the Australian English data examined here the surprise effect plays an important role, such pragmatic meaning may eventually become bleached and replaced by a sense that the event is salient in that it plays an important role to the unfolding of a story. Eventually, as in the cases of French or German, the PP form may become a general past tense. It is interesting that in such cases, as explained by Schaden (2008), hot news cannot be conveyed by another form such as a SP tense. Although more work is required to examine the present proposal in the context of such languages, the present analysis may also contribute to an explanation. If these languages have taken a similar path with respect to the evolution of perfects (see Ritz, 2007, for parallels between Old French and Australian English narratives) then hot news/mirativity is the primary meaning through which the PP has evolved to become a past tense. It is therefore not surprising if such meaning continues to be expressed by the PP form. Further work could explore the importance of hot news meaning in the historical development of perfects in these languages.

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