The verbal realizations of the perfect aspect in Canadian English

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Abstract

The perfect aspect associated with the present conveys the idea that a situation started or occurred in the past and continues or has effects in the present (universal perfect – UP x existential perfect – EP). This study aimed to investigate the morphological realizations of UP and EP associated with the present in Canadian English, and comparatively analyze these realizations. An experimental study was developed including a cloze test and a decision task. The hypotheses were that, apart from the Present Perfect, Canadian English uses (i) other morphological forms to express UP and EP associated with the present, and (ii) these forms are different for each type of perfect. These hypotheses were supported, as the results showed that, apart from Present Perfect, different forms are used for UP and EP.

Keywords: aspect; perfect; morphological realization; Canadian English.

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As realizações verbais do aspecto *perfect* no inglês canadense

Resumo

O aspecto *perfect* associado ao presente expressa a ideia de que uma situação começou ou ocorreu no passado e continua ou apresenta efeitos no presente (*perfect* universal – PU x *perfect* existencial – PE). Este estudo buscou investigar as realizações morfológicas de PU e PE associados ao presente no inglês canadense e analisar comparativamente essas realizações. Desenvolveu-se um estudo experimental com um teste de preenchimento de lacunas e um de decisão. As hipóteses concernentes às formas morfológicas para expressar o PU e o PE associados ao presente no inglês canadense foram que, além do *Present Perfect*, (i) há outras formas morfológicas e (ii) essas formas morfológicas são diferentes. Elas não foram refutadas, uma vez que os resultados mostraram que, com exceção do *Present Perfect*, diferentes formas verbais são usadas para PU e PE.

Palavras-chave: aspecto; *perfect*; realização morfológica; inglês canadense.

Introduction

Assuming that mental representation can be analyzed considering its different structures and properties, our goal is to investigate the category of aspect, observing more specifically the perfect aspect. According to Comrie (1976), the category of aspect shows information about the internal temporal constitution of a situation. Perfect aspect may be described as an aspect that highlights a time span between event time and reference time. Although it is not consensual that perfect is considered a type of aspect, this study is based on this classification, considering it a grammatical aspect that can be morpho-syntactically realized and to be associated with different verbal tenses (Comrie, 1976).

Drawing on the different proposals for types of perfect found in the literature (Comrie, 1976; Pancheva, 2003), this research follows the classification in two types (McCawley, 1981; Iatridou; Anagnostopoulou; Izvorski, 2003), namely: universal perfect (UP) and existential perfect (EP). The main difference between the two types would be that, for UP, event time extends until reference time, whereas for EP event time finishes before reference time, even if there is a repercussion of the event in this second moment. Considering all data previously presented in the literature, it can be observed that there seems to be some similarity in the morphological choices to express UP on one side, and EP on the other, in different languages, which may support the two-fold classification (Nespoli, 2018). The same can be said about the choice of adverbs/adverbial expressions, which, many times, seem to directly contribute to the expression of perfect (Pancheva, 2003), and which are of two different types: those in the service of the expression of UP and those in the service of the expression of EP.

Normative grammars of English indicate that the periphrasis "have" (in present tense) + participle (Present Perfect) is the morphological way to express perfect aspect. Although it serves this purpose, studies analyzing British and American English (the most widely investigated varieties), as Lopes (2016), Jesus (2016) and Machado and Martins (2020), indicate that there are other productive choices to express this aspectual information.

In a variationist analysis of Canadian English (from Ontario), Franco and Tagliamonte (2022) show that the use of Present Perfect and Past Simple, when in a context with an adverb of indefinite time ("since", "already", "yet", "ever" and "recently"), are in a stable variation, expressing the same information. In addition to these verbal forms which can be also observed in other varieties of English, Yerastov (2016) shows that there is wide use of the structure called Transitive Be Perfect [be + participle + NP] with participles "done", "finished" and "started" (e.g. "I'm done the dishes", "I'm finished the homework" and "I'm started the gym classes") in Canada, which can be interpreted as a morphological expression of EP.

Despite the abovementioned studies, no systematic research on the expression of the perfect aspect in Canadian English could be found in the literature. Considering this, the main goals of this research are (i) to investigate the forms of morphological realization of UP and EP in Canadian English, when associated with present tense; (ii) to comparatively analyze the realizations of both types of perfect in order to bring evidence to support the categorization proposed by Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Izvorski (2003). By doing so, we aim to contribute to the investigation of the linguistic representation of the perfect aspect.

Based on Lopes (2016), Jesus (2016) and Machado and Martins (2020)'s findings about British and American English, two hypotheses have been formulated for this study. The first is that, apart from the Present Perfect, there are other morphological forms to express both types of perfect associated with present tense in Canadian English. The second is that, apart from the Present Perfect, the morphological realizations of UP and EP associated with present tense in Canadian English are different. In order to test these hypotheses, an experimental study with two linguistic tests, applied to native speakers of Canadian English, was developed for this study.

In the next section of this article, we provide the theoretical background for this study. After that, we present the methodological design of this research. In the subsequent section, we describe the results of the experiments described in the previous section. Later, we discuss the results obtained in the light of our theoretical background. Then, we will present our final remarks.

Theoretical background

The perfect aspect

Aspect is defined by Comrie (1976) to look at the internal temporal constitution of a situation, thus, not having a deictic function, a characteristic of the category of tense. The aspectual value of a sentence may be expressed by verbal morphology, characterizing it as a grammatical aspect, such as the perfect aspect. Comrie (1976) establishes that there are two main grammatical aspects in languages: perfective aspect, when we observe the situation as a whole; and imperfective aspect, when we emphasize the different internal phases that compose the situation.

As previously said, one other type of aspect which may be morpho-syntactically conveyed in a sentence together with the perfective or the imperfective aspect is the perfect, object of study in this research. Comrie (1976) states that perfect is an aspect different from the others in that "it expresses a relation between two time-points, on the one hand the time of the state resulting from a prior situation, and on the other the time of that prior situation" (Comrie, 1976, p. 52).

There are different proposals to classify the types of perfect in the literature, considering it has four types (Comrie, 1976) or three (Pancheva, 2003), for example. Proposing a leaner, two-fold classification, McCawley (1981) and Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Izvorski (2003) divide the perfect aspect in universal perfect (UP) and existential perfect (EP), classification adopted for this research. According to the authors, who define these types of perfect when associated with the present, UP indicates a situation which holds throughout an interval that has started in the past and stretches up to the present, whilst EP indicates a situation which was finished in the past and still shows some effects in the present. Both types can be observed, respectively, in the examples below:

1.   Maria has lived in Brazil since 2010.

2.   I have (already) read this book.

In (1), the situation expressed by the verb "to live" started at some point in the past and still holds true at the reference time, which coincides with the utterance time. While in (2), the situation expressed by the verb "to read" happened at least once, having started and finished in the past, but its effect still holds at the reference time, which also coincides with the utterance time (the book was read).

The realization of perfect in different languages

Considering data previously presented in the literature, we can observe that there seems to be some similarities in relation to the verbal morphologies chosen to express UP on one hand and EP on the other in different languages, even those descending from distinct genera, such as those from the Romance and Germanic ones, which can support the classification of this aspect in two types (Nespoli; Martins, 2018; Nespoli, 2018). The same happens with the choice of adverbs which, most times, seem to contribute directly to the expression of the perfect aspect, as indicated by Pancheva (2003). Observing the relation between adverbial expressions and the expression of perfect, Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Izvorski (2003) suggest that there are adverbs and adverbial expressions which are relevant to the syntactic representation of perfect, to which the authors referred as adverbs of perfect level. Nespoli (2018) describes examples of adverbs/adverbial expressions that express UP, such as "since X time" and "lately", and that express EP, such as "already" and "not yet". The examples presented in (3) and (4) bellow exemplify a morphology (in bold) and an adverb/adverbial expression (in italic) used to express UP and EP associated to the present tense, respectively, in Portuguese (a) and Italian (b), Romance languages, and in English (c) and German (d), Germanic languages[3].

3a.   Ana **estuda** português *desde 2020*.

3b.   Ana **studia** portoghese *dal 2020*.

3c.   Ana **studies** Portuguese *since 2020*.

3d.   Ana **lernt** *seit 2020* Portugiesisch.

4a.   Ana *já* **visitou** o Brasil.

4b.   Ana **ha** *già* **visitato** il Brasile.

4c.   Ana **has** *already* **visited** Brazil.

4d.   Ana **hat** Brasilien *schon* **besucht**.

Analyzing the perfect aspect associated with the present, Lopes (2016) observes that Brazilian Portuguese seems to use the periphrases "*ter* (to have) in the present tense + participle" and "*estar* (to be) in the present tense + gerund" and the Present Simple

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3 The morphologies used in the examples (3) and (4) are not the only ones employed to convey UP and EP, respectively, associated to the present tense. However, those verbal forms used to express UP in (3) could not be used to convey EP in (4) and some of the verbal forms used to express EP in (4) could not be used to convey UP in (3), such as those in (4a), (4b) and (4d).

to express UP, as well other items in the sentence, like the use of adverbs/adverbial expressions. On the other hand, to express EP, this language seems to use the Past Simple with other items in the sentence, as adverbials. Also analyzing British English, the author observes that this language seems to express UP through the use of the Present Perfect, Present Perfect Continuous and the periphrasis "*to be* in the present + gerund", as well other items in the sentence, like the use of adverbs/adverbial expressions. To express EP, this language seems to use the Present Perfect and Past Simple with added information, like the use of adverbs/adverbial expressions.

Researching about the perfect aspect associated with the present in American English, Jesus (2016) finds the use of Present Perfect, Present Continuous and Present Simple to express UP. Also studying American English, Machado and Martins (2020) find the use of Present Perfect (with or without the phonetic expression of the auxiliary "have") and Past Simple to express EP, when associated with the present.

Canadian English

In a variationist study, Franco and Tagliamonte (2022) investigate the alternance between Present Perfect and Past Simple in the context of informal speech, analyzing spoken data from Ontario. The results found indicate that the use of the periphrasis "have + participle" and the Past Simple, when in a context set by adverbs of indefinite time ("since", "already", "yet", "ever" and "recently"), are in a stable variation, conveying the same information. They also notice that, in situations where there seems to be evidence of a change in course, this change does not follow the predictions in the literature, which indicate an increase in frequency of the use of "have + participle". On the contrary, their data show an increase in frequency with the Past Simple form.

In addition to these two verbal forms, previously observed in other varieties of English, Canadian English seems to use the structure [be + participle + NP], known as Transitive Be Perfect, specifically with verbs "do", "finish" and "start". Yerastov (2012; 2016) investigates its use in Canadian English and finds out that it is proportionately distributed across the country. The author suggests that the use of Transitive Be Perfect may indicate a resultative interpretation, with the result of the event persisting in the moment of reference (Yerastov, 2016, p. 171-172).

In light of the given information, it is relevant to understand which morphological forms are used by native speakers of Canadian English to express UP and EP and if the structure [be + participle + NP] is used to express the perfect aspect, more specifically, considering its resultative interpretation, EP.

Syntactic representation

The observation of how different languages morpho-syntactically express a feature may be useful to verify or make assumptions related to the mental representation of the sentences. In one important study for cartographic studies, Cinque (1999) maps the Middlefield phrases and based on the order of adverbs, for example, proposes a hierarchy of functional heads, among which, different types of aspect. Tescari Neto (2021), considering the "One Feature One Head" Principle (Kayne, 2005), states that this order of categories is actually a hierarchy of features, each one identified with one position (Tescari Neto, 2021, p.49).

In relation to the syntactic representation of the perfect aspect, observing the characteristics that differentiate UP from EP, Nespoli and Martins (2018) propose the split of the single projection of perfect (Alexiadou; Rathert; Von Stechow, 2003), taking into consideration the distinct verbal forms and the type of adverbs used to express UP and EP in Brazilian Portuguese and in Italian. Assuming the split projection, Nespoli (2018) proposes the existence of one UperfP node and one EperfP node, related to UP and EP, respectively. In order to make that proposal, the author considers, supported by studies as Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou and Izvorski (2003), that the core differentiation between UP and EP would be the opposed specification of the features [±bounded] in the Asp head and the features [±continuative] in the Uperf head, both being characterized by the feature [+resultative] in the Eperf head (Nespoli, 2018, p. 156).

Materials and Methods

In order to investigate how native speakers of Canadian English morphologically realize UP and EP, an experimental study was conducted[4], consisting of two types of linguistic tasks: one cloze test and one decision task. Both tasks were available online, assigned to the participants through a link.

The linguistic experiments

The cloze test was designed to verify the most used morphological options to realize each type of perfect. To achieve this, the participants were presented with four small texts with blanks to be filled with the verbs and extra information (as negation or adverbials) given in brackets for each blank. The task consisted in reading the texts and filling in the blanks, necessarily using the verbs and information given, modifying them as wanted in order to sound as natural as possible to the speaker. Each text included target and distractors,

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4 This study has been analyzed and accepted by the Committee for Ethics in Research from the Institute of Studies in Collective Health of Federal University of Rio de Janeiro through the process number 69293123.2.0000.5286.

with a total of 10 target blanks and 20 distractors. The example in (3) shows one of the texts from the task, in which blank number [2] is a target for UP and blank number [5] is a target for EP. All target sentences for both types of perfect can be seen in Table 1.

3. "I [1] _____ (move) here in 2008 because of a job offer as a photojournalist. Yeah, I [2] _____ (take) pictures here for 15 years already. I'm in love with this city. When people [3] _____ (ask) me about suggestions of places to visit, I [4] _____ (give/ always) them the same answer. I think everyone should come here. That's normal, my friends think the same when I say I [5] _____ (go/ never) to their favorite city. My passion for this city started right away. On the first day I [6] _____ (decide) to walk around a little bit and [7] _____ (think): "This is the best city in the world!".

Table 1. Target sentences in Task 1

Type of perfect	Target sentences
UP	- I miss the food, which is much more flavorful than anything _____ (eat) lately. - (...) so I _____ (drive/ not) since I got here. - I _____ (write) them every day for the past three weeks (...) - (...) from the moment we woke up, I _____ (do) my best to convince him to do something by himself. - Yeah, I _____ (take) pictures here for 15 years already.
EP	- I _____ (finish/ already) the book, mom. - Well, ok. Let me just dry my hands because I _____ (do) the dishes… - my friends think the same when I say I _____ (go/ never) to their favorite city. - I _____ (break) the window and the glass is cracked. - The janitor said he knows someone, so I _____ (give/ just) him my number!

Source: Self elaboration

In order to avoid confusion between the interpretation of a verb in the Past Simple or in the Present Perfect without the auxiliary "have", we chose to use only irregular verbs with different morphologies in the Past Simple and in the Past Participle (such as, respectively, "went" and "gone") in the target sentences, except for the verbs "to start"[5] and "to finish" which, along with the verb "to do", were included in the test for being considered the most accepted verbs used in the Transitive Be Perfect. The methodological choice for this type of irregular verb was adopted in Machado (2022) and guided the development of the cloze test and the decision task, described in the next paragraph.

The decision task was designed to identify all the options used in the language to express UP and EP. To do so, the participants received sets of sentences, each one with a brief context to make the aspectual information clear, followed by different options to be

5 The verb "to start" was only used in a target stimulus of the decision task.

selected in case they can fit the context previously given. The task consisted in reading the context and selecting one or more sentences according to the information in the context. The given options consisted of all the morphological forms that seem to be used in other varieties of English to express the perfect aspect (Iatridou; Anagnostopoulou; Izvorski, 2003; Lopes, 2016; Jesus, 2016; Machado; Martins, 2020), the structure [be + participle + NP], which seems to be productive in Canadian English (Yerastov, 2012, 2016), as well as distracting options. By doing so, it was possible to investigate which morphologies can convey UP, which ones can convey EP, which ones can convey both types, and if Transitive Be Perfect can convey EP in this language. The task consisted of 8 targets and 16 distractors. In Table 2, we can see all the target contexts and sets of sentences for UP and EP[6].

Table 2. Target stimuli in Task 2

Type of perfect	Target stimuli
UP	- Considering that my parents are pilots and it's holiday season… ( ) They've flown a lot. ( ) They're flown a lot. ( ) They've been flying a lot. ( ) They're flying a lot. ( ) They fly a lot. ( )They flown a lot. - Considering that I started this job in 2013… ( ) I'm done it for 10 years. ( ) I've been doing it for 10 years. ( ) I'm doing it for 10 years. ( ) I've done it for 10 years. ( ) I do it for 10 years. ( ) I done it for 10 years. - Considering that I entered a writing class 3 months ago… ( ) I've written many essays lately. ( ) I'm written many essays lately. ( ) I've been writing many essays lately. ( ) I'm writing many essays lately. ( ) I write many essays lately. ( ) I written many essays lately. - Considering that Jack and Emma became vegetarian last year… ( ) They've eaten vegetarian meals since then. ( ) They're eaten vegetarian meals since then. ( ) They've been eating vegetarian meals since then. ( ) They're eating vegetarian meals since then. ( ) They eat vegetarian meals since then. ( ) They eaten vegetarian meals since then.

6 The order of the sentences for each context were pseudorandomized so that the verbal forms were not exhibited in the same order.

EP	- Considering they're babies…
	( ) They've never drunk coffee. ( ) They're never drunk coffee. ( ) They've never been drinking coffee. ( ) They're never drinking coffee. ( ) They never drank coffee. ( ) They never drunk coffee.
	- Considering that my homework is ready…
	( ) I've done the homework. ( ) I'm done the homework. ( ) I've been doing the homework. ( ) I'm doing the homework. ( ) I did the homework. ( ) I done the homework.
	- Considering that there are 3 complete pages in this essay…
	( ) I've started the paper. ( ) I'm started the paper. ( ) I've been starting the paper. ( ) I'm starting the paper. ( ) I started the paper. ( ) I start the paper.
	- Considering that there's a wonderful painting of mine in this exhibition…
	( ) I've just finished my masterpiece! ( ) I'm just finished my masterpiece! ( ) I've just been finishing my masterpiece! ( ) I'm just finishing my masterpiece! ( ) I just finish my masterpiece! ( ) I just finished my masterpiece!

Source: Self elaboration

Participants

To take part in the study, the participants had to be native speakers of Canadian English, having been immersed in the language before the age of 15, and should be adults at the time of the study. All the personal data was verified by a questionnaire given before the tasks[7].

After checking the criteria for the participants, the answers of one person had to be excluded because they did not fit the criteria for minimal age of immersion in the language. Besides that, observing the responses, we noticed deviations from what had been prompted by the instructions, which could have an impact on the results. For that reason, we decided to exclude the responses of any participants who had more than one deviation on target sentences and/or more than three deviations in distractor sentences.[8] The criteria for defining what would be considered a deviation were: (i) not using the main verb in a periphrasis; and (ii) not using any verb. In (4) and (5) we have real examples of both criteria, respectively.

4.   "(…) so I ____ (drive/ not) since I got here." Answer: Haven't

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7 The participants also had to agree to a Free and Informed Consent Term, in which they could find all the information concerning their rights during this research.

8 The criteria of exclusion was established based on the cloze test because there was only one unexpected response in the second task, and it concerned only one stimulus, as will be described in section 4.2.

5. "He is bored and _____ (want) to play chess." Answer: He

After all final checks, Task 1 had 12 responses, and Task 2 had 11. All participants were native speakers ranging in age from 19 to 61 years old, with an average of 36.2 years old for Task 1 and 32.3 years old for Task 2. From the 12 participants in Task 1, 8 were born in Ontario, 1 in British Columbia, 1 in Alberta, 1 in Brazil and 1 in Serbia. From the 11 participants in Task 2, 6 were from Ontario, 1 from Manitoba, 1 from British Columbia, 1 from Alberta, 1 from the USA and 1 from Serbia.

Results

Task 1: Cloze test

As mentioned previously, there were 12 valid responses for the first task, in which participants had to fill in the blanks using the information given. On Table 3, we can find all the different verbal forms used in target blanks for UP (5 target blanks) and EP (5 target blanks)[9]:

Table 3. All verbal forms used in target blanks in Task 1

UP	EP
Present Simple Present Perfect Present Perfect with some variation (main verb in the Past Simple; no use of auxiliary) Present Perfect Continuous <u>Past Simple</u> *Ungrammatical forms*	Past Simple Present Perfect Transitive Be Perfect <u>Modal + verb</u> <u>Future Conditional</u> <u>Present Simple</u> <u>Present Continuous</u> <u>Past Continuous</u> *Ungrammatical forms*

Source: Self elaboration

In order to understand what could have prompted these unexpected forms, we analyzed each context for the sentences with target blanks and realized that some sentences allowed different interpretations, which resulted in verbal forms that could not be related to the perfect aspect. In (6) we can see one example of a target sentence for UP, and in (7), one for EP.

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9 The results showed morphological choices that did not fit the information conveyed by perfect aspect, being either UP or EP. These verbal forms are underlined in Table 3.

6. "(...) from the moment we woke up, I [2] ____ (do) my best to convince him to do something by himself."

Example of an answer with a different reading: *did*

7. "-Well, ok. Let me just dry my hands because I [6]____ (do) the dishes..."

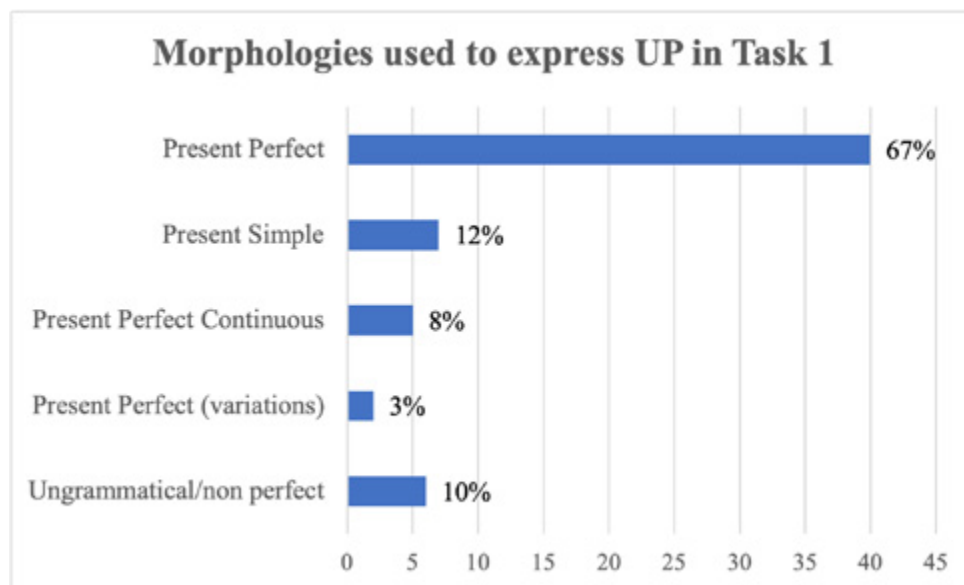Example of an answer with a different reading: *am doing*

To be able to analyze the morphologies used to express UP and EP, we excluded the verbal forms employed by the participants which expressed other aspectual information, used due to a different reading of the sentences. The results can be found in Table 4. The percentages of use for each verbal form employed to express UP can be seen in Chart 1, and those for EP, in Chart 2.

Table 4. Morphologies used to express UP and EP in Task 1

| UP	EP
Present Simple Present Perfect Present Perfect with some variation (main verb in the Past Simple; no use of auxiliary) Present Perfect Continuous	Past Simple Present Perfect Transitive Be Perfect

Source: Self elaboration

Chart 1. Morphologies used to express UP in Task 1

Morphologies used to express UP in Task 1

- Present Perfect — 67%
- Present Simple — 12%
- Present Perfect Continuous — 8%
- Present Perfect (variations) — 3%
- Ungrammatical/non perfect — 10%

Source: Self elaboration

Chart 2. Morphologies used to express EP in Task 1

Morphologies used to express EP in Task 1

- Past Simple — 63%
- Present Perfect — 12%
- Transitive Be Perfect — 2%
- Ungrammatical/non perfect — 23%
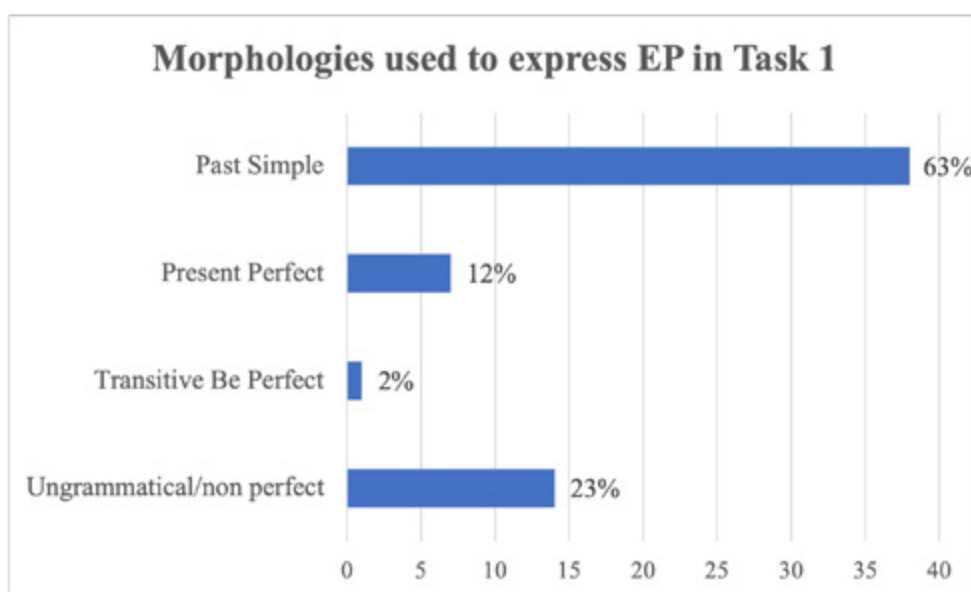
Source: Self elaboration

Task 2: Decision task

The second task of the experiment consisted of a decision task and had 11 responses. On Table 5, we can find all the different verbal forms selected to complete the previous context for UP (4 target contexts) and EP (4 target contexts)[10]:

Table 5. Morphologies used in target sentences in Task 2

UP	EP
Present Perfect Continuous Present Perfect Present Continuous Present Simple	Present Perfect Past Simple Transitive Be Perfect <u>Future</u>

Source: Self elaboration

All the verbal forms used in the sentences chosen by the participants to express the context of perfect aspect were according to our expectations, except the choice of one future sentence, which clearly did not express the idea given, as seen below (10).

10. Considering that my homework is ready...

( ) I'm done the homework.

(X) I'll do the homework.

( ) I did the homework.

( ) I've been doing the homework.

( ) I've done the homework.

( ) I done the homework.

We also analyzed all the choices made by this participant, and all of them were properly related to what the task was about. Therefore, we considered that the use of the future in this one sentence was due to lack of attention. As it did not convey the perfect aspect, the Simple Future used in the sentence was not considered one morphology used to express EP, as seen in Table 4. The percentages of use for each verbal form in the sentences chosen to express UP can be seen in Chart 3, and those for EP, in Chart 4.

**Table 6.** Morphologies used to express UP and EP in Task 2

UP	EP

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10 The results showed one morphological choice that did not fit the information conveyed by perfect aspect, being either UP or EP. This verbal form is underlined in Table 5.

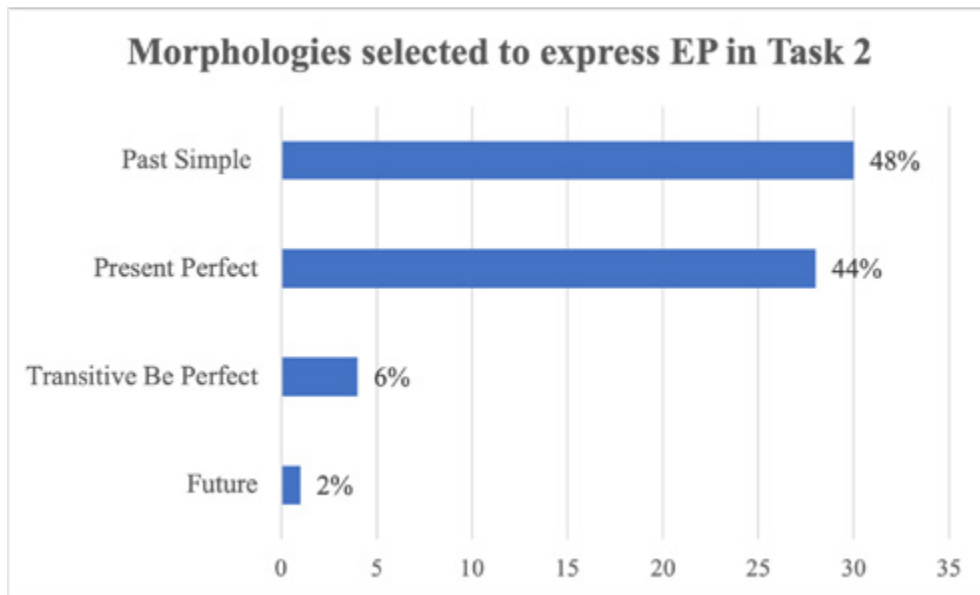| Present Perfect Continuous Present Perfect Present Continuous Present Simple	Present Perfect Past Simple Transitive Be Perfect

Source: Self elaboration

Chart 3. Morphologies selected to express UP in Task 2
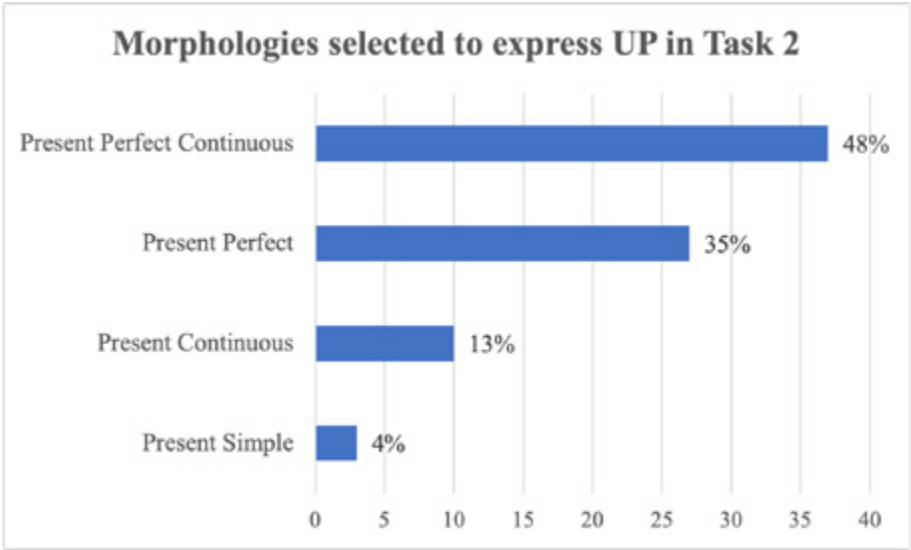
Source: Self elaboration

Chart 4. Morphologies selected to express EP in Task 2

Source: Self elaboration

In this task, the participants were informed that they could choose one or more sentences to express the idea in the context given. Of all 11 participants, 4 chose only one sentence for each context, it being a target or distractor. The other 7 participants chose one or more, with no apparent pattern.

In target contexts, which corresponded to 88 responses, participants chose one single sentence from the set of options 47 times, being 18 in contexts of UP and 29 in contexts of EP. From the 18 single choices in contexts of UP, the Present Perfect was selected 4 times, the Present Perfect Continuous was selected 11 times, and the Present Continuous was selected 3 times. From the 29 single choices in contexts of EP, the Present Perfect was selected 13 times, and the Past Simple was selected 15 times[11]. Also in target contexts, participants chose two or more sentences from the set of options 41 times, being 26 in contexts of UP and 15 in contexts of EP. From the 26 multiple choices in contexts of UP, the Present Perfect Continuous was always selected and the Present Perfect was selected 23 times. From the 15 multiple choices in contexts of EP, the Past Simple and the Present Perfect were always selected.

Discussion

The results of both tasks provide information concerning the verbal realizations of the perfect aspect in Canadian English. As mentioned before, two hypotheses have been

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11[9] In one single choice in context of EP, the Future Tense was selected, as described before.

formulated for this study: (i) apart from the Present Perfect, there are other morphological forms to express both types of perfect associated with the present in Canadian English; and (ii) apart from the Present Perfect, the morphological realizations of UP and EP associated with present tense in Canadian English are different. None of these hypotheses were refuted, as results showed other morphological forms to express both types of perfect associated with present tense besides the Present Perfect periphrasis and, apart from the Present Perfect, the verbal forms used to express UP are different from those used to express EP.

Having distinct verbal forms to express each type of perfect, Canadian English uses the Transitive Be Perfect (or [be + participle + NP]) as an option specifically to express EP. The results obtained included five uses of this structure, one in the first task and four in the second task. In Task 1, one participant spontaneously used the form "am done" to fill the blank in the sentence found in (11).

11.   Well, ok. Let me just dry my hands because I **[6]____ (do)** the dishes…

The other four uses in Task 2 occurred in the same context, which was defined by the sentence "Considering that my homework is ready…". To express the idea given by this context, four people chose the option "I'm done the homework" as one possible and productive sentence in the language. These uses follow the contexts of acceptability described by Yerastov (2012), among which we can cite the highest preference of use with the verb "done", and a preference for definiteness or possession in the direct object, which motivated us not to use objects with no marking of definiteness. It is important to highlight that, although this verbal structure also seems to be used with "finished" and "started" (Yerastov, 2012), it was not verified in the results of the tasks developed for this study.

The use of Transitive Be Perfect in Canadian English to express EP, when associated with the present, did not seem to be found in other varieties of English (Lopes, 2016; Machado; Martins, 2020). Even being non-productive in other varieties of English, this structure was not used in this language to express both types of perfect. Having a resultative interpretation, it was used only to express EP, as expected.

Comparing the results obtained in the first task (without options of answer) with those obtained in the second one (with options of answer), we can conclude that the Present Perfect was the option mostly chosen to express UP in Canadian English when there were no options of answer, but the Present Perfect Continuous was the one mostly chosen to express this type of perfect in Canadian English when there were options of answer. Such a preference for the Present Perfect Continuous is reinforced by the detailed analysis of the results obtained in the second task considering that the participants could choose

multiple options of answer. In this case, most of the target contexts of UP with the selection of just one option of answer presented the selection of this verbal form and all the target contexts of UP with the selection of two or more options of answer also contained it. Such results seem to reveal that the Present Perfect and the Present Perfect Continuous are the preferred morphological ways to express UP in Canadian English, and this second one may be especially chosen to emphasize the continuity of the situation up to the present moment, which is the main property of this type of perfect.

Also comparing the results obtained in the first task (without options of answer) with those obtained in the second one (with options of answer), we can conclude that the Past Simple was the option mostly chosen to express EP in Canadian English when there were no options of answer, but the Past Simple and the Present Perfect were almost equally chosen to express this type of perfect in Canadian English when there were options of answer. Such equivalent use of the Past Simple and the Present Perfect in the expression of EP is reinforced by the detailed analysis of the results obtained in the second task taking into account that the participants could choose multiple options of answer. In this case, the target contexts of EP with the selection of just one option of answer presented a balanced division among the selection of just the Past Simple or just the Present Perfect, and all the target contexts of EP with the selection of two or more options of answer contained the selection of both verbal forms. These results – especially those obtained in the first task – seem to suggest that the Past Simple is the preferred morphological form to express EP in Canadian English and this is followed by the Present Perfect in terms of use in the expression of this type of perfect.

Ultimately, the fact that, besides the periphrasis "have + participle", all the verbal forms used in this language to express the perfect aspect could convey only one type, with different forms used to express UP and EP, support the proposal of a split projection, one for each type of perfect (Nespoli; Martins, 2018).

Final Remarks

This study aimed to investigate the verbal forms of morphological realization of UP and EP in Canadian English, when associated with the present, and analyze the realizations of both types of perfect. In order to bring evidence to support the two-fold categorization of this aspect, we developed an experimental study consisting of two tasks, one cloze test and one decision task, and applied them to native speakers of Canadian English. The results of both tasks showed that Canadian English uses the Present Perfect to express both types of perfect associated with the present, but other morphological forms are also used to express them, and those which express UP do not express EP, and vice versa, being, besides the Present Perfect, the Present Perfect Continuous the morphology mostly used to convey UP, and the Past Simple, the one mostly used to convey the EP.

The structure [be + participle + NP] seems to be productive in this language as one of the forms used to express EP, but not UP.

The findings in this research are relevant to the description of the morphological realization of perfect aspect in Canadian English and also provide insight into the underlying properties that motivate the choices of verbal forms to express both types of perfect, contributing to the studies in syntactic representation of the perfect aspect.

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