

## The development of the perfect within IE verbal systems: an overview

The main aim of the talk is to describe the general development of „perfect“ categories in the history of IE languages, focussing on such categories (synthetic or analytic) that can be said to have „perfect“ functions (i.e., something like an anterior present), and their rise and fall. The perspective is primarily onomasiological: Is there a dedicated construction (category) used for perfect meaning, and how is it shaped? What is its functional range, and what does it contrast with?

The classical IE perfect was used in a synchronic perfect function (resultative or anterior) only in some of the earliest texts, namely in Ancient Greek, Vedic Sanskrit and Avestan (cf. KÜMMEL 2000). In the Anatolian languages, however, the perfect does not appear at all, while the synchronically unmotivated *hi*-conjugation has formal characteristics (endings and ablaut) typically associated with the perfect. Everywhere else, if the perfect did not disappear completely, it merged with or developed into a non-perfect past tense (a well-attested grammaticalization path, cf. BYBEE et al. 1994: 54f.), as it also did in later Indo-Aryan and Greek. E.g., the Latin „perfectum“, formally continuing old perfects and aorists (cf. MEISER 2003), is in fact a perfective past which also covers anterior present readings. Similar developments can also be claimed for Celtic (SCHUMACHER 2004), Albanian (SCHUMACHER & MATZINGER 2013) and Tocharian (cf. MALZAHN 2010). In Germanic the simple past continues the original perfect, but some few stems have become functional presents. Armenian and Balto-Slavic have no real traces of the perfect as a category (only lexical relics).

Thus, most IE languages could not use the old perfect any more in a perfect function. However, the perfect function very often was expressed by new constructions, typically starting from some type of resultative periphrasis. The earliest such example is found in Hittite: Beside the synthetic preterit a periphrastic construction could be used, employing the stative/resultative participle with an auxiliary, either *es-/as-* ‘to be’ or *har(k)-* ‘to hold, to have’ (HOFFNER & MELCHERT 2008: 310ff.). A very similar construction was also used much later in Western Europe, as is well known, and in the Northern Middle Iranian, i.e. Sogdian (WENDTLAND 2011) and Alanic-Ossetic. In some regions of Europe, the auxiliary ‘have’ was later generalized (cf., e.g. LARSSON 2009), but central regions mostly preserved the alternation. Baltic and Slavic as well as Tocharian, Armenian and many later Indo-Iranian languages show periphrastic constructions with the copula ‘be’ only. In Indo-Iranian this was often connected with the rise of „ergative“ constructions (cf. MASICA 1991: 341-6; JÜGEL 2012) for transitive verbs. One Middle Iranian language, Khotanese Saka, agrees with Balto-Slavic in employing different types of participles to express valency differences (SIMS-WILLIAMS 1997). Often this new perfect again developed into a simple past (perfective in those languages that still had a distinct imperfect), e.g. in most of Indo-Iranian as well as in French, Southern German and most Slavic languages. Sometimes these constructions also developed evidential functions.

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