

Realization of Present Perfect in Urdu and its Semantics: A Comparison with English

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Abstract

This paper aims to present an analysis of the realization of present perfect in Urdu language in comparison to English with a focus on the meaning contribution of present perfect in both languages. The exact semantic contribution of present perfect depends on the morpho-syntactic features of the elements that enter into its configuration and therefore its temporal meaning varies across languages. However, these differences need to be reconciled for a uniform semantic account of 'perfect' under the generative framework. The main semantic contribution of Urdu perfects is analyzed in this paper according to the 'Extended-now' approach according to which perfect is a relative tense and it sets up a 'Perfect Time Span' (PTS) which connects a past event to the time of utterance. The analysis shows that Urdu perfects pattern with English perfects in most cases except universal perfects. Urdu does not have universal perfects because Urdu perfects are formed with the perfective participles which don't allow the meaning of unboundedness and continuity of the situation –which are an essential part of the meaning of universal perfects. However, Urdu perfects are not perfective across all situation types in the same way as English perfects are as Urdu perfectives require a light verb with the main verb to express the meaning of culmination. This behavior of Urdu perfects further lends support to the proposal that 'perfect' is not an aspect but a tense and the application of PTS approach provides a uniform semantic account of perfects in both Urdu and English.

Keywords: Urdu perfects, Perfect Time Span, Universal Perfects, Existential Perfects

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2.4.1. Introduction

Present perfect has a distinct temporal meaning in comparison to the three major tenses (past, present and future). As a tense it is often compared to the simple past tense, because the present perfect locates the time of eventuality before the time of speech as does the simple past. In addition, present perfect requires a present tense auxiliary which links the reference time to the time of speech. In this way, as a composite tense, perfect mediates between the time for which an assertion is being made and the actual time for which the eventuality holds in the actual world. Thus, present perfect is morphologically in competition with both the simple present and simple past, and in many Indo-European languages perfect requires present tense morphology (Grønn & von Stechow, 2017).

English has a distinct *perfect* construction which is formed with the periphrastic 'have' and its inflected forms. Periphrasis refers to the use of multiple words in place of affixes to express grammatical meaning. The typical pattern is the use of a content word with a function word instead of using derivational/inflectional morphemes. Perfect and passive constructions in English are examples of periphrases (Anderson, 1997). However, there is a lot of crosslinguistic variation in how perfect is realized; in Chinese, for example, perfects are formed with the aspectual marker 'guo' (Smith, 1997, p. 106). Similarly, German present perfect is formed with a past participle and a present tense auxiliary (Rothstein, 2008). Urdu present perfect is also formed on the similar lines with perfective participle and present tense auxiliary (Schmidt, 1997).

This paper aims to shed light on the different aspects of the meaning of Urdu and English perfects, including how perfect constructions compete with past constructions and the related semantic implications. The goal of the discussion is to account for the similarities and differences in Urdu and English perfect constructions in terms of their meaning contribution. The term *perfect* is used in this paper to refer to 'present perfect' (and should be read as such hereon, all other types of 'perfect' such as 'past perfect' and 'future perfect' are specified). The main research questions this paper aims to address are:

- How is perfect realized morpho-syntactically in Urdu in comparison to English?
- How does the semantic contribution of the elements that enter into the perfect constructions in Urdu and English differ?

- What is the aspectual value of present perfect constructions in Urdu?

2.4.2. Review of Existing Literature: Temporal Meaning of Present Perfect

One of the main issues still under debate regarding ‘perfect’ is whether it is a tense or an aspect. The grammaticalized expression of location in time of an event is known as tense (Comrie, 1985). This grammaticalization can occur either through morphological marking and change in forms of different elements in the syntax. Auxiliaries and affixation on the verb are two of the common devices that express temporal reference (Thomson, 2005). Aspect is the second crucial facet of temporal reference in languages. Aspect refers to the various ways in which a situation can be viewed or represented in terms of its internal temporal properties. Aspect expresses information about the international constitution of the situation: whether it is complete or incomplete, in progress or repetitive (Smith, 1997). Tense allows the speaker to talk about events in relation to a reference point. This reference point can be deictic – the moment of speech most commonly – or a time point established but the discourse context. Aspect enables speakers of a language to express how they view the structure of an event (Mani, Pustejovsky, & Gaizauskas, 2005). A two-way distinction is made usually between perfective and imperfective aspect. Perfective aspect is used to express an event or an action without any reference to the structure of the event, in its entirety and as marking completion. Imperfective aspect is used to express that an event or action is either not complete – in progress – or there is some form of continuity associated with the event/action/process, repetition or occurrence or cyclic events, for example (Smith, 1997; Declerck, Reed & Cappelle, 2006).

On the aspectual interpretation of ‘perfect’ espoused by Klein (1994), perfect links a reference time to an event time (TT to TSit). Klein utilizes three terms in his account: ‘topic time’ (TT); ‘time of utterance’ (TU); and ‘time of situation’ (TSit). TT is the time interval for which the claim is made by a particular sentence (and by the speaker to be more specific), TU refers to the time interval during which the sentence is uttered, TSit refers to the time interval (in the actual world) during which the event holds. Tense encodes the relation between TU and TT, and aspect refers to the relation between TT and TSit. Both TT and TSit can be modified by temporal adverbials. However, Klein’s proposal is problematic as progressive – which is most definitely an aspect – can be embedded under

perfect as *he has been running since 2 0' clock* is both perfect and progressive.

Currently, the most commonly accepted semantics of perfect under the generative framework subscribe to the relative-tense interpretation of perfect on the lines of *Extended-Now theory* (Alexiadou, Rathert & von Stechow, 2003; Iatridou, Anagnostopoulou & Izvorski, 2001; Rothstein, 2008). According to the *Extended-Now theory* the present perfect expresses a time span with the starting point at some point in the past and links it to the moment of speech/utterance (Rathert, 2001). The term *Extended Now* was introduced by McCord (1978) to express the observation that present perfect links the present time – the now – to a moment in the past. Perfect behaves as a relative-tense because it relates the reference time to some time-point in the past.

Perfect has been characterized in English by a number of features by different semanticists. Klein (1994) discusses it in terms of the notion of 'post time'. In the case of the perfect, the TT completely falls into the post time of the situation whereas in 'perfective' the TT is partially included in post time. The situation expressed/asserted through perfect occurs before the reference time or TT¹. There is a resultant stative value associated with the *perfect*. Both perfect and perfective express a change in the 'stative value' in the sense that there is a time point when the situation does not hold and then there is a time point after it when the situation expressed by the verb with the perfect/perfective does hold and this change encoded in the meaning of 'the perfect'. This is sometimes referred to as the 'post-state theory'. In relation to the aforementioned change in state, the subject is ascribed a particular property in the 'present' due to the subject's participation in a previous situation – hence present perfect constructions have a 'stative value' in addition to the temporal meaning.

Perfect expresses an eventuality as 'closed' or in other words the viewpoint is 'perfective' with the exception of universal perfect. Smith (1997), in particular, asserts that this is a feature of perfect constructions but other authors don't seem to emphasize on it. However, this cannot be ascribed as a true feature of perfect especially on the relative-tense approach as tenses don't have a specified aspectual value associated with

¹ TT = Topic Time or time for which an assertion is made by a particular utterance. TSit = the time interval for which the eventuality holds in the actual world.

them. Although perfect expresses anteriority, adverbs expressing anteriority like *yesterday* are not compatible with present perfect in English – this is famously labelled as the *present perfect puzzle* by Klein (1994). These adverbs are also referred to as *positional adverbs* in literature because they assert a specific position/point on the time axis. Iatridou et al. (2001) argue that ‘anteriority’ is not included in the meaning of ‘perfect participle’. Present perfect in English is, however, compatible with adverbs expressing ‘recency’ – thus ‘recency’ is deemed to be part of its meaning.

The notion of ‘present relevance’ is associated with ‘perfect’ but it cannot be a defining criterion for perfect; a situation expressed in simple past can also have relevance for the present (Chung, 2012). In Portuguese, for instance, a past incident with present relevance can only be expressed by simple past if the habituality and continuation of the eventuality are not to be emphasized. Thus, *I have studied Portuguese* and *I studied Portuguese* both translate to *eu estudei Portugues* in Portuguese (Comrie, 1985, p. 81).

The main semantic contribution of the present perfect is the introduction of a “perfect time span” (PTS hereon). The left boundary (LB) of the PTS is fixed by temporal adverbial and the right boundary (RB) is the time of utterance (TU) expressed by the present tense auxiliary. For perfects without temporal adverbials, the LB of the PTS is asserted to be somewhere in the past and thus unspecified. This is a reformulation of the *Extended-Now Theory* discussed earlier and sometimes referred to as ‘XN’ in literature (Alexiadou et al., 2003; Rothstein, 2008). The term PTS was first introduced by Iatridou et al. (2001) and it has become a preferred term because it can be generalized for all types of perfects in contrast to *Extended Now* which only refers to present perfect. For the purpose of analysis in this paper, the setting of PTS is considered as a defining feature for present perfect constructions in English and Urdu.

3. Method

3.1 Data Sample

Being a native speaker of Urdu language, I have relied on my own sentences for analysis and examples from standard Urdu grammars (including most importantly Schmidt, 1999). All the grammatical variations expressed as acceptable in Urdu without any semantic or syntactic oddities in this paper are based on the grammatical structure of tense-aspect variation given in prominent Urdu grammars (Schmidt, 1999;

Abdul Haq, 2012 & Sihab, 2017). For semantic and syntactic oddities, I have verified with two native speakers of Urdu to ascertain that the sentences are not acceptable in addition to my own intuitions about the sentences. Where needed, to ensure the authenticity of a point in consideration multiple translations and back translations of the sentence variations were verified by native Urdu speakers.

3.2 Transcription of Urdu Sentences

Urdu sentences included in this study have been transcribed on the basis of modified Velthius script (adapted from Hussain, 2015). The Velthius script is a system of transliteration developed initially for Sanskrit language for transcription to and from Devanagari script. Velthius is an ASCII (American Standard Code for Information Interchange) transliteration system which is preferred to ITANS because of excessive capitalization. Velthius relies on the sounds essentially so the reader is advised to attempt to relate the transcriptions to IPA sounds. Appendix A contains the list of transcription keys used in the script in correspondence to the IPA sounds.

3.3 Glossing of Urdu Sentences

The Urdu sentences analyzed in this paper have been glossed according to Leipzig Glossing Rules which are developed by Max Plank's Institute of Evolutionary Anthropology and the University of Leipzig. Leipzig glossing rules include conventions for morpheme by morpheme glosses (Comrie, Haspelmath & Bickel, 2008). Leipzig glossing rules provide guidelines for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glossing and includes ten rules for interlinear glosses for syntax and semantics. Most of the abbreviation required for linguistic glossing are provided in Appendix B but it is not an exhaustive list and the rules correspond to the common usage in the linguistic community. Interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme is intended to provide meanings of words as well as their parts. Number of hyphens in the examples correspond to the number of hyphens in the gloss as shown in the example below:

Mai;n	aa	ga-yaa
I	come	go-PFV
I came.		

3.4 Diagnostics for Aspectual Values

Aspectual properties of situations can be determined and characterized on the basis of a number of features that can be tested through various

linguistic structures. In order to test the compatibility of two assertions, the conjunction test is used (Smith, 1997). A situation can be closed or open. Correspondingly, open assertions are compatible with assertion that express that the situation continues or was terminated without culmination. Perfective aspect is not compatible with assertion of continuity:

*Ahmed ate the cake but he didn't get to finish it.

*Ali ate the cake and he is still eating it.

3.4.1 The Morphosyntactic Realization of Present Perfect in Urdu

In English, the present perfect is realized periphrastically with the auxiliary 'have' and perfect participle as in the sentence: *I have read Anna Karenina*. In most Urdu grammars, a three-way distinction is made for past tense: 'past indefinite', 'near past' and 'distant past' (Sihab, 2017, p. 86). The past indefinite or simple past in Urdu is formed by adding perfective suffix 'ā' to the end of the verb root. The simplest present perfect sentences in Urdu are formed by the addition of the inflected auxiliary verb *hona* ہونا which means *to be* with present tense marking to perfective participle. Distant past is formed in a similar way with the perfective participle and past auxiliary *tha* تھا. English present perfect most nearly corresponds to Urdu near past constructions. The Urdu present perfect is also a periphrastic tense as it is realized through a present tense auxiliary and a perfective participle. Consider the following examples:

1. I read Anna Karenina. (Simple Past/Aorist)

میں نے عینہ کیرینینہ پڑھی۔

Mai;n=ne	Anna Karenina	p.rh-ii.
1.SG=ERG	Anna Karenina	read-PFV.F.SG

2. I read Anna Karenina. (Distant Past)

میں نے عینہ کیرینینہ پڑھی تھی

Mai;n=ne	Anna Karenina	p.rh-ii	th-ii.
1.SG=ERG	Anna Karenina	read-PFV.F.SG	
be.PST.F.SG			

3. I have read Anna Karenina. (Near Past/Present Perfect)

میں نے عینہ کیرینینہ پڑھی ہے۔

Mai;n=ne	Anna Karenina	p.rh-ii	hai.
1.SG=ERG	Anna Karenina	read-PFV.F.SG	
be.PRS.SG			

Both past indefinite and the so called distant past sentences in Urdu correspond to the English *simple past* and the discourse context

determines which of these two is used. Both *simple past* and *recent past* in Urdu don't assert that the eventuality holds at any specific time in the past and although anteriority is part of their meaning, they are both indefinite. However, the present perfect construction in Urdu does set up a PTS: the LB of the eventuality is asserted to be at some point in the past and the RB of the eventuality coincides with the time of speech (TU) marked by the present tense auxiliary verb *hona* ہونا (in present tense). The anteriority part is contributed by the participle and the present tense auxiliary connects the eventuality to the TU – creating a sense of recency or present relevance.

Although, both simple past and present perfect locate eventuality before the TU, they both achieve it in different ways. With simple past sentences, we see that there is a bit of distance between the eventuality and the moment of speech. Perfect on the other hand, locates the event much closer to the moment of speech and thus creates a sense of recency – by setting up the PTS. In addition, the meaning of present perfect is mediated both the tense marking auxiliary and the participle which shifts the focus from anteriority to content.

In English, present perfect has four major types: universal perfect, experiential perfect, perfect of result and perfect of recent past (Comire, 1976; Iatridou et al., 2001; Klein, 1994). The universal perfect (referred to as the U-perfect/U-reading hereon) is used to denote an eventuality that continues from some point in the past to the present moment. English perfect constructions (regardless of the tense) are unusual in the sense that both the perfective and progressive perfects are formed by the auxiliary 'have'. This seems to be an exception rather than the norm (Smith, 1997). U-perfects are possible only with homogeneous eventualities (Matthewson, Quinn & Talagi, 2015). A crucial requirement for universal perfect is that it requires unboundedness – which means that the eventuality has not reached its end point and is still going on at the moment of utterance. In most languages, unboundedness is realized through progressive or imperfective morphology. English universal perfects can also be formed without the progressive morphology: *I have lived in this town for five years*. U-perfects obligatorily require a temporal adverbial. English U-perfects without temporal adverbials are ambiguous between a U-perfect and E-perfect reading and the context determines which reading is more likely. A typical example of English universal perfect is as follow:

4. We have been living here since 1969.

In (4) the eventuality of 'living' still holds at the time of utterance which is the RB, and the LB is set at particular point in time by the adverbial i.e. 1969. As Iatridou et al. (2001) assert, U-perfect is not considered a central use of perfect because it is a language specific quirk and whether or not the U-perfect is available in a language depends on the elements that contribute in the realization of present perfect. In Urdu, the perfect participle is formed from a perfective stem and thus U-perfects are not possible with the perfect participle. The availability of the universal reading depends on whether a language has non-perfective participles. Urdu does not have universal perfects because perfect in Urdu is formed with a perfective participle which does not allow a continuative and unbounded reading. In Urdu, the equivalents of English universal perfect constructions are realized morpho-syntactically through progressive morphology (with the exceptions of states which don't allow progressive morphology), temporal adverbials and postpositions added to present continuous:

ہم یہاں ۲۰۱۰ سے رہ رہے ہیں۔

5. Ham yahaa;n 2010 se rh rah-e
hai;n
1.PL here 2010 since stay stay-PFV.M.PL
be.PRS.PL

We have lived here since 2010. (activity, unbounded, progressive morphology)

6. Ali ek haf.te se bemar hai.
Ali one week since sick
be.PRS.SG

Ali has been sick for a week. (state, unbounded, non-progressive morphology)

The use of progressive morphology is tied to the semantic similarities between present progressive tense and universal perfect in terms of the temporal information they both encode. In universal perfect, the eventuality continues at the utterance time and this makes the universal perfect quite similar to the present continuous semantically. The sentences in (5) carries a universal perfect like meaning because the eventuality of 'living' starts at a time-point in past i.e. the year 2010 and continues till

the moment of speech (TU) and thus a PTS is set up. U-perfects with statives don't allow progressive morphology in English. Similarly, in Urdu progressive morphology cannot be used as statives as illustrated in (6) because statives don't have initial and final endpoints.

In English the universal perfect reading is obligatory with some adverbials and possible with others. This does not seem to be the case in Urdu. Universal perfect like meaning can only be asserted in Urdu through a temporal adverbial with the postposition *se* (سے, literally = from) which sets up the left boundary of the PTS.

Experiential perfect is used to show that a person has had a certain experience. Example (3) given earlier is experiential perfect. Indefiniteness of past time is also a feature of English experiential perfect and simple past constructions: *I have lived in Lahore* vs *I lived in Lahore*. Although there does not seem to be much difference in both these sentences in terms of their semantics, in the former the eventuality of 'living' is somehow relevant to the present and is, thus, made salient by the use of present perfect instead of simple past.

Perfect of result is possible only with telic eventualities and can be used only if the effects of the eventuality still hold. See, for example, the following examples:

7. I have caught the butterfly.

میں نے تتلی پکڑ لی ہے۔

Mai;n=ne	ttl-ii	pakar	l-ii
hai			
1.SG.=ERG	butterfly.F.SG	catch	
take.PFV.F.SG		be.PRS.SG	

In the above example, the *resultative perfect* can only be used in English language if the butterfly remains 'caught' (and it couldn't be true if the butterfly were to escape/fly again). The Urdu equivalent of this sentence (as mentioned above), however, requires a light verb and, although, it is possible to make experiential perfect in Urdu without a light verb, the realization of resultative perfect seems to need a light verb – marking completion/telicity. This entails that completion/telicity in Urdu is expressed explicitly through light verbs and the perfective participle is not the sole contributor of aspectual information in this regard. It is then arguable that the participle labeled as 'perfective' in Urdu Grammars

reading are possible but unlikely. This is substantiated by the data from Urdu as in Urdu, unmodified perfects with ambiguous E/U-perfect readings are not possible. In case the state still persists then it would be expressed through simple present with the assertion that the state continues till the speech time and if the speaker is not sure if the state does or doesn't persist any more, then it can only be expressed through past:

16. Vo bimaar hai (aaj kal).
 3 sick be. PRS.SG today tomorrow
 Literally: She has been sick (these days). Simple present
 وہ بیمار ہے (اے کل)
17. Vo bimaar th-ii (lekin ab nahii'n hai).
 3 sick be.PST.F.SG (but now not be.PRS.SG)
 Literally: She was sick (but isn't anymore). Simple past
 وہ بیمار تھی (لیکن اب نہیں ہے)

It follows from the above discussion that perfects have different types. From a semantic perspective, a crucial issue is to formulate a uniform semantics that would account for the various types of perfects. The PTS can account for the apparent polysemy in different forms of perfect. Although perfect has different types, one feature is common across all these types which is the linking of a past time point to the moment of speech – the setting of PTS. Variations in perfect arise because the perfect eventuality might have occurred during the PTS leading to E-perfect reading or lasts for the entire PTS resulting in U-perfect – provided the language allows progressive morphology with perfect morphology. As we have seen that Urdu-perfects differ from English perfect in not allowing for U-perfect readings firstly owing to the morphological elements that enter into the formation of perfects in Urdu. However, although perfects in Urdu are formed with the help of perfective participle, they still need light verbs to express absolute culmination which indicates that the behavior of Urdu perfects differ considerably from their English counterparts. Moreover, Urdu doesn't allow unmodified perfects and specific reference to past or present through tense marking is required.

5. Aspect in Present Perfect Constructions

Viewpoint aspect or grammatical aspect is expressed through the semantic and syntactic features of the verb that are retained in the perfect participle. The elements/features that enter into the semantics of present perfect (and

in setting up the PTS) include the auxiliary, the tense marking on auxiliary and the perfect/perfective participle. The perfect itself does not carry the feature “un/boundedness” and the element below the perfect contributes this information. The perfect is just a time span which asserts the presence of an eventuality in the PTS which can be bounded or unbounded. The bounded/unbounded distinction correspond to the culmination/non-culmination feature of eventualities. Languages vary in terms of which aktionsart/lexical aspect can combine with which viewpoint aspect. The clausal representation of perfect is as follow (from Pancheva, 2013):

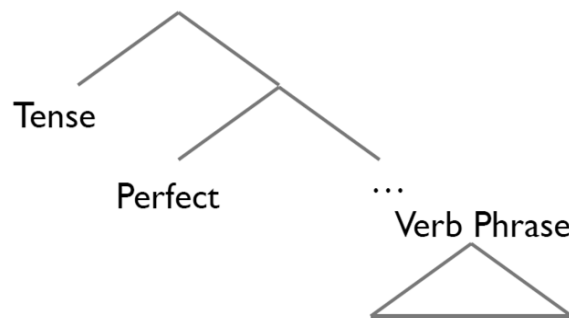


Figure 2. Syntactic Representation of Perfect

The type of perfect obtained in a sentence is dependent on the viewpoint aspect, lexical aspect (type of eventuality) of the perfect participle and the temporal adverbial. PTS approach to perfect entails a uniform semantics for present perfect and the differences in interpretation are ascribed to how the adverbials are interpreted specifically in relation to the scope of the adverb. Scope refers to extent to which the adverbial modifies the predicate: it can modify the entire predicate, part of the participle or the entire sentence (thus in English we have sentence-level adverbs too).

Temporal adverbial can have two types of interpretation: durative and inclusive. On the durative interpretation the predicate holds at every sub-interval of the PTS. Durative adverbial act as universal quantifiers: they quantify over all the sub-intervals of the time span (PTS) asserted by the perfect and both the LB and the RB boundaries are part of the PTS. Duratives lead to U-perfect readings. Inclusive adverbials, on the other hand, act as existential quantifiers and are totally contained within the PTS and neither the LB nor the RB is asserted to be part of the PTS. E-perfect readings require inclusive adverbials. Some adverbials like *since* are both

durative and inclusive and their interpretation depends on whether the predicate has a sub-interval property or not.

Durative adverbials: since, for, ever since, at least since, always

Inclusive adverbials: since, once, twice, from x to y

In Urdu, constructions similar to English U-perfect are compatible with adverbial phrase made with the postposition *se* سے and both *se* سے (literally = from) and *tak* تک (literally = till) which express from x to y like meaning. The E-perfects in Urdu require only the temporal adverbials and the postposition is not required. Adverbs in Urdu E-perfects specify a time point in past – the LB and RB is established by the auxiliary. Consider the following sentences:

18. Ali 2009 se NUST me;n parh rah-a
hai
Ali 2009 since NUST in study stay.PFV.M.SG
be.PRS.SG
(Ali has been studying at NUST since 2009)
19. Ali aur Sara unhai;n roz subh 9 baje
se
Ali and Sara they.3.PL.OBL=ACC everyday morning 9
o'clock since
10 baje tak p.rh-aa rah-e
hai;n
10 o'clock till cause to.study stay-PFV.M.PL
be.PRS.PL
Ali and Sara have been teaching them every day from 9 a.m. to 10
a.m.
20. Ali-ne aaj subh 9 baje dr.khvast
d-ii
Ali=ERG today morning 9 o'clock application
give.PFV.F.SG
hai
be.PRS.SG
(Ali has submitted the application at 9 a.m. in the morning today.)

Experiential perfects in English can be made with almost all types of eventualities and with both perfective and imperfective view points;

universal and resultative perfects on the other hand are not compatible with all aspects. It is possible in English to get a universal reading with bounded feature (perfective reading), without progressive morphology in case of activities but a bounded and universal reading with telic predicates without progressive is not possible. States in English when used with the progressive can result in either a U-perfect or an E-perfect reading. See the following examples:

21. I have worked since Monday. (activity)
 U-reading: bounded, durative interpretation of since
 E-reading: bounded, inclusive interpretation of since
22. I have written a letter since Monday. (accomplishment)
 U-reading: not possible
 E-reading: bounded, inclusive use of since.
23. Aliya has been sick since Tuesday. (stative)
 U-reading: Aliya became sick on Tuesday and is still sick. (since: durative reading)
 E-reading: Aliya was sick at some time during Tuesday and the moment of utterance of the sentence. (since: inclusive reading)

Correspondingly, un/boundedness is dependent on how perfect combines with viewpoint aspect and lexical aspect. If the predicate is telic (accomplishments and achievements are telic, see section 2.3 for a detailed discussion), with the E-perfect we should get a closed reading which is the case in English:

24. I have built the house. (bounded accomplishment)
25. She has reached the finish-line. (bounded achievement)

Hence, English E-perfects with telic eventualities only allow for perfective viewpoints as: *I have read Anna Karenina but not finished it* is semantically odd. As it was discussed earlier, Urdu perfects are formed with what has been termed as the *perfective participle* (Schmidt, 1997). Schmidt (1997) categorizes Urdu present perfect and simple past under perfective tenses: “the immediate past tense, also called the present perfect describes an action or state which is completed, but which still affects the present situation. Very often it refers to events which have recently been completed” (p. 126). Perfectivity, however, doesn’t seem to be a characteristic of Urdu existential perfects across all types of eventualities. Telic eventualities, particularly in the case of sentences without light verbs do not seem to assert perfectivity. Perfectivity is also not asserted by the perfective participle in the simple past Urdu constructions:

26. Mai;n= ne Anna Karenina p.rh-ii hai
 1.SG=ERG Anna Karenina read-PFV.F.SG
 be.PRS.SG
 laikin porii nahii;n
 but complete.F not.
 Literally: #I have read Anna Karenina but didn't read the entire book. (accomplishment, present perfect, unbounded)
27. Mai;n= ne Anna Karenina p.rh-ii laikin
 porii
 1.SG=ERG Anna Karenina read-PFV.F.SG but
 complete.F
 nahii;n
 not
 Literally: #I read Anna Karenina but didn't read the entire book. (accomplishment, simple past/aorist, unbounded)

Frame adverbial can be used to check whether a predicate is telic or atelic and they can also turn a predicate into a telic or atelic eventuality. *In x time* adverbials are possible only with telic eventualities whereas *for x time* adverbials express atelic eventuality. The frame adverbial tests when applied to Urdu E-perfect activities like *ser karna* literally = to walk show that Urdu E-perfects with *for x time* are acceptable for activities but the *in x time* is not good with E-perfects and require that the auxiliary is dropped.

28. Mai;n=ne aaj do ghanta park me'n
 ser
 1.SG=ERG today two hours park walk in
 walk
 k-ii hai
 do.PFV.F.SG be. PRS.SG
 Today, I walked in the park for two hours in the morning – atelic
 میں نے آج صبح دو گھنٹے پارک میں سیر کی ہے۔

¹ Through-out this study conjunct clauses are used to ascertain the aspectual value of the first clause of example sentences. Clauses with closed aspectual value are not compatible with clauses that negate the closed aspectual value of the first clause and therefore render the sentence ungrammatical.

29. Mai;n=ne aaj do ghanta me;n park=kii
 ser 1.SG=ERG today two hours in
 park.M.SG=GEN walk
 k-ii hai
 do.PFV.F.SG be. PRS.SG

Today, I walked the (entire) park in two hours. – telic

With achievements, the perfective participle, however, asserts that the eventuality has achieved the end point:

اس نے میچ جیتا

30. Us=ne match jiiit-a.
 3=ERG match win-PFV.M.SG
 She won the match. (achievement, simple past).

اس نے میچ جیتا ہے

31. Us=ne match jiiit-a hai
 3=ERG match win-PFV.M.SG be.PRS.SG
 She has won the match. (achievement, present perfect).

One possible explanation for this is that what has been termed as ‘perfective participle’ in Urdu to make simple past and formed with the perfective suffix ‘ã’ is in fact aorist and not a true perfective. The term ‘aorist’ has been used interchangeably for the perfective for Indo-European Languages including Hindi/Urdu. According to Hewson and Bubenik (1997) in Indo-European languages aorist marks completion and generally an opposition is drawn between an aorist and imperfect: interpreted as past perfective vs. past imperfective. Aorist used to be very common in ancient Indo-European languages but now it has survived in only a few (Modern Greek has an aorist). The authors, however, don’t elaborate on the notion of completeness and don’t take a position on using the term aorist instead of ‘perfective’. The aorist in Urdu is relevant with reference to present perfect because the perfect is formed with the auxiliary but in the aorist, there is no auxiliary (Hewson & Bubenik, 1997).

Aorist has often been asserted to carry a grammatical aspectual meaning only, with no bearing on the durative quality of the eventuality (Montaut, 2016). In Greek grammatical theory, from which the term comes, aorist is contrasted with both the tenses that indicate completion (perfects) and tenses conveying duration (imperfects). Platts and Kellogg (who were one of the first grammarians of Urdu and Hindi respectively, cited in Montaut, 2016) use the term ‘indefinite perfect’ for the perfective participle ‘ã’ which forms aorist in Hind/Urdu. Kellogg and Platt’s use of ‘indefinite’ is

related to ‘indefinite perfects’ vs ‘indefinite imperfects’ opposition. Indefinite imperfects are formed by the addition of ‘-t’ to the verb root (see section 4.2.3. for details on imperfective participle in Urdu).

Montaut (2016) argues that the perfective/imperfective distinction has been borrowed from Slavonic languages and their meanings when applied to other languages can lead to multiple interpretations of the terms – especially when it comes to Hindi/Urdu. In Urdu perfects, as we have seen, the telic eventuality is not asserted as bounded or ‘perfective’ through the perfective participle. Furthermore, the remote past construction in Urdu, formed by the addition of *tha* ^{ٿا} has been traditionally interpreted as a pluperfect (which is a relative tense), but as Montaut (2001) demonstrates, it can also function as an absolute tense and doesn’t have to assert remote past meaning necessarily:

				وہ ابھی تو آیا تھا۔
32. vo	abhii-to	aay-aa	th-a	
	3	now-EMPH	come.PFV.M.SG	be.PST.M.SG
	He just came.			

This is further substantiated by how Schmidt (1997) differentiates between simple past and remote past in Urdu. For Schmidt, Urdu simple past constructions are used when the mere mention of the eventuality is intended and remote past constructions are used when the temporal context (the pastness of the eventuality) is important. See the following example given by Schmidt (1997, p. 127):

				کل بارش ہوئی تھی۔
33. Kal	bari.s	hoii	thii.	(remote past)
	Yesterday	rain	be.PFV.F.SG	be.PST.F.SG
	It rained yesterday.			
				کل بارش ہوئی۔
34. Kal	bari.sh	hoii (simple past)		
	Yesterday	rain	be.PFV.F.SG	
	It rained yesterday.			

Correspondingly, ‘perfective participle’ in Urdu is not perfective in the sense of lending the meaning of ‘un/boundedness’ to the predicates it combines with. This is further substantiated by the existence of truly ‘perfective forms’ of the V+V nature in Urdu, requiring a light verb with the participle (which are discussed in detail in the next chapter). Thus, it

can be argued that the perfective participle in Urdu should be labelled as *aorist*. The temporal interpretation of aorist is dependent on the syntactic and discourse context, entailing that it is in fact ‘indefinite’ (a well-known feature of the aorist). However, this poses no contradiction to the PTS (or extended-now approach) as PTS doesn’t entail that there is a specific aspectual value associated with the ‘perfect’ and neither is perfect considered as a tense-aspect combination. The meaning of completion is not contributed by perfect itself; the feature bounded/unbounded is contributed by the elements embedded below the perfect.

Therefore, locating events in the past is not the main function of perfect. The primary temporal meaning of perfect includes the location of an event that has occurred before the reference time in correspondence to the reference time – which is the moment of utterance in case of present perfect. The meaning of ‘present relevance’ for present perfect is accomplished by the PTS by linking the moment of utterance to a past time span.

6. Conclusion

The comparative analysis of present perfect constructions in Urdu and English presented in this paper shows that the differences in the temporal meaning contributed by the perfect in both languages arises out of the morphosyntactic differences. Setting up of a unique time span is the major semantic contribution of perfect and this time span is termed as the PTS and it associates the time of speech to a time span in past. How a given eventuality is situated on the time scale through the PTS depends on the type of perfect and the morphosyntactic features that enter into the configuration of perfect predicates in a given language. Urdu and English perfects pattern in the same way as English and anteriority is part of the meaning of the perfect. The meaning of recency is not part of the semantic contribution of perfective participle in Urdu and it is created through the present tense auxiliary *hai* in Urdu. Existential perfects in Urdu are similar to English perfects but Urdu does not have universal perfects (U-perfects) on the same pattern as English Universal perfects. Urdu perfects are formed with the perfective participle which doesn’t elicit the unboundedness property – a crucial requirement for U-perfects. In addition, we saw that Urdu present perfects are not perfective in the same way as English perfects are; especially in the case of telic eventualities including accomplishments and achievements, a light verb is required to mark culmination. English perfect predicates of activities can lend the U-

perfect reading even without the progressive morphology if a durative adverbial like *since* is used, but with telic eventualities progressive morphology is required. Therefore, the perfective/imperfective reading of perfect depends on the interaction between lexical aspect and morphological elements. Urdu present perfects have been classified as ‘near-past’ constructions’ and compete with both simple past and distant past construction as they differ only slightly in terms of their temporal reference. All of these three constructions can be used to express the same past eventuality and aspectual value. Present perfect in Urdu is felicitous when present relevance needs to be expressed. In cases where just the mention of the eventuality is required, simple past is used. Distant past constructions are preferred if the pastness of the eventuality needs to be emphasized. Conclusively, it follows from the preceding observations that the perfective participle in Urdu does not lend the meaning of termination for eventualities because it is not inherently perfective and should be termed as *aorist* instead of perfective.

2.5. References

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APPENDIX A

Modified Velthuis Script for Urdu

	Urdu Script	Modified Velthuis	IPA	Examples in English	Examples in Urdu
Vowels		a	ʌ	Bus	bas 'stop, enough' بس
	آ	aa	ɑ:	Father	Paalaa 'nurture' پالا
	ا	i	ɪ	Kiss	kis 'which' کس
	ی	ii	i:	Fees	fiis 'fees' فیس
		u	ʊ	Full	cup 'quiet' چپ
	و	uu	u:	Fool	phuul 'flower' پھول
	ے	e	e:	Face	bel 'vine' بیل
	ے	ai	æ	Trap	bail 'ox' بیل
	و	o	o:	Bow	cor 'thief' چور
	و	au	ɔ	Caught	kaun 'who' کون
DIPHTHONGS					
	ئے	a'e			ga'e 'they went (m)' گئے
	ئی	a'ii			ga'ii 'shewent' گئی
	ین □	a'ii;n			ga'ii;n 'they went (f)' گئیں
	و □	a'uu			ga'uu 'cow (archaic)' گؤ
	اؤں	aa'uu;n			gaa'uu;n shall I sing گاؤں
	اؤ	aa'o			gaa'o 'you sing' گاؤ
	اؤں	aa'o;n			gaa'o;n 'village' گاؤں
CONSONANTS					
	ب	b	b	Bus	bas 'stop, enough' بس
	بھ	bh	b ^h		bhes 'disguise' بھیس
	پ □	p	p	Spill	pin 'pin' پن
	پھ	ph	p ^h	Pin	phuul 'flower' پھول
	ط، ت	t	t		tum 'you' تم
	تھ	th	t ^h		tham 'stop' تھم
	ٹ	.t	t̪		.tuu.t 'break' ٹوٹ
	ٹھ	.th	t̪ ^h		.thes 'dent' ٹھیس
	ج	j	dʒ	Jail	jel 'jail' جیل
	جھ	jh	dʒ ^h		jhuul 'swing' جھول
	چ	c	tʃ	Staunch	cal 'walk' چل
	چھ	ch	tʃ ^h	Church	chaap 'stamp' چھا □
	ھ، ح، ہ	h	h/f	Hand	haathii 'elephant' ہاتھی
	خ	.kh	χ		.khariid 'buy' خرید
	د	d	d		duur 'far' دور
	دھ	dh	d ^h		dhuul 'dust' دھول

	ڈ	.d	d		.dor 'string'	ڈور
	ڈھ	.dh	d ^h		.dhuu;n.d 'search'	ڈھونڈ
	ر	r	r		ras 'nectar'	رس
	ڑ	.r	r̄		pa.r 'fall'	پڑ
	پڑھ	.rh	r ^h		pa.rh 'read'	پڑھ
	ز؛ض؛ضز	z	z	Zip	zor 'force'	زور
	ژ	.z	ʒ	Measure	.zaalaa 'hail'	ژال
	س؛ص؛س	s	s	Same	seb 'apple'	سیب
	ش	.s	ʃ	Shame	shaam 'evening'	شام
	غ	.gh	ɣ		.ghulaam 'servant'	غلام
	ف	f	f	Fail	fel 'fail'	فیل
	ق	q	q		qasam 'oath'	قسم
	ک	k	k	Skill	kaam 'work'	کام
	کھ	kh	k ^h	Kite	khel 'game'	کھیل
	گ	g	g	Goal	gol 'round'	گول
	گھ	gh	g ^h		ghol 'dissolve'	گھول
	ل	l	l	Loot	luu.t 'loot'	لوٹ
	م	m	m	Man	maar 'hit'	مار
	ن	n	n	Not	nahii;n 'not'	نہیں
	ں	;n			mai;n 'I'	میں
	و	v	v	Btwv&w	vahaa;n 'there'	وہاں
	ی	y	j	You	ye 'this'	یہ
SPECIAL CHARACTERS						
a=	ا	a=			faura='now'	فوراً
u=	ا	u=			summu=bukmu=	صمُّ بکْم

APPENDIX B**List of Abbreviations**

1	First Person	LOC	Locative
2	Second Person	M	Masculine
3	Third Person	NOM	Nominative
ACC	Accusative	OBJ	Object
ART	Article	OBL	Oblique
AUX	Auxiliary	PASS	Passive
CAUS	Causative	PFV	Perfective
DAT	Dative	PL	Plural
DEF	Definitive	POSS	Possessive
DET	Determiner	PRED	Predicate
ERG	Ergative	PRF	Perfect
EMPH	Emphasis	PRS	Present
FUT	Future	PROG	Progressive
GEN	Genitive	PST	Past
IMP	Imperative	SBJV	Subjunctive
INF	Infinitive	SG	Singular
INS	Instrumental		
IPFV	Imperfective		