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**The Sicilian present perfect:
an experimental investigation on the dialectal variety of
Partinico**

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Alla mia Jassi, la migliore linguista in erba di tutti i cieli

«Quando finirà il tempo? Se accettiamo l'ipotesi sveviana di un mondo privo d'uomini e di malattie che continua a rotolare come una palla liscia di biliardo nell'universo, dove è andato a finire il Tempo? Sant'Agostino tagliava corto affermando che il tempo scorre solo per noi e forse aveva ragione. Il Tempo finirà, come scrive Savater, quando "verrà il giorno che metterà fine ai giorni, l'ora finale, l'istante oltre il quale termineranno le vicissitudini, l'incerta sequela dei fatti, e non accadrà più nulla, mai". Elementare, Watson. Allora da quale lato affronto la questione passato- futuro con un minimo di cognizione di causa? Dal lato filosofico? Ma ci vorrebbe una cultura della quale sono assolutamente sprovvisto. Dal lato fisico- matematico? Vogliamo babbare?- direbbe il mio Montalbano. Del Tempo riesco sì e no a parlare col metodo che mi è stato insegnato alle scuole elementari, vale a dire l'uso dei tempi verbali. E dovrete contentarvi. Ad ogni modo, presento subito la mia carta di credito, firmata Aristotele, quando afferma, nella "Poetica" , che il verbo reca in sé, oltre che il senso, soprattutto l'idea di tempo. E infatti il verbo, fin dall'antichità, è stato considerato la parola per eccellenza. Tutto ciò premesso, la contestazione subitanea che mi viene da fare è che sicuramente si stava meglio prima! "Prima quando?"- penso che vi state domandando un pochino imparpagliati. Rispondo subito. Quando, ad esempio, Immanuel Kant poteva scrivere con assoluta convinzione che "è legge necessaria della nostra sensibilità e quindi condizione formale di tutte le percezioni che il Tempo precedente determini necessariamente il seguente". Oppure quando, per saltare all'indietro dalla metafisica alla fisica, Laplace, nella sua "Teoria analitica delle probabilità", del 1814, scriveva che "lo stato presente dell'universo è da considerarsi come l'effetto del suo stato anteriore e come la causa del suo stato futuro". E quindi i tempi del verbo, in questo determinismo meccanicistico, si stagliavano nel nostro quotidiano discorso, e perciò nella nostra vita, come i fari che segnalano ai naviganti l'attracco in porti sicuri, in ancoraggi certi. Del resto non c'è stato un grande storico francese che sosteneva come la storia del suo paese fosse stata resa possibile dall'organizzazione definitiva della lingua e di conseguenza dalla netta definizione e distinzione di passato, presente, futuro? Ripassiamoceli, questi tempi verbali, in uso nella lingua italiana, cominciando da quelli che si riferiscono a ciò che è già successo: imperfetto (io ero); passato prossimo (sono stato); passato remoto (io fui); trapassato prossimo (ero stato); trapassato remoto (fui stato). A ciò che succederà, vengono designati il futuro (io sarò) e il futuro anteriore (sarò stato). Risulta evidentissima la sperequazione: cinque modi per dire del passato e due soltanto per accennare al futuro. Dev'essere perché "di doman non v'è certezza", come sosteneva il poeta. E a questo proposito devo dire, di passata, che noi siciliani, nel nostro dialetto, manchiamo completamente tanto del trapassato remoto quanto del futuro anteriore che viene sostituito dal futuro semplice il quale, a sua volta, è usato, avvertono i grammatici, così scarsissimamente che si può sostenere che non venga mai usato. Ha un senso questa assenza del futuro? Temo proprio di sì.(...)»

Andrea Camilleri, *Passato, Futuro: qualche variazione sul tema*

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Abstract

Ce travail aborde la question de l'existence et des divers usages du passé composé dans la variété dialectale sicilienne, en se focalisant sur la distribution de ce temps verbal par rapport à celle du passé simple. Des opinions conventionnelles concernant l'utilisation du passé simple et du passé composé, semblent diviser la péninsule italienne en deux zones distinctes. Il est en effet notable que dans le nord de l'Italie, la forme composée est quasiment exclusivement utilisée, tandis que dans le sud, c'est le passé simple qui est dominant. L'Italie centrale, au contraire, couvre, tant sur le plan géographique que sur celui de l'emploi des temps verbaux passés, un rôle à mi-parcours, démontrant une utilisation plus équilibrée des deux formes. Cette perception de la répartition inégale en Italie de la forme composée et de la forme simple du passé est confirmée par de nombreuses descriptions grammaticales de la langue italienne, telles que Serianni (1988), et par des études traditionnelles sur les différences dialectales existantes dans toute l'Italie, telles que celles de Rohlfs (1966- 1969).

Compte tenu de cette opinion conventionnelle de l'existence exclusive du passé simple dans le dialecte sicilien et en considérant les lacunes de la littérature produite jusqu'à nos jours sur le passé composé sicilien, cette étude se propose de jeter un nouveau regard sur la question à travers la présentation de données expérimentales.

Ce travail analyse en premier lieu les concepts généraux de temps verbal, d'aspect et, en particulier, de parfait. Ceci représentant les préliminaires théoriques de base pour la recherche expérimentale, qui se concentre, en outre, sur la théorie syntactique proposée par Giorgi et Pianesi (1997), selon laquelle les temps verbaux sont le résultat de deux sortes de relations: d'une côté, la relation entre le temps de l'énonciation et le temps de référence, appelée T1; d'un autre côté, la relation entre le temps de référence et le temps de l'événement, T2, celle-ci exprimant le parfait.

Le concept de parfait indique une relation entre un événement antérieur et l'état découlant de l'événement en question. Dans des langues telles que l'anglais, cela signifie que le parfait exprime l'état résultant d'un événement dans un moment qui est postérieur par rapport à l'événement lui-même. Dans d'autres langues comme l'italien ou le français, la situation est différente, car le passé composé, exprimant la valeur du parfait, peut aussi être employé comme pur passé, étant dépourvu ainsi de toutes connections avec le moment présent.

L'hypothèse de départ de ce travail considère le passé composé sicilien comme un temps qui

n'exprime pas les états présents d'un événement passé ou sa proximité avec le présent. Le temps considéré a plutôt des valeurs duratives et itératives, c'est-à-dire qu'il se réfère à un événement qui s'est déroulé dans un laps de temps prolongé ou qui s'est produit plusieurs fois. On a également supposé que la distribution entre le passé composé et le passé simple en sicilien ne se base pas sur des distinctions temporelles, mais plutôt aspectuelles.

Afin de recueillir des données concrètes pour confirmer les hypothèses, j'ai effectué une expérience avec trente participants de la ville de Partinico, qui est située à 30 km de Palerme, dont le dialecte a été classé par Ruffino (1978) dans la catégorie des dialectes occidentaux de l'île sicilienne. Pour identifier les conditions de mon enquête, j'ai passé en revue les différents types de parfait inclus dans le panel du *present perfect* anglais et du *passato prossimo* italien, présentés et analysés de manière détaillée dans les études de Comrie (1976) et Bertinetto (1986). La recherche s'est, donc, focalisée sur le parfait expérientiel et sur le parfait habituel, en tenant compte également des potentiels éléments relatant du présent et découlant des événements passés indiqués par le verbe.

Le parfait expérientiel concerne, en particulier, l'expression d'un événement qui s'est vérifié au moins une fois dans le passé. Quant au parfait habituel, il se réfère à un événement qui s'est passé de manière habituel, c'est-à-dire un événement que le sujet a effectué habituellement. De plus, en me référant aux exemples en dialecte de Catane proposés par Giorgi et Pianesi (1997: 134), dans lesquels on analyse la distribution du passé composé et du passé simple dans une séquence, j'ai considéré le même type de phrases comme conditions supplémentaires de l'expérience, afin de vérifier les possibles différences entre ma variété, le dialecte de Catane et l'italien. Les exemples proposés par la susmentionnée étude démontrent en effet que la distribution des deux temps dans une séquence fonctionne en sicilien de manière inverse par rapport à la langue standard: la séquence passé simple - passé composé, est grammaticale en italien, alors qu'elle est considérée agrammatical en sicilien.

Trente personnes ont participé au test. Les participants ont été divisés en deux groupes de 15 personnes selon leurs âges: un premier groupe âgé de 20 à 30 ans et un second âgé de 50 à 70 ans. L'expérience a été organisée sous forme de questionnaire écrit, composé de deux étapes différents: l'une d'évaluation grammaticale et l'autre visant à évaluer la production. A travers la première évaluation, les participants devaient juger les phrases proposées par le questionnaire, en choisissant parmi trois options possibles: *oui*, *non* et *comme ci comme ça*.

La deuxième tâche consistait en des phrases à trous, pour lesquelles les participants devaient remplir les champs vides, en conjuguant les formes verbales fournies à l'infinitif italien. Tous les participants ont été invités à remplir un formulaire au début du test, dans lequel ils devaient indiquer leur emploi, leur niveau d'éducation scolaire et combien de dialecte ils parlent dans leur vie quotidienne.

Étant donné que l'enquête a été réalisée au moyen d'un questionnaire écrit à remplir et que les expériences étaient constituées de phrases fournies hors contexte, les résultats peuvent évidemment être considérés comme plus limités par rapport à des données recueillies à partir d'un discours spontané. Néanmoins, la combinaison de deux évaluations différentes a permis de tester l'intuition grammaticale des locuteurs à partir de différentes perspectives. Donc, malgré le nombre limité de participants, les résultats de cette recherche peuvent être considérés comme un point de départ intéressant pour d'éventuelles interprétations sémantiques et syntaxiques sur la distribution du présent parfait et du passé simple en sicilien.

Les données résultant de l'enquête ont confirmé l'existence du passé composé dans le dialecte sicilien et sa distinction par rapport à son emploi dans la langue italienne. En outre, il a été relevé que les différences entre le passé simple et le passé composé sont de nature aspectuelle et non temporelle. Il a aussi été démontré que le passé composé sicilien n'exprime pas le passé récent ou les effets présents d'un événement passé, mais il véhicule des valeurs duratives et itératives. Les valeurs du parfait, quant à elles, sont exprimées, contrairement à ce qui se passe dans d'autres langues comme l'italien ou l'anglais, par le passé simple, qui représente la forme choisie par défaut par les locuteurs siciliens.

J'ai aussi noté que l'aspect de durée et d'itération, qui est propre au passé composé sicilien, présente des similarités avec la langue portugaise, où le même temps verbal est employé pour se référer à un événement habituel. Grâce à l'analyse du parfait portugais proposé entre autre par Giorgi et Pianesi (1997: 47), il a été possible de découvrir des points communs entre le système verbal sicilien et celui du portugais. En effet, dans les deux langues, c'est le passé simple qui est employé dans les situations où en italien et en anglais c'est le passé composé qui est nécessaire, c'est-à-dire pour exprimer les valeurs du parfait; de plus, le dialecte sicilien et le portugais sont dépourvus du passé antérieur. On propose, donc, que comme en portugais, le passé simple représente aussi en sicilien un T2, véhiculant une valeur de parfait. En tenant

compte du fait que le participe passé est aussi un T2, l'absence du passé antérieur dans les deux langues sera justifiée du fait que la présence concomitante de deux T2 n'est pas permise. Le passé simple du sicilien et du portugais peut être, donc, considéré comme le résultat d'une même évolution de la forme synthétique du parfait latin, qui correspond aux formes composées par exemple de l'italien ou du français, mais qui s'est développé vers des formes de passé simple pour le portugais et le sicilien.

Introduction

In this dissertation I focus on the existence, the usages and the distribution of the Sicilian present perfect in comparison to the simple past. Sicilian is a dialect classified by Pellegrini (1977) within the category of the extreme southern Italian dialects and it has often been considered as a variety exclusively using the simple form of the past to express perfective meaning. A common opinion regarding the distribution of the simple past and the present perfect seems to divide the Italian peninsula into two different areas. In the northern part of Italy there is in evidence an almost exclusive use of the compound form, whereas in the South, the simple past is dominant. In fact, in the Sicilian dialect the compound past form does exist, even if it is employed only in very specific circumstances. Literature written so far on this topic displays, however, some contradictions and gaps which do not enable a clear and general description of the considered tense in the Sicilian dialect.

The theme of this research was conceived, therefore, with the intention of shedding light on the afore-mentioned question by means of collecting data through an experimental investigation. The experiment was carried out in the town of Partinico, located in the province of Palermo by submitting a questionnaire to thirty speakers divided into two age-categories. The conditions tested through the questionnaire aimed at analysing the use of the present perfect to express experiential and habitual perfect meanings and the distribution of the simple and the compound past forms in a sequence. Moreover, the investigation also aimed at clarifying the role played by the current relevance of the Sicilian speakers' choice between present perfect and simple past.

In the first chapter, I focus on the concepts of tense, aspect and perfect, in order to introduce the general theoretical preliminaries which are essential for the development of the research. Referring in particular to the concept of perfect, a brief cross-linguistic analysis is carried out to describe a general outline of the Romance and German languages, an interesting benchmark for a comparison with the uses of the Sicilian tenses.

In second part of the work, I focus firstly on the Italian present perfect, in order to give an overview of the morphological, syntactic and semantic characteristics of which it is constituted; then, I introduce the Sicilian dialect, analysing in particular the verbal system and

its range of tenses. In addition, I carry out a state -of- the art review of the present perfect in Sicilian, the main subject of my experimental research, as the information contained in current linguistic literature presents some discrepancies and gaps.

The last chapter consists of a detailed description of the experimental design and the methodologies employed, followed by the presentation of the collected data and the final interpretation and discussion of the results. In this last section, it will be shown that the Sicilian present perfect expresses durative and iterative meaning and that the current relevance does not represent a crucial factor in the distribution between the simple and the compound past forms. In addition, a syntactic analysis will demonstrate a parallelism between the Sicilian and the Portuguese verbal systems and between their distribution of the simple past and the present perfect.

1. General theoretical preliminaries

In this chapter I introduce some general concepts which will constitute the background of this work. These concepts are the ones of Tense and Aspect, their contrasts and their intersections. The temporal-aspectual domain is, in fact, one of the fundamental intersections between the language universe and the extralinguistic dimension. The human experience and reality, which take place over time and in the time dimension, are filtered through linguistic categories differing from one language to another. Referring to some classical and influential reference literature of this linguistic area, such as Reichenbach (1947), Comrie (1976, 1985) and Giorgi&Pianesi (1997), I explain some basic notions and focus on the concept of Perfect, in particular on the Present Perfect as compound past tense.

This chapter consists of three sections. In the first section I will pay attention to the subject of tense, distinguishing it from the general concept of time and presenting some of the most influential accounts of tense from the linguistic literature, which will drive us to Reichenbach's revisited theory proposed by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997).

The second section will focus on the notion of aspect, strictly related to the one of tense and indicating the internal temporal structure of an event. I will discuss the different aspectual values and their subcategories, providing examples which give an overview covering different languages with distinct characteristics.

In the last section, I will consider the notion of perfect, focusing on the present perfect and presenting theories aiming at solving the so-called *present perfect puzzle*. Taking into account the hypothesis by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997), who propose a cross-linguistic solution to the afore-mentioned *puzzle*, I will briefly present the differences in the distribution of the present perfect in some Romance and Germanic languages, such as German, Portuguese and French. The final part of the third section will consider the variety of meanings that the present perfect can convey.

1.1 Tense

1.1.1 Time and Tense

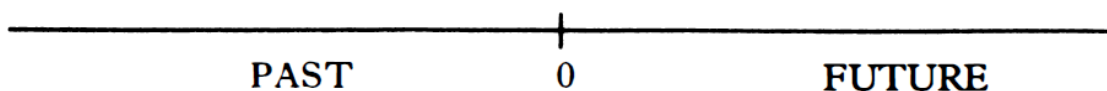
The cognitive and linguistic representation of events is based on the essential categories of space and time, through which events are conceptualized, organised and put in interrelation (Sinha, Gärdenfors 2014: 72). Without these two basic categories no well -coordinated communication, inter-comprehension or society would be possible. For instance, every natural language has a rich inventory of means to express time and space. Nevertheless, as pointed out by Klein (1994: 3) a primacy of time expressions in comparison to those of space has often been shown in the study of natural languages. This imbalance is made evident, on the one hand, by the freedom of the speaker to refer to space location in his utterance or not and, on the other hand, by the constant presence of temporal information. This evidence is not only offered by languages with finite verbs, which express time notions through morphological markers on them, but also by languages such as Chinese with no finite verbs but with other means to express time. (Klein 1994: 10). The asymmetry between the categories of time and space is also marked by the relativity of space positions: given a point A in the space and a point B located on the left of A, the left position of B in relation to A will not be maintained if the observation point is moved to another position. That is not the case for location in time, because given an event A in time and an event B, past compared to A, B will always remain past compared to A.

In order to give a definition of time in language, it is important to distinguish it from the general notion of Time, the physic entity related to the events of reality, a continuous evolution of the existence of events in the past, in the present and in the future, considered as a whole (Bertinetto 1986: 23). This latter concept is articulated in many different ways, depending on the perspective of the different human cultures, which try to create instruments to define and objectify the passing of time. For the concept of linguistic time, English provides the term Tense, which indicates, according to the definition of Giorgi&Pianesi (1997), the system of relationships, which are instantiated between events and expressed by linguistic elements, such as morphological verbal markers or temporal adverbials.¹ The

1 The main instruments for the expression of time in natural languages are, thus, verbal tenses and

concrete realization of tenses observed in a variety of languages can present relevant differences. There are languages, for instance, which do not express any morphological distinction between Past and Future, other languages which do not present any future tense, such as Finnish, or other ones whose basic temporal opposition is constituted by the pair Presence/Future, for example Yoruba.

In most of the cases, though, languages show the employment of tenses as a means to locate events in relation to the present moment of the utterance. As Comrie (1985: 2) points out, it is possible to represent time as a straight line, where the past coincides conventionally with the left side and the future with the right side. Considering the present as a point 0 in the centre of the line, all the events occurred in the past would be located on the left of 0 and all the events of the future on its right.



(Comrie 1985: 2, Figure 1)

Comrie (1985) proposes the representation of time depicted in the figure above in order to fix a universal account of tense, valid for every kind of language. Since Comrie's representation is connected especially to a Western way of conceiving time, many arguments have been proposed against the universality of this diagrammatical description of time. It has, in fact, been argued that some cultures have a completely different concept of time, such as a cyclic one, or no conception of time at all and some others do not conceive of the idea of progress.

temporal adverbials. The category of adverbials do not include just pure adverbs, but also all the lexical items and syntactic structures which can absolve the same function of temporal adverbs (Bertinetto, 1986).

According to some studies, tenses seem to be driven diachronically by temporal adverbs, as it has been noted in some pidgins: for example Neo-melanesian has developed a morphologic marker for the future, *bai*, located before the verb and obtained by the morphologization of the adverb *baimbai*, from the English *by and by*, used to express the idea of future. (Labove, 1970/1977)

But in Comrie's opinion, all these observations are irrelevant for the development of a tense account: even if a culture does not admit a conceptualization of time, everyone has the perception of the natural evolution of the life phases of a person; even if some cultures do not conceive the idea of progress, the qualitative changes in time do not affect the temporal sequence of events on the time line.²

A further discussion, related to the conception of time in language, involves the definition of temporal entities. One of their most common representations arises from Arthur Prior's Tense Logic (Prior 1955, 1957), where temporal referent are conceived as points without duration.³ This interpretation immediately faces some issues connected to the limit of the truth conditions of an utterance represented by a single finite point on the time line. Those issues arise from examples such as 1) *John ran*, for which it is hard to define to which step of the running of John the moment represented by the point on the timeline corresponds. The point of the tense of *John ran* could correspond, for instance, to his movement of the left or the right leg or also to the pause between the two phases of the event (Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 23). In order to face the problems arising from the conception of temporal entities as a point, other theories have considered them as intervals, a notion which implies the existence of a duration. An interval approach seems to fit better for a tense account, because it avoids considering the possibility of referring through the language only to punctual and durationless entities (Moens 1987: 39). Even this approach indeed presents some problems, like the one related to the stative nature of predicates. Considering the sentence

(2) *John was sick*

(example from Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 24)

the interval, which the sentence refers to, contains the time span from the beginning to the end

2 For instance, cultures with a cyclic conceptualization of time, such as the Australian Aboriginal cultures, consider every event occurring in the present time as a reflection of an event occurred in the cycle before and as a premise of another one which will be occur in the future. Nevertheless that seems not to have an influence on tenses as grammatical categories of the languages of the cultures concerned (Comrie 1985: 5).

3 A brief explanation of Priorean Temporal Logic will be presented in section 1.1.2 of this chapter.

of John's sickness. Although, if we take into account the interval approach, the truth of this sentence can be questioned, because (Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 24) «according to a widely accepted view (cf. Dowty 1979), propositions whose main predicate is stative have the property that their truth at an interval i entails their being true at any subinterval of i . Thus, if i' is a subinterval of i , it holds that John is sick at i' . Suppose now that j is an interval containing i . Then, there is a part of j where John is sick (i), and another part where he is not, (i'). What is the status of (36) or, more precisely, of the propositions corresponding to (36), with respect to j ?».

An alternative solution has, thus, been proposed in the literature. This new temporal ontological option is represented by the concept of event, an alternative which would avoid all the contrasts in the truth conditions deriving from the point and interval hypothesis. One of the first people to assume event as temporal entities is Trichy (1980, 1985), who points out that each event is the only factor determining the time span it takes up and that it is necessary to take into account the internal phases of the event. The same ontological basic concept has been adopted as well by Bach (1986), whose theory includes atomic events, plural events and processes, but one of the most influential proposals in this domain is Davidson (1967) who considers events to be concrete individuals. On the heels of this work, Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) refer to events as temporal entities and hypothesize that, in this way, truth conditions of sentences just require the existence of an event. Considering the example cited above, *John ran*, its truth condition would affirm the existence of the event of running.

(3) $\exists e(\text{run}(\text{John}, e))$

(example from Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 25)

In accordance with these assumptions, in this work events will be accepted as ontological basic entities and the term will be employed throughout the whole thesis to refer to temporal states of affairs.

1.1.2 Tense approaches

In this section, on the basis of the theoretical general notions discussed above, different

semantic approaches to time in language will be presented and compared: they are in particular the so called Priorean Tense Logic and the Referential approach.

As mentioned in the preceding section, Arthur Prior's achievements resulted in the development of an account for time in language, the Tense Logic, considering tenses as sentential operators, which, applied to basic sentences, product new sentences with a time evaluation in the past or in the future. As demonstrated in the following examples (Giorgi, Pianesi 1997, p.), the operator for the past is P, while the one for the future is F and both operators create binary relations between time points on the time line, transforming *untensed* sentences into *tensed* ones.

(4) a. John saw Mary
P[see(John, Mary)]

(5) b. John will see Mary
F[see(John, Mary)]

A fundamental characteristic of the Priorean tense operators is the option of combinability. Combined in more complex sequences, tense operators can express the meaning of more articulated tenses, such as the English pluperfect, obtained by combining two P operators, or the future perfect, resulted from the union of P and F. Nevertheless, the possibility of combination is not always able to absolve the meaning of some tenses, as for instance the Present Perfect, which cannot be represented by any sequence of tense operators.

The latter is not the only argument against Priorean tense logic, which demonstrates the impossibility of assuming tense operators theory as a basis for a tense approach. Other gaps have, in fact, been shown in relation to the interaction of the time evaluation, given by the operators P and F, and other expressions as the DPs. An explicit demonstration of this lack is proposed by the following example mentioned in Giorgi, Pianesi (1997: 10) and taken from Enc (1986), where a quantified DP occurs:

(6) All rich men were poor children.

Since the DP is introduced by *all*, a universal quantifier comes into play and the interaction

with the tense operator P makes it more complicated to build a truth condition which can really meet the original meaning of the sentence.

- (7) a. $\forall x (\text{rich-man}(x) P(\text{poor-child}(x)))$
b. $P(\forall x (\text{rich-man}(x) \text{---}\rangle\text{poor-child}(x)))$

(example 24 from Giorgi and Pianesi 1997: 10)

Both truth conditions presented above do not represent the meaning of the sentence (6), which instead affirms that all rich men, both the past and present ones, were once poor children. The truth condition (7)a., actually, means that for every rich man x of the present time there is a past time in which x was a poor child; in condition (7)b., on the contrary, the operator P encompasses the universal operator \forall , giving a past evaluation to the whole sentence. For the condition (7)b., in fact, for every rich man of a time in the past there was a poor child at the same time in the past.

In addition to the latter arguments related to the interaction of tense operators with DPs, another failure of the Priorian tense logic is the lack of a defined limit for the combination of tense operators. As already mentioned before, it is in fact possible, according to the Priorian theory, to compose limitless sequences of P and F. This option produces, anyway, combinations which do not find any concrete reflection in real tenses which are in a limited number across natural languages.

A further traditional tense approach is constituted by Reichenbach's tense system (Reichenbach 1947), which represents a starting point for the Referential approach and analyses semantic differences in the temporal reference domain through the postulation of three temporal entities, S, E and R. While S is the *speech time*, namely the time of the utterance, and E the time of the *event* expressed by the predicate, R represents the ultimate proposal of Reichenbach and indicates the *reference time*, which has been defined as (Taylor 1977: 203) «the temporal standpoint from which the speaker invites his audience to consider the occurrence of the event».

Referring to Jespersen (1924), Reichenbach postulates the existence of a third temporal entity, i.e. the reference time, in order to avoid vague notions such as "more past than normal past"

needed because of the semantics of complex tenses like the perfects (Moens 1987). Assuming the existence of these three temporal entities, tenses are involved in ordering them in two distinct relation categories: the first one between S and R and the second one between R and E. *Speech time* and *event time* are, thus, never in a direct relation, but their interconnection is always mediated by the *reference time*. According to Reichenbach's account, the relations between S and R on one hand and R and E on the other are consequently the following ones:

<i>Relation</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Name</i>
S,R	S is simultaneous with R	present
S—R	S precedes R	future
R—S	R precedes S	past

<i>Relation</i>	<i>Meaning</i>	<i>Name</i>
E,R	E is simultaneous with R	simultaneous
E—R	E precedes R	anterior
R—E	R precedes E	posterior

(Tables from Hackmack 1991: 7)

As hypothesized by Giorgi, Pianesi (1997: 27), tenses should be the result of the two categories of relations, namely the S and R relation, called T1, and the E and R relation, called T2. Although such a system would not always reflect the tenses in the strict sense of natural languages. Considering the case of English, for instance, the posterior future and the posterior past would not correspond to any tense contained in the tense inventory of the language. In fact, Reichenbach's proposal assumes the existence of a morphological distinction in tenses for each possible position of E in relation to R and S, but it seems not to be the case.

Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) propose, thus, a revisited Reichenbachian theory of tense, hypothesizing a categorial distinction between the two relations, T1 and T2, which is produced in the features and in the morphosyntactic behaviour of the tense morphemes.⁴

These heads are projected only when the temporal relation is realized, i.e. when the temporal points do not coincide. On the one hand, T1 is, thus, projected in past tenses, where the relation R_S is realized, and in future tenses, whose temporal relation is S_R. T2, on the other hand, is projected for tenses that express the meaning of perfect (E_R) or prospective (R_E). The syntactic structure describing tenses differs from one language to another, especially in

4 Further arguments about the distinction between T1 and T2 will be presented in the section 1.3 of this chapter in relation to the discussion about the Perfect.

the combination of T with AGR, since languages such as English do not overtly realize at the same time tense morphemes and agreement affix. Other languages like Italian or German, instead, allow the coexistence of both affixal heads.

(8) a. He loves/loved.

b. *He loveds.

c. *He wills love.

(9) a. am-o-

b. am-av-o.

(example from Giorgi, Piansesi 1997: 68, 69)

For English, therefore, Giorgi and Piansesi (1997) hypothesize the existence of a *hybrid* category AGR/T, whose features, respectively the ϕ -features of the third person and the temporal feature, are strictly dependent on each other. The value of the third person expressed by AGR, for instance, hints the unmarked features of tense, but, on the contrary, the marked t-features have no effect on the third person value.

Since Italian behaves in a different way in comparison to English, in the second chapter of this work, we will focus on the syntactic structure of Italian tenses, showing how, in this case, ϕ -features and t-features are overtly realized.

1.2 Aspect

1.2.1 Tense and Aspect

As displayed in the preceding paragraph, tenses establish relationships between events located on the time line. Natural languages build these relationships starting from the point of the utterance, distinguishing among past, present and future events. As explained by Comrie (1985), tenses which take the present moment as their deictic centre are called *Absolute tenses*. *Relative tenses*, on the contrary, build relations between events not considering as deictic centre the present moment, but another one. Moreover, absoluteness and relativeness of tenses can be combined in the case of *Absolute-relative tenses*, such as the pluperfect or the future perfect, where the event is placed in the past relative to the reference point, but this latter is located, respectively, in the past or in the future relative to the speech moment. Even if not all the natural languages grammaticalise the semantic concept of time reference in the definite category of tenses, the lexicalization of time reference seems to always occur across languages by means of temporal adverbials, used to collocate events in time.⁵

Beyond these distinctions, it is also possible to classify and order events referring to their internal temporal structure. The grammatical category for catching the internal arrangement is referred to by the name of *aspect*. The general definition of aspect proposed by Comrie (1976: 3) reads as follows:

«aspects are different ways of viewing the internal temporal constituency of a situation»

As in the case of external temporal information, aspectual values can also be expressed in two different ways: on one hand they can be realized through grammaticalization and, thus, aspect can in this case be considered as a pure grammatical category of languages; on the other hand, this internal temporal information can also be exhibited by lexical material. In the case of the aspectual domain, there is a lack of terminological uniformity and the distinction, mentioned above, between grammaticalized and lexicalized aspectual values has produced a discussed

5 Bertinetto (1986: 29) proposes a classification of temporal adverbials, taking into account as ranking criteria the ones of a) *deicticity/anaphoricity/calendarity* and b) *durativity/punctuality/frequentativity*.

non-compliance among the various studies on this linguistic area.

The term which often competes or co-occurs with the term *aspect* is the German one of *Aktionsart*, a word which means "kinds of actions". The distinction between *aspect* and *Aktionsart* refers normally to the different way in which internal semantic distinctions are expressed: the former term indicates the grammatical category and the latter all the results of the lexicalization of the internal temporal information.

In order to enter the concrete meaning driven by the concept of aspect, the following examples from different languages can give a clearer demonstration of such a distinction:

(10) English: John was reading when I entered.

French: Jean lisait quand j'entraï.

Spanish: Juan leía cuando entré.

Italian: Gianni leggeva quando entrai.

(example from Comrie 1986:3)

The sentences in (10) are constituted by two parts which clearly play a different role in building the general meaning: the first predicate proposes the background, whereas the second one refers to the event itself, considered in its entirety. The event of entering, in fact, is, presented as a whole with a beginning and an end. On the contrary, the event of *John reading* makes up the setting in which the event of entering occurs. The form *John is reading* does not give any information concerning the beginning and the end of the event, but it rather makes explicit reference to its internal temporal structure. The distinction arising from the two verbs employed in sentence (8) does not have a temporal nature, since both events occur in the past, but it has an aspectual nature, because the differences are related to the internal information of the events. As we will see in the next section, the verbal forms such as *John was reading* have an *imperfective* aspect, while forms like *I entered* present a *perfective* aspectual value.

The aspectual values are unbounded from any time localization question or from the mutual order between events. Aspect is used, rather, to unearth specific semantic properties, connected to the verbal tenses, but in relation to the different perspectives and ways in which

the speaker can perceive the development of an event.

Even if tense and aspect represent two separate and different grammatical categories, there are cases which demonstrate that they are, though, strictly connected. Comrie (1976: 82) proposes, for instance, the example of some West-African languages, such as Yoruba and Igbo, where there are no morphological markers that convey the temporal opposition between present and past, but there are aspectual distinctions, useful to replace that lack. As a result of this status, in Igbo, for instance, in *neutral* contexts without any temporal indications, imperfective forms, identified by *nà* located before the verb, express present meaning, whereas perfective forms refer to the past. Something similar also occurs in languages which demonstrate a lack of explicit temporal markers, such as Chinese, where aspectual morphemes can also express temporal information (Melchert 1980, quoted in Bertinetto 1986: 25).

Other examples, for instance the following one mentioned by Moens (1987: 54), seem to show that the relation between tense and aspect is more systematic and relevant than it appears.

(11) a. John wrote a good book.

b. John writes a good book.

(example 68, Moens 1987: 54)

As it is possible to notice, sentence (11 a.) refers to a whole, definite and singular event, whereas sentence (11 b.) expresses the meaning of an habitual event, the one of writing a good book. This semantic distinction, which is shown from the different verbal forms employed in the examples, is clearly driven in this case by the variation of tenses.

Also in a romance language like Spanish, which presents aspectual distinctions through inflectional morphology, it is possible to notice that tense and aspect categories can combine their information in a unique form. The verbal form of (12) combines, for instance, an imperfective meaning with past temporal information.

(12) Maria cocinaba.

Not always do aspectual properties correspond to temporal ones and neither do all natural

languages use morphological markers to express aspect.

Summing up, temporal-aspectual categories are clearly differentiated in some languages, whereas they can combine their properties in some others. Since the categories of the temporal-aspectual domain are so variable and undefined across natural languages, their wide repertoire of options can often produce neutralizations or connections among them.

1.2.2 Perfective and Imperfective aspectual values

As mentioned in the preceding section, the main distinction within the aspectual values consists in the opposition between *Imperfective* and *Perfective*. Taking into account Comrie (1976: 16)'s definitions, Imperfectivity considers the event from an internal point of view within its structure, whereas Perfectivity pays attention to the event as a whole, with a global perspective, i.e. in its totality.⁶

Misleading definitions of perfective and imperfective have considered them as indicating, respectively, events of short duration or limited periods of time and events of long duration or unlimited periods. This idea can easily be questioned, since both aspects can refer to the same span of time, without any connection to the duration or limitedness of the time period.

With regard to the perfective aspect, it implies a global view of the event which includes the final point of the time span. In other words, in comparison to the imperfective form, which requires an internal point of view relative to the event structure, perfective assumes an external perspective. As mentioned, perfective has often been associated with the notion of *complete*, that has to be differentiated from the one of *completed*. Comrie (1976: 19), in fact, points out that it is necessary to demarcate the divergence between the two terms, since the

6 A more detailed classification of the aspectual values divides imperfective and perfective in other subcategories which try to capture the different shades of verbal aspect detectable in natural languages. In Bertinetto (1986: 119) this classification is represented by a diagram, where the imperfective aspectual values are divided into the categories of *habitual*, *progressive* and *continuous*, whereas perfective distinguishes between *complete* and *aorist* properties. Aorist itself, according to this classification, disposes of a subcategory, the *ingressive* one. Bertinetto's analysis refers especially to the Italian verbal system, while the classification proposed by Comrie (1976) distributes the aspectual categories in a different order. He considers, for instance, *progressive* and *nonprogressive* as subcategories of the imperfective value *continuous*.

latter puts too much emphasis on the final point of the event. Perfective forms do not imply any prominence among the different phases of the development of the event, which are rather considered in their totality, i.e. in their building a *complete* event.

With respect to the imperfective aspect, as seen above, it entails explicit references to the internal phases of the temporal structure of an event. It means, actually, that imperfective forms assume an internal point of view, opposite to the global and total overview of perfective aspect values.

As for all the aspectual values in general, the expression of imperfectivity differs from language to language, since it is sometimes represented by a single category, sometimes subdivided into more specific subcategories which are characterized by semantic distinctions of the general aspectual properties of imperfective. The main subgroups concerning imperfective are the *habitual* and the *continuous* and the latter itself distinguishes between *progressive* and *nonprogressive*.

Habitual imperfective can be referred to as the aspect indicating the re-occurring of an event, in relation to some defined and recurring conditions. It seems apparently to be strictly connected to the notion of *iterativity*, but this association is misleading, since the repetition of an event does not implicate the property of habituality.

(13) Ho visto questo film tre volte.

'I have watched this film three times'

Sentence (13) shows that the iteration of an event does not involve the notion of habituality: in this case, for instance, the fact of having already watched the same film three times cannot be considered as a habit. Moreover, it is evident that the insertion of a numeric quantification of the iteration of an event excludes the possibility of an habitual interpretation.⁷ In fact, if the iteration of an event is limited to a number of repetitions, it can be conceived as a single event or as whole through a global view, typical of perfective forms. According to Bertinetto (1986: 79), this incompatibility is related to the intrinsic property of *indeterminacy*, the common

7 In this regard, Bertinetto (1986: 159) proposes the following example from Italian, which shows that numeric specifications of the repetition of an event seem to be incompatible with imperfective verbal forms:
i. *L'estate scorsa, Michele mi *veniva/venne/è venuto a trovarmi cinque volte.*

denominator of the imperfective forms. The indeterminacy of the habitual aspect is relevant, according to this analysis, despite the perspective of habituality, which tends to consider every single event forming the 'habit' as a concluded event. In Bertinetto (1986: 160)'s analysis, thus, indeterminacy involves not only the number of iterations, but also, in some specific contexts, the prosecution of the events sequence which compose the habitual process.

In addition, the habitual aspect also seems to have the feature of referring to an extended period. In this way, the event is not conceived as «incidental property of the moment», as affirmed by Comrie (1976: 28), but as a property of the entire period. Furthermore, when the event acquires the property of being continuous and characterising the period taken into account, habituality seems to move in the direction of *attitudinality*. This issue, discussed by Bertinetto (1986: 145), allows a question arise, as to whether habituality and attitudinality are two different aspects or just distinct notions on the conceptual level. Some languages, such as Turkish, express these two concepts by means of different aspectual values. The same distinction also seems to be shown by the fact that imperfective verbal forms can be expressed by habitual periphrasis, such as *used to* in English or *essere solito*+infinitive in Italian, only with habitual and not with attitudinal meaning.

This differentiation is, however, neutralized in some cases, where habituality implicates attitudinal values:

(14) Maria è solita fumare ⇒ Maria fuma

'Maria usually smokes ⇒ Maria smokes' (in the meaning of «Maria is a smoker»)

The discussed question, whether habituality and attitudinality are distinct aspects or just different sorts of the same category, is surely related to the language that one takes into account. Nevertheless, the solution achieved by Bertinetto (1986) in relation to Italian is that the two notions take part of the same aspectual category, but are differentiated in relation to the *Aktionsart*. The habitual aspect, thus, assumes different connotations depending on the nature of the verbal lexemes which it is applied to.

Another imperfective aspectual value which deserves to be taken into account is the *progressive* one, classified by Comrie as a subcategory of *continuousness*. It can be defined in the negative relative to habituality: continuousness is an imperfective which is not habitual. It

has been noted that some languages systematically distinguish progressive from nonprogressive forms, whereas others allow the use of forms to also express progressive meaning.

(15) a. Maria is singing

b. Maria sings

(16) a. Maria sta cantando

b. Maria canta

Sentence (15 a.) presents the English progressive form referring to the on-going event of Maria's singing, whereas the form used in (15 b.) excludes any progressive interpretation, contrasting with Italian. (16) a. and b. can both express a progressive meaning, even if the verbal form used in b. can also assume other aspectual values than the habitual one. French uses a progressive periphrasis too, *être en train de* + the infinitive form of the verb, but it is even less applied than the Italian one and progressiveness is normally expressed by nonprogressive forms.

The ways of applying progressive forms differ, thus, from one language to another and depends, moreover, on internal rules strictly related to the nature of the language taken into consideration.

1.3 Perfect

1.3.1 Perfect and the present perfect puzzle

We have seen in the preceding section that aspect provides information about the internal temporal structure of an event. Perfect differs from the aspectual values presented before, since it indicates a relation between a prior event and the state deriving from the event in question. In languages such as English, that means that perfect expresses the continuing relevance of an event to a moment which is future compared to the event itself. The tenses expressing perfect meaning are not always related to the present, as for instance the present perfect, but they can also express the relation between a past event and another even earlier event, as in the past perfect, or between a future event and a prior one, as in the future perfect (Comrie, 1976: 53). In other cases, such as in Italian and in other Romance languages, instead, perfect can also merely express a pure past, as we will later see.

The aim of the present work concerns the existence and the usages of the present perfect in a southern variety of Italian spoken in Sicily. I will focus, thus, in this section on the present perfect, in order to give a general theoretical basis from a semantic and syntactic perspective.

One of the most interesting questions concerning the present perfect is the so-called *present perfect puzzle* (Klein 1992), widely discussed in literature and indicating the impossibility in some languages of making event time explicit through temporal adverbials in co-occurrence with the use of the present perfect. Many theories have been proposed in order to give an explanation to the phenomenon. Dowty (1979) elaborates the concept of *extended now (XN)*, a time interval which includes the event time and is extended up to the speech time. The truth condition of the XN predicate, proposed by Dowty and quoted in Giorgi, Pianesi (1997: 90), reads as follows:

(17) $XN(t)$ is true at a time t' iff t' is a final subinterval of the interval denoted by t .

According to this theory, punctual temporal adverbials such as *yesterday* cannot be applied in a sentence with the present perfect, since the adverbials modify the extended now indicated by the verb.

(18) *John has eaten at twelve o' clock.

Taking into account the example mentioned above, Dowty's theory affirms that adverbials such as *at twelve o' clock*, if in combination with the present perfect, are ungrammatical. That occurs because the event of John's eating is contained in an extended now indicated by the time adverbial and this latter should, thus, extend up to the speech time and include it. Since this is not possible, sentences like (18) are not grammatical in English.

Another theory about the present perfect puzzle and mentioned by Giorgi, Pianesi (1997: 90) is the *consequent state* account developed by Parson (1990). The concept of consequent state indicates the state resulting from an event and is related to the state of being culminated. The consequent state, in fact, according to Parson, derives only from culminated events and holds for ever. As pointed out by Giorgi, Pianesi (1997), the consequent state has to be distinguished from the *target state* of an event, which does not hold for ever, but is instead temporary.

(19) John has eaten an apple.

(20) John threw the ball over the roof.

(examples from Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 91)

The first example, for instance, shows a consequent state which will never end, the state of John's having eaten an apple. The second one, on the contrary, has as the result the target state of the ball being on the roof, i.e. a temporary state.

According to Parson, if a temporal adverbial such as *yesterday* is added to the sentence in (19), the present perfect is not allowed any more. This occurs because the time made explicit by *yesterday*, at which the consequent state should hold, must coincide with the speech time now. Because of the impossibility of this coincidence, no punctual temporal adverbials are admitted with the present perfect.

An additional account for solving the present perfect puzzle is the one proposed by Klein (1992: 10) and based on the so-called *P-Definiteness Constraint*, which distinguishes two

groups of temporal expressions: precise temporal positions, *P-definite*, and not precise temporal positions, *P-indefinite*. Klein claims that in English the present tense is P-definite, since it implies that every temporal position must include the present moment of the speech time. On the other hand, the simple past is P-indefinite, because it only requires that the time of the event is past relative to the speech time. For the present perfect, instead, he refers to the mentioned P-Definiteness Constraint. The definition provided by Giorgi, Pianesi (1997: 112) reads as follow:

(21) **P-Definiteness Constraint:** In an utterance the expression of *R* and the expression of *E* cannot both be independently P-definite.

According to Klein's P-Definiteness Constraint, in sentences such as (18), *John has eaten at twelve o' clock*, both reference time and event time are P-definite: the former because of the present tense of the auxiliary and the latter because of the temporal adverbial employed in the sentence. Sentences such as the example (18) are, thus, unacceptable.

Even if the theories mentioned above seem to propose an explanation of the present perfect puzzle, they cannot be considered satisfactory, since they cannot be applied to languages other than English. As we will discuss in more detail in the next chapter, in fact, languages like Italian perfectly permit such temporal adverbials with the present perfect. The present perfect puzzle questioned here, for instance, seems to categorize languages in two different groups: on the one hand, the languages such as English or Scandinavian, which do not allow the co-occurrence of temporal adverbials and present perfect; on the other hand, languages like Italian or German, where this co-existence does not give rise to any ungrammaticality.

(22) *John has eaten at twelve o' clock.

(23) John ha mangiato alle dodici in punto.

Since the theories of Dowty, Parson and Klein are limited to the case of English and cannot be generalized, the proposal of Giorgi and Pianesi (1997) aims at providing a cross-linguistic explanation involving not only the semantic domain, but also the morphosyntactic one. They consider both temporal adverbials fixing the event time and the ones fixing the reference

present perfect.

German is endowed with two past tenses called *Perfekt* and *Präteritum*, etymologically comparable respectively to the Perfect and the Simple Past, but following different distribution rules to the English ones. The German perfect, for instance, can be used without conveying any current relevance meaning as shown in the following examples:

(25) Kolumbus hat Amerika entdeckt.

lit. Columbus has discovered America

(26) Mozart hat Klavier gespielt.

lit. Mozart has played the piano.

(examples 2, 3 from Comrie 1995: 151)

According to Comrie (1995: 152), the German *Präteritum* excludes the possibility of expressing current relevance, whereas the *Perfekt* is neutral towards it: this latter tense, in fact, can both indicate events with or without continuing current relevance. Moreover, as mentioned in the preceding section, the German *Perfekt* allows the use of punctual temporal adverbials:

(27) John hat gestern einen Apfel gegessen.

lit. John has eaten an apple yesterday.

Even if the two tenses seem to behave in a parallel way, since the *Perfekt* can also be associated with punctual time expressions and can disclose no current relevance, some cases demonstrate the existence of a distinction between *Perfekt* and *Präteritum*. For instance, *Perfekt* cannot be replaced by *Präteritum*, if the former expresses the continuing relevance of an event. Moreover, many examples demonstrate that in standard written German, especially for narration, the basic past tense which fits better in the context is the *Präteritum*.

Some non-standard varieties of German have an even simpler past tense system, since they exclusively employ the *Perfekt* to speak about the past. In particular, the class of Upper German dialects is characterised by the loss of the *Präteritum* and this characteristic also has an influence on the near-standard/standard varieties spoken in this area of Southern Germany

(as well as in Switzerland and Austria). Whereas some of the dialects of this area have completely lost the use of Präteritum, some others maintain it in a small number of verbs, as for instance the verb *sein* (to be).

Concerning the use of the present perfect in Romance languages, a very interesting analysis comes from the work of Harries (1982), who proposes a synchronic classification of the distribution of present perfect and simple past across the different languages of the Romance family. Bertinetto and Squartini (2000) offer a schematized version of Harries' classification which we report here below. Considering the syntactic and semantic difference of the present perfect in Romance compared to English, they refer to this tense by the name of Compound Past (CP).

STAGE I: the CP is "restricted to present states resulting from past actions, and is not used to describe past actions themselves, however recent" (some Southern Italian vernacular varieties)

STAGE II: the CP occurs "only in highly specific circumstances" such as contexts "aspectually marked as durative or repetitive" parallel to English *I have lived here / been living here all my life ; I have often seen him at the theatre* (Galician and Portuguese, many varieties of American Spanish)

STAGE III: the CP expresses "the archetypal present perfect value of past action with present relevance" (Castilian Spanish; some varieties of *langue d'oïl* and *langue d'oc*)

STAGE IV: the CP also expresses the preterital or aoristic functions, while the SP is restricted to "formal registers" (Standard French, Northern Italian, Standard Romanian)⁹

The subdivision proposed by Harries classifies southern varieties of Italian in the first stage. Since the main topic of the present research is represented by the existence and distribution of the present perfect in Sicilian compared to Italian, we will focus with more attention on this discussion in the next chapters.

We will now briefly introduce some information about Portuguese and French, which deserve to be taken into account.

Portuguese, classified by Harries in the second stage, is endowed with two past tenses, an

9 Bertinetto, Squartini (2000: 5)

analytic form, composed of the auxiliary verb *ter* plus a participle form, and a synthetic one. The Portuguese periphrastic form of the past presents a semantics which substantially differs from the other Romance languages, except Galician and some varieties of American Spanish. The afore-mentioned tense, for instance, conveys an iterative and durative meaning that associates the use of the present perfect with the expression of a habit.

(28) Tem comido muito.

I took the habit of eating a lot.

(examples 142 from Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 123)

The same requirements are not necessary in the employment of other forms of perfect, such as the past perfect, which does not communicate the habit meaning. Portuguese periphrastic past, moreover, cannot be combined with definite temporal adverbials like *yesterday* and cannot refer to completed past events, regardless of whether they are recent events or interpreted as experiential ones.

(29)*Já tens estado em Australia?

'Have you already been to Australia?'

(30) Nos últimos dias o João tem chegado tarde.

'In the last few days John arrived late.'

(examples 5, 7 from Bertinetto, Squartini 2000: 7)

Sentence (29) does not permit the use of the analytic form, since the predicate is interpreted as an experiential perfect, whereas sentence (30) is grammatical because it expresses the iterativity of John's arriving late. In the use of Portuguese present perfect, therefore, present relevance and recentness are not significant factors, whereas durativity and iterativity are.

In the 4th stage, Italian-like-languages are classified, i.e. French, Romanian, Northern Italian varieties, Romansh, Ladin, Friulan and Sardinian. In these languages, the compound form of the past tense is also used in merely perfective contexts, showing that recentness and temporal

distance are not relevant aspects. Nevertheless, as we will see in the next section, some data demonstrates that in French a diachronical development changed the distribution rules of the past tenses, since, until the XVII century, the use of the present perfect was related to the temporal closeness of the indicated event. A consistent distinction exists still, anyway, in modern standard French between the spoken and the written language. Oral French experienced the complete loss of the simple past, whereas this latter tense is still largely used in written texts, such as newspapers, and especially in formal and literary contexts. Furthermore, simple past seems to remain the basic tense for narration, since it (Bertinetto and Squartini 2000: 14) «advances the plot by situating the events in the narrative loom relative to one another».

Beyond the general situation of French described above, it is possible to note some exceptions in the different varieties spoken in France. In the Occitan and Franco-Provençal areas, the simple past seems to be more resistant and its current use has also been attested in the Northwest and Northeast, i.e. in the regions of Normandy and Wallonia.

After this brief overview of the uses of the present perfect across the different languages of the Germanic and Romance families, we will present in the next sections some of the possible meanings that the perfect can convey.

1.3.3 Types of perfect

As seen above, perfect expresses the continuing relevance of a prior event and instantiates a relation between this event and the state resulting from it. Beyond this general definition, it is possible to identify more detailed and specific meanings that perfect can assume. I will refer now to the classification proposed by Comrie (1976) and submit examples from English, but it is necessary to notice that not in every language does the perfect cover the whole spectrum of meanings that we are going to present.¹⁰ In particular, the specific perfect meanings discussed below are the perfect of result, the experiential perfect, the perfect of persistent situation and the perfect of recent past.

The examples that we will take into account are limited to the present perfect, because it fits with the discussions of the next chapters and with the goals of the whole thesis which aims to

¹⁰ A more detailed classification of the types of perfect present in the Italian language will be discussed in chapter 2.

analyse the present perfect in the Sicilian dialect. Nevertheless, the different types of perfect meaning can also be applied to other forms, as the past perfect or the future perfect.

Taking into account the perfect in its resultative meaning, it is possible to notice that it implicates not only the occurrence of an event, but also the state resulting from it and caused by it. In other words, resultative perfect refers to an event whose direct result still holds at the *evaluation moment*. The latter, which often corresponds to the moment of the utterance, represents the point from which the perfect is evaluated, i.e. the end point of the period, commonly known as *extended now*, which perfect involves. The resultative perfect can be considered, thus, as the most explicit form in which the current relevance is expressed by the perfect.

(31) John has cleaned the table.

Sentence in (31) refers to the event of cleaning the table in the past relative to the moment of the utterance, but it licences the inference of a resulting state: the fact that the table is now clean and it is not necessary to clean it again can be considered as a current state resulting from the event expressed by the perfect.

(32) John has had a bath.

As in (31), also the perfect in (32) presents the same resultative meaning, deriving in this case from the event of having a bath: the subject does not immediately need to have any other bath, since he is now clean.

The perfect of result has to be distinguished from the experiential perfect, which implies that the event indicated by the perfect has held at least once in a period of time in the past which includes the moment of the utterance as the final moment.

(33) John has been to Venice.

The experiential perfect in (33) means, therefore, that in the time span of John's life leading

up to the moment of the utterance, it has occurred at least once that John has been to Venice. The sentence in (33) is a very clear example of the experiential meaning of the perfect and can also be used in order to distinguish this type of perfect from the resultative one, whose demarcations are often undefined.

As Comrie (1976: 59) points out, in fact, English distinguishes sometimes overtly between resultative and experiential perfects, as shown by the following example:

(34) John has gone to Venice.

Sentence in (34) clearly differentiates from (33), since *John has gone to Venice* needs a resultative interpretation, which tells us that John is still in Venice. On the contrary, the experiential reading of (33) suggests that John has been in Venice at least once, but it does not necessarily imply that he is still there.

In most cases, though, at least in English, the distinction between the two types of perfect can be more complicated and ambiguous, since it is not overtly expressed. The following example is a demonstration of this ambiguity, which can be solved through other kinds of information, as prosodic or contextual ones:

(35) Ann: I have lost my passport
Beth: Oh dear. What are you going to do?
Ann: Oh no. I meant in the past.
(example n. 4 from Mittwoch 2008)

In the dialogue proposed by Mittwoch (2008), the reaction of Beth demonstrates that she interpreted the perfect used by Ann, *I have lost*, with a resultative reading. The final utterance of Ann shows, indeed, that it was instead an experiential one: the state resulting from the perfect used in the first sentence is not current anymore and it has to be interpreted as an event which occurred at least once in Ann's life.

The analysis of Mittwoch (2008) proposes moreover a differentiation between the two perfect types related to the singularity or not singularity of the event. According to this study, in fact, resultative perfect denotes singular events, while experiential ones can be associated connected to the possibility of plurality. As argument in favour of the experiential reading, for

instance, Mittwoch takes into account the occurrence of quantified DPs or adverbs of quantification and the *repeatability* of the event.

(36) John has been to Venice three times.

(37) Have you ever been to the Biennale?

(38) John has died.

In the example (36), the adverb of quantification implies the plurality of the event is connected to the experiential reading; sentence (37) can also be interpreted as experiential, since the event of the Biennale occurs every year and it is felicitous as long as the Biennale as an international event and institution lasts. On the contrary, (38) has to be interpreted as a resultative, since the perfect implies the state of John being dead and precludes the possibility of the *repeatability* of the event.

A further possible perfect meaning is the perfect of persistent situation, that involves a period of time including the present in which the event or the situation described by the verb is still valid. This usage of the perfect is characteristic of the English language, where it is possible to have sentences such as the following one:

(39) John has lived in London for two years.

The perfect in (39) describes a situation which started in the past and persists in the present, since John has lived in London for the last two years and he still lives there. It is evident that the English present perfect creates a continuing connection between a time in the past and the present, whereas other languages behave differently in cases like (39). Many other languages, in fact, employ the present to express an on-going situation which started in the past and lasts until the present.

(40) John vive a Londra da due anni.

(41) John habite à Londres depuis deux ans.

(42) John wohnt seit zwei Jahren in London.

The examples above show, for instance, that Italian, French and also German rely on the present tense to express these kinds of situations that are related both to the past and to the present.

Last but not least in Comrie's classification of the types of perfect, we find the perfect of recent past, whose characteristic current relevance derives from the temporal closeness of the event in the past to the present. Normally, the recentness of an event is not a necessary factor for determining the current relevance of the perfect, but it can be a sufficient condition to imply the use of the perfect. As seen before, English does not allow the use of past temporal adverbials in combination with the present perfect, but by reason of the recent past reading, the employment of *recently*, *just* and their synonyms is permitted.

(43) John has recently played football.

(44) John has just arrived.

The degree of recentness allowed using the perfect varies across languages and English, for instance, does not authorize any other explicit reference to a past time.

(45) *John has eaten an apple yesterday.

Even expressions such as *this morning* are not allowed if the moment of the utterance is situated after the time span of the morning of the same day. On the contrary other languages, like most of the Romance ones, have developed a use of the perfect which does not really take into account the recentness of the event described by the verb. This development is evident if one considers that in French grammar of the seventeenth century "the rule of the twenty-four hours" was in force, which fixed the limit to the employment of the perfect: it could be used only in order to describe events occurring within twenty-four hours before the present moment (Comrie 1976: 61). In modern spoken French, on the contrary, the use of the perfect has completely replaced the Simple Past and the same has also occurred, as we will see in the next chapter, in other languages such as Italian.

2 The present perfect in the Italian domain: the case of Sicilian.

In this chapter I focus on the functions and the uses of the present perfect in Italian and in Sicilian, comparing the distribution of this tense to other past tenses such as the Simple Past and also the Imperfect. This analysis will take into account geographical distinctions which, according to a common *cliché* regarding the distribution of the Simple Past and the Present Perfect, seem to divide the Italian peninsula into two different areas. In the northern part of Italy, in fact, there is in evidence an almost exclusive use of the compound form, whereas in the South the Simple Past is dominant. Central Italy, on the other hand, covers, both geographically as well as in the distribution of the two past tenses, a mid-point role, demonstrating a more balanced use of both forms. It is this latter standard variety which I will refer to in the description of the Italian tenses. This perception of the unequal distribution of the compound and the simple past forms in Italy is confirmed by many grammatical descriptions of Italian, like Serianni (1988), and by traditional studies about the dialectal differences which exist across Italy, such as Rohlfs (1966-1969).

Nevertheless, studies about the evolution of Modern Italian show an increasing use of the compound past also in the southern area and hypothesize a re-standardization process (Berruto 1987) or a general development of the whole verbal system, which evolves in the direction of the present perfect thanks to the stronger morphological regularity of this tense in comparison to the simple past (Berretta 1988).

In the first section of this chapter I analyse three of the past verbal forms available in Italian, i.e. the Imperfect, the Simple Past and the Present Perfect, with a focus on the latter one, in order to give an overview of the morphological, syntactic and semantic characteristics of which it is constituted. Comparing the three tenses, it will be possible to better understand their distribution in the spoken and written Italian language, the distinctions in their use and their temporal and aspectual peculiarities.

This first section will represent the point of departure for the subsequent analysis focusing on the case of the Sicilian dialect, discussed in the second section of the chapter. I will, in fact, first provide a brief outline of the general dialectal situation concerning the use of the simple

past and the present perfect in Italy and, then, I will focus my attention on the tense system of the dialect spoken in the Sicilian island. My interest will concentrate especially on the state of the art review of the present perfect in Sicilian, the main subject of my experimental research, whose information contained in the linguistic literature elaborated so far presents some discrepancies and gaps. This final discussion about the existent hypothesis on the Sicilian present perfect will represent the theoretical base for the experimental data presented in chapter 3.

2.1 Imperfect, Simple Past and Present Perfect in Italian

In this section I present the three deictic forms expressing a past meaning in Italian, i.e.. *Imperfetto* (Imperfect), *Passato Remoto* (Simple Past) and *Passato Prossimo* (Present Perfect). The Italian past tenses range also includes two relative tenses, *Trapassato Prossimo* and *Trapassato Remoto*, which indicate the priority of an event relative to another past one, but in the present analysis I will only take into account the former three deictic forms. The focus will be on the compound past form, *Passato Prossimo*, in order to show its different characteristics in comparison to the English present perfect and to build a starting point for the main analysis of the present work, i.e. the present perfect in the Sicilian dialect.

2.1.1 Imperfect

The Imperfect can be considered as one of the most ductile tenses of the Italian language thanks to the flexibility of the meaning and the variance of uses. It has often been evident that the Italian imperfect does not merely behave like a normal tense, but it presents several modal uses, which overrun into the *Conditional* and *Subjunctive* areas. In this work, however, I will not take into account the modal occurrences of the imperfect, rather I will focus on the aspectual and temporal characteristics of this tense. The starting point of the analysis can be, in fact, represented by the aspectual values system of the imperfect, which is a tense with a purely imperfective nature.

Giorgi and Pianesi (2002: 32) propose that the imperfect is a 'dependent' tense relying on contextual temporal references and that it can be considered as a present in the past.¹¹ This condition of present in the past relies on its pure imperfective aspect which, as Bertinetto (1986) points out, is made evident by the indeterminacy characterizing the event expressed by the imperfect form of the verb. The mentioned indeterminacy involves the prosecution, the duration and the number of iterations of the event. Concerning the first point, i.e. the prosecution of the event, the indeterminacy of the imperfect tense form focuses on the development of the event itself, but does not give any information about its accomplishment.

¹¹ For further discussions on the imperfect tense see Giorgi and Pianesi (1995, 2001, 2004,) and Giorgi (2010)

(1) Quando arrivai, Maria leggeva il giornale come ogni mattina.

When I arrived, Maria was reading the newspaper like every morning.

The verb form *leggeva* suggests that the event of Maria's reading was already ongoing and, thus, focuses on the development of the event. Nevertheless, it is not possible to deduce if the event has been accomplished or not.

The indeterminacy, according to Bertinetto's analysis, also concerns the duration of the event. The imperfectivity of the tense taken into account, in fact, demonstrates the openness of the event on the temporal line without defining its duration. Even if it is sometimes possible to find duration adverbials in co-occurrence with imperfect verbal forms, such as in

(2) Maria leggeva ogni giorno il giornale per due ore.

Maria used to read the newspaper every day for two hours.

these adverbials cannot be considered as normal adverbials of defined duration, since they do not specify the duration of the whole process, which is presented in (2) as an habitual event: rather they merely give information about the singular occurrences.

With regard to the co-occurrence of imperfect and adverbials indicating the number of iterations of the event, indeed, it is possible to note differences depending on the determinacy of the adverbials. Sentences like (3) are acceptable because of the indefiniteness of the number of iterations,

(3) Maria leggeva il giornale tutte le mattine.

Maria used to read the newspaper every morning

whereas sentences such as (4) are ungrammatical because of the incompatibility of the definite adverbials and the imperfect verbal form.

(4) # Maria leggeva il giornale tre volte.

Maria used to read the newspaper three times.

Nevertheless, (4) can still be acceptable if it is considered from a narrative perspective or if it

is inserted in a context of habituality, such as in (5), or if a temporal indication suggests the simultaneous execution of two different events, such as in (6).

(5) Maria leggeva il giornale tre volte a settimana.

Maria used to read the newspaper three times a week.

(6) Ieri, mentre tu te ne stavi a dormire per tutta la mattinata, Maria leggeva il giornale tre volte.

lit. Yesterday, while you were sleeping all morning, Maria was reading the newspaper three times.

The imperfective nature of the imperfect tense is also made evident by the possibility of the speaker of choosing between the afore-mentioned tense and the other two perfective past tenses of Italian. This choice depends on the way in which the speaker wants to present the event.

(7) a. Quella sera a Roma ha nevicato/nevicò.

b. Quella sera a Roma nevicava.

The sentence in (7) a., in fact, highlights the event occurrence and its accomplishment, whereas the sentence in b. focuses on the event development, without giving any evidence of its duration or end.

In spite of all the arguments sustaining the exclusive imperfective disposition of the imperfect aspect, there are also some cases showing that the tense in question can sometimes express perfective aspectual values. It is the case of the so-called *narrative imperfect*, developed from the novels of the 19th century in almost all the romance languages and affirmed in current journalistic language. This narrative side of the imperfect is, in fact, often combined with elements strictly related to the perfective aspectual values, i.e. adverbials of defined duration or adverbials of defined numeric iteration, such as in the example mentioned by Bertinetto (1986: 386, ex. 11c)

(8) La guerra, scoppiata nel 1914, durava circa cinque anni e si concludeva

con il trattato di Versailles.

The war, started in 1914, lasted about five years and ended with the Treaty of Versailles.

Nevertheless, because of the strong imperfective inclination, which the imperfect tense demonstrates in its standard usages, and considering the possible aspectual neutralizations, which permit a perfective reading in narrative contexts, in order to evaluate the general aspectual values of the imperfect, it is necessary to analyse every single case in which it is employed.

Taking now shortly into account the temporal properties of the imperfect, as pointed out by Giorgi (2008), the characteristic *anaphoric* has often been attributed to the imperfect form, since, even if it can be employed in main clauses, the imperfect cannot occur *out of the blue*, but needs to be anchored to some temporal references provided by the context, as shown in (9). Moreover, the temporal anchoring of the imperfect form cannot be directly related to the moment of the utterance, i.e. to the temporal coordinates of the speaker: rather this temporal relation always works indirectly.

(9) a. # Maria leggeva un giornale.

Maria read a newspaper.

b. Ieri mattina, Maria leggeva un giornale.

Yesterday morning Maria read a newspaper.

2.1.2 Simple Past

Among the three deictic past tenses of Italian, the Simple Past seems to be the most stable and unambiguous within its exclusive perfective aspectual values. As we will see in section 2.2, the distribution of the simple past in contrast to the present perfect form is related in Italian to diatopic variations, which make the usage of these two tenses variable across the different geographical areas of Italy. Nevertheless, in a general standard definition, it is possible to consider the simple past as a tense indicating an event that occurred in the past and is free

from connections to the time of the utterance. That does not mean that the event must be situated in a very distant time from the present, but it needs to be considered as definitely in past time and impossible to re-actualise. Because of the aoristic aspectual value, in fact, the simple past describes a concluded event, whose end point is well known, without considering its effects as actual or relevant for the speaker.

A peculiarity of the simple past is, moreover, its strong deictic nature which often contrasts it to the present perfect form: the simple past, in fact, always indicates an event whose anteriority to the moment of the utterance is necessary. The same does not occur with the present perfect, which can sometimes be used to indicate an event anterior to the reference time, but posterior to the time of the utterance.

(10) Ti chiamerò quando ho finito/*finii.

lit. I will call you when I have finished/I finished

As shown in the example above, the use of the simple past with a future meaning compared to the speaker's present moment is ungrammatical and needs the employment of the compound past form. That means that events expressed by the simple past always have to respect a precedent position relative to the moment of the utterance; on the other hand, the present perfect can be located in different positions on the time line. As proposed by Bertinetto (1986: 430), this difference between the two tenses means that the simple past cannot assume some atemporal interpretations which can, instead, be expressed by the compound form.

(11) Per consolarmi, cercai di pensare ad una madre che ha perso/perse il proprio figlio.

Lit. In order to comfort me, I tried to think of a mother who has lost/lost her child.

(from Bertinetto 1986: 430, ex. 4)

The example above shows that the changing of the tense produces a modification in the general meaning of the sentence: in the first case, the use of the compound form refers to a hypothetical woman located in an atemporal dimension, whereas the simple past implies that the woman is concretely identifiable and that the loss of her child really occurred in the past.

The aoristic aspect and the deictic character of the simple past, in fact, demonstrate the conclusion and the non-prosecution of the described event. For that reason, through the simple past it is not possible to express the inclusive meaning which assumes the present perfect, i.e. the expression of an event whose time includes the time of the utterance. This difference is very evident in the use of verbs like *avere*, to have. The compound past form of the verb can have both a perfective meaning, in which it can be replaced by the simple past form (such as in 12a), as well as an imperfective stative meaning, where the use of the simple past would be ungrammatical (12b).

(12) a. Ieri ho avuto/ebbi le chiavi dalla portinaia.

lit. Yesterday I have had/had the keys from the doorkeeper.

b. Ho avuto/*ebbi sempre le chiavi sin dal primo giorno.

I have always had the keys since the first day.

(from Bertinetto 1986: 436, examples 1a, 1b)

Because of the necessary temporal priority of the event expressed by the simple past in comparison to the moment of the utterance and the impossibility of any inclusive meaning, this tense is not combinable with temporal adverbials which deictically refer to the speech time, such as *adesso* (now), *in questo momento* (in this moment), *finora* (until now). As we will see in the next section and in the next chapter discussing the results of the experimental research on which this work is based, that is not the case for every variety of Italian. Some regional marked varieties, such as the Sicilian one, which we will focus on, also permit the use of the simple past with adverbials and expressions directly referring to the present moment of the utterance.

Synthesizing the characteristics of the simple past which have been discussed above, it is possible to affirm that this tense indicates an event whose conclusion has to be necessarily anterior to the speech time and needs a specific temporal reference which does not tolerate a-temporal, habitual or undetermined interpretations. Even if modern Italian seems to experience a neutralization of the distinctions in the usage between the simple past and the present perfect, as we will see in the next section, some cases still show a strict separation in the distribution of the two past tenses. In this regard, it is interesting to note that this

distinction is maintained in the concatenation of tenses in a temporal sequence, where the simple past cannot follow the present perfect in the narration of the events.

(13) a. Gianni emigrò negli Stati Uniti, ma poi è tornato.

Lit. Gianni emigrated to the States, but then he has come back.

b. *Gianni è emigrato negli Stati Uniti, ma poi tornò.

Lit. Gianni has emigrated to the States and then he came back.

(from Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 89, examples 48 c, d)

As shown in the examples above, the first event cannot be considered more actual than the second one, i.e. Gianni's coming back from the States. That means, therefore, that in the construction of a narrative sequence, the distribution of the two past tense forms cannot be free, but the simple past always has to refer to a prior event in comparison to the compound form. The results of the experiment discussed in chapter 3 will show, however, that the same does not occur in the Sicilian dialect, where a sequence formed by the past simple+the present perfect is never acceptable. On the contrary, the opposite sequence, present perfect+past simple, is considered grammatical.

2.1.3 Present Perfect

The traditional definition of the Italian present perfect describes it as «the past of the present» (Fornaciari 1881: 172), a tense which indicates an accomplished event, but in relation to the present. According to this traditional concept of the tense, the connection to the present could be produced by the following factors: the brevity of the time span elapsing between the event and the speech time, the prosecution of the event until the time of the utterance or the prosecution of its effects on the present. These three factors taken into account using the traditional perspective refer to the afore-mentioned inclusive meaning of the present perfect and to the current relevance which the event can have. Nevertheless, the first factor seems to be too restrictive if considered in the light of the actual uses of the present perfect in those areas of central Italy, where both the simple and the compound past forms are employed. As already mentioned, despite the neutralization of the differences between the two tenses, the

distinctions which still hold are more based on aspectual reasons than on the temporal collocation of the described event. The brevity of the time span between the time of the event and the time of the utterance is not, therefore, a relevant factor in choosing one of the two past forms: rather it can just be considered as a secondary consequence of the aspectual nature of the chosen tense.¹² It is, moreover, interesting to note that the *rule* relative to the closeness of the event to the present was established from the 16th century and not before. Already in Old Italian, as analysed by Skubic (1970), in fact, the criteria ruling the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past were based on aspectual oppositions and did not really take into account the temporal distance of the event.

In order to build an overview on the Italian present perfect, I will now briefly give some morphological information about this tense and mention the historical background of its development from the Latin verbal system. The Italian present perfect is formed like the English one, i.e. the present form of the auxiliary plus the past participle of the verb. In Italian both *avere*, to have, and *essere*, to be, can be auxiliaries. This past form does not directly derive from Latin, since the Latin verbal system had a synthetic form for expressing a perfective meaning, i.e. the perfect. The perfect corresponded both to the actual Italian simple past and to the present perfect and it was formed by the verbal stem, followed by a component expressing the temporal value and, at the end, the ϕ -features lexicalizing the person and number information (Giorgi and Pianesi 1997: 45)

(14) am(a)-vi-t
he/she/it loved

The development of the compound past form derives, instead, from changes in the use of have and be as auxiliaries in the Late Latin phase. In fact, *habeo* in contrast to *sum*, respectively have and be, which originally did not have any possessive meaning, occurred in constructs

12 The distance on the temporal line between the event time and the time of the utterance can be in some languages one of the criteria on which the verbal system is structured: it is, for instance, the case of a Bantu language such as Kikuyu, where an immediate, a near and a far past are distinguished (Johnson 1981 quoted in Bertinetto 1986). The same does not occur in Italian, where the distance of the event from the speech time is not a relevant factor, even if the Italian name for the present perfect, *Passato prossimo*, seems to indicate a temporal closeness.

expressing possession. With the verb *habeo*, the possessor was expressed by the subject and the direct object expressing the possession. Many written documents of the time attest that the verb *habeo*, which covered the role of the auxiliary of the noun, slowly became the auxiliary of the past participle (Rinaldi 2008: 37). In the following example the past participle is still in agreement with the object and that is a sign that *habeo* is still the auxiliary of the noun:

(15) si habes iam statutum quid agendum putes (Cicero)

If you have already established what you think you should do.¹³

In contrast, in sentence (16), an extract of Oribasio in the 6th century, the past participle form, *probatum*, is not in agreement with the object anymore:

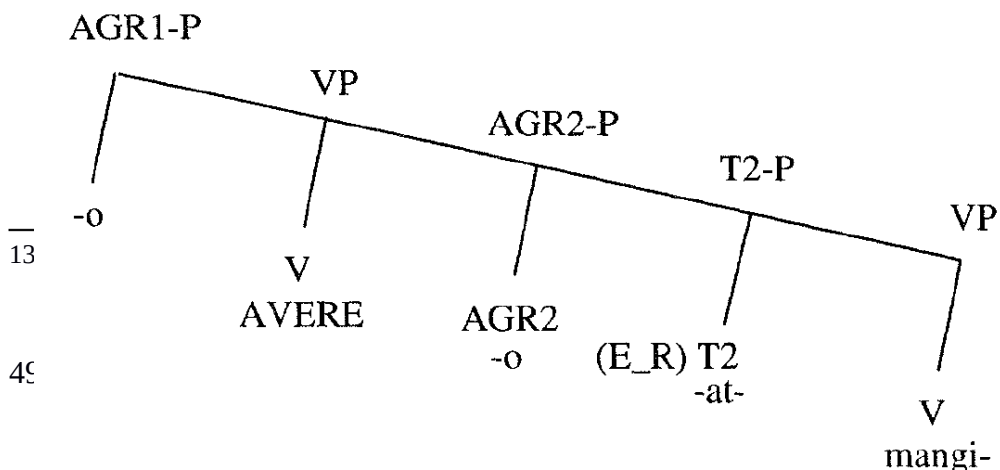
(16) hae omnia probatum habemus. (Oribasio)

We have approved all these things

In late Latin, therefore, a new periphrastic form with perfective meaning is created and is strongly distinguishable from the synthetic form, the Latin perfect, where, according to Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 46)'s hypothesis, the tense morpheme *-vi-* realises T2 and the final morpheme expressing the ϕ -features lexicalises AGR1. The latter and T2 are, in the case of Latin, compatible because T2 has a verbal nature. On the other hand, T2 of the Italian present perfect deriving from the development mentioned above has an adjectival nature and thus requires AGR2 where the features of gender and number are lexicalised. In this way, the presence of an auxiliary is necessary to realise AGR1, but since the auxiliary expresses the present tense, no empty T1 heads are projected.

(17) Ho mangiato.

I have eaten.



(from Giorgi, Pianesi 1997: 43, example 6)

After the preliminary morphosyntactic information about the present perfect given above, I am going to present the different specific uses of this tense in Italian. In section 1.3.3 we have already analysed the uses of the compound past form in English and we will now see that in Italian as well this tense is suitable for a varied range of functions and meanings.

The first type of perfect that I take into account is the *resultative perfect*, already discussed with regard to English in the first chapter and whose relevant factor is represented by the persistence in the present of the result of the event expressed by the verb. In this case, as already discussed before, the closeness of the event to the speech moment does not play any crucial role. On the contrary, the determining factor is the relevance which the event still holds for the speaker at the moment of utterance. The relevance is not connected to the concrete results of the event, rather it is to its effects.

(18) Il cameriere ha pulito il tavolo: adesso possiamo sederci.

Lit. The waiter has cleaned the table: now we can sit.

The effects produced by the event of cleaning the table are relevant at the moment of the utterance, since the table is now clean, and the perfect used in (18) can, therefore, be considered as a resultative perfect.

The use of the present perfect is often associated with the concept of recentness of the event, but, as we have previously discussed, the close location of the event on the temporal line relative to the present of the speech time is not a decisive factor in choosing the compound

form in Italian. Even so, it is evident that the probability of considering a recent event as no longer relevant in the present is very low and, thus, recentness often becomes significant if connected to the resultative meaning of the present perfect.

(19) È troppo tardi per avvisarla: Maria è andata via pochi minuti fa.

Lit. It is too late to warn her: Maria has gone away some minutes ago.

A previously mentioned possible meaning of the present perfect is, moreover, the inclusive one, which can be considered as a particular case of current relevance, where not only the effects and the results of the event still hold in the present, but also the event itself.

Another type of perfect which is possible to find in Italian as in English is the experiential perfect, which indicates the participation in a certain event or experience at least once in the past.

(20) Maria è stata a Venezia.

Maria has been to Venice.

Sentence (20) implies, therefore, that Maria has been to Venice at least once in her past life. The time span considered by this function of the perfect is, in fact, very large and normally involves the whole existence of the subject in question, also including the present moment. Concerning the inclusive meaning mentioned before, it has been noted that in some cases appropriate temporal adverbials, which explicitly refer to the moment of the utterance, are necessary in order to avoid an experiential interpretation, as demonstrated by the following example

(21) a. Finora Maria ha lavorato a Roma.

Lit. Until now Maria has worked in Rome.

b. Maria ha lavorato a Roma.

Maria has worked in Rome

In addition to the deictic uses of the present perfect discussed so far, there are cases in which the tense behaves in such a way as to lose its conditions of past tense but assume future or

atemporal meanings. It is the case where the use of the compound past form is dependent on another verbal form expressed in the present or in the future tense.

(22) Se entro due ore Gianni non ha finito i compiti, non uscirà con i suoi amici.

Lit. If Gianni has not finished the homework in two hours, he will not go out with his friends.

In cases such as the one depicted in (22), the present perfect could easily be replaced by the future perfect and that demonstrates that the event described by the verb did not necessarily occur before the time of the utterance.

Uses of the present perfect without past meaning can also appear in main clauses, i.e. in cases in which the compound past form of the verb does not depend on another present or future verb form but occurs independently. This happens, for instance, with a specific function of the tense called by Bertinetto (1986: 425) *imminente*, because the perfect refers to an imminent event which will occur in the near future. This use of the present perfect brings to mind a function of the present tense and, in fact, an interchange between the two tenses seems to be possible in cases such as the following one

(23) a. Prima di sera ho finito

Lit. Before the evening I have finished.

b. Prima di sera finisco.

Lit. Before the evening I finish.

In these cases, a different location of the adverbs can produce changes in the meaning of the sentence. If in (23), for instance, the temporal adverbial is moved after the verb, *ho finito prima di sera*, the utterance cannot be interpreted as future anymore and the present perfect form regains its perfective aspect.

As in the circumstance illustrated in (11), furthermore, the present perfect can also assume an a-temporal function, where the event described by the present perfect is not prior to the moment of the utterance, but it is situated in an a-temporal fixed dimension.

(24) Una persona che ha studiato non può comportarsi così.

Lit. A person who has studied cannot behave in this way.

In sentences like (24), the present perfect is not directly connected to the tense of the main clause and the event which it describes could have occurred or could occur at any time.

2.2 Present perfect and Italian dialects: the case of Sicilian

It has already been pointed out in the preceding sections that the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past in Italy does not respect constant and fixed criteria in all areas of the country, but it is strictly connected to diatopical variations. There are in fact geographical and territorial distinctions: on the one hand, the northern Italian dialects, where the simple past seems not to be in evidence whereas the compound form is used in every kind of function; on the other hand, the southern Italian dialects, which in contrast display the tendency to almost ignore the present perfect and generally prefer the use of the simple past.

The issue of the distribution of the two tenses becomes more complicated if we consider that it does not only concern the vernacular varieties, i.e. the dialects existing in Italy, but also the regional Italian languages, which means the local varieties of the standard language. In this regard, Bertinetto & Squartini (2000: 18-22) conducted an investigation in eleven Italian towns, in order to check how differently the two tenses are employed across Italy for several different semantic and textual functions, which are «the most salient cases for assessing the contrast between the two past tenses of Italian». The towns participating in the research were equally divided into the different areas of the country: three towns in the North, three in the central region of the peninsula, three in the South and one for each of the two islands, Sicily and Sardinia. The results obtained by Bertinetto & Squartini do not show consistent differences in relation to the typical perfect functions such as the inclusive, the resultative and the experiential meanings, since everywhere in Italy the use of the compound form largely supersedes the simple past. On the contrary, relevant discrepancies can be noted in relation to aoristic functions, such as narrative contexts, where the northern and the Sardinian speakers predominantly prefer the use of the present perfect rather than the simple past and the southern ones, conversely, choose to employ the simple form much more often than the compound one. With regard to the results of this research, it is interesting to note the responses of the Sicilian speakers, which, unexpectedly, are closer to the ones of central Italians rather than of southern speakers, with an almost impartial distribution of the two tenses. The responses of the Sicilian participants demonstrate, therefore, completely different behaviour by using the two past tenses in the local standard variety in comparison to the dialect.

In relation to the same question, Centineo (1991) has also pointed out that in the Italian variety spoken in Sicily the simple and the compound forms have the same perfective meaning and are alternate in oral narrative contexts: according to its analysis, this switch from one tense to another would be produced by the change from a sequential narration to an evaluative comment.

Regarding the connection between the geographical areas of Italy and the distribution of the simple past and the present perfect, Lo Duca & Solarino (1992) have also proposed an analysis, which takes into account narrative contexts. Their study demonstrates that in northern varieties the simple past is only employed in telling fairy tales, whereas autobiographical narration shows an exclusive use of the present perfect. Even in the narration of fairy tales, the use of the simple form is far less frequent than in southern varieties, where this tense also supersedes the compound past in personal and autobiographical oral stories.

The distribution of the tenses among the various Italian dialects are, nevertheless, more divergent than in the local varieties of the standard. A common cliché about the distribution of the simple and the compound forms attributes their exclusive use, respectively, to the southern dialects in the first instance and to the northern dialects in the second. As we will see, in reality, in a southern dialect such as Sicilian the present perfect also exists, but its usages and characteristics diverge from the standard ones. As already pointed out by Rohlfs (1949: 672), the compound form replaces in the northern dialects the *dead* simple past. The regions which he mentions are, in particular, Piedmont, Lombardy and Veneto, i.e. in general the area of the peninsula which is located on the northern side of the river Po.

(25) Va per diese ani che 'l xè morto.

He has been dead ten years now.

(example from Rohlfs 1949: 672)

The difference of Sicilian from the northern varieties mentioned above will become clearer in the next sections, where I will give a brief overview of the Sicilian verbal system, focusing on the uses of the past forms and, in particular, on the existence and the meanings of the present perfect.

2.2.1 The Sicilian dialect and its tense system

According to Pellegrini's (1977: 31) classification of the Italian dialects, Sicilian belongs to the Extreme-Meridional category which is included in the central-southern macro-area and which also comprises the dialects of Calabria and the Salentino. Although Sicilian shares several important characteristics with the other southern vernacular varieties, it presents a particular profile which is the result of the intricate vicissitudes and developments of the social and political history of Sicily. Sicilian is a Romance dialect deriving from Latin, a language which was transmitted from one generation to the next one from the time of the Roman conquest of the island, occurring in 241 B.C. In addition to the several modifications endured by Latin during the transmission, it also suffered the influence of the sub-stratum languages, which left particular phonological traces. An important and crucial role was also played, during the development of the dialect, by the different populations occupying the Sicilian area after the Romans. Sicily, in fact, situated at the heart of the Mediterranean Sea, has always been a land of conquest and a crossroad of people and commercial exchanges, a situation which has permitted a linguistic history with an international Mediterranean dimension (Ruffino 1978: 11). Byzantines, Arabians, Northmen and the populations from Spain, all left a linguistic heritage, identifiable in the dialect even today.

All the linguistic innovations coming from abroad, though, did not take root in the same way in the whole island, but followed different processes of development, depending on the amount of exposure to the new influences of the various areas. Except for the written language, which shows a considerable uniformity, the spoken dialect is characterised by a high variability depending not only on the different geographical parts of the island, but also on the different groups of the same community, on the age and on the social condition of the speakers.

This non-uniformity is also relevant for the verbal system. Verb forms vary, in fact, across Sicily, especially in their morphological constructions and in their aspectual values, as we will later see. Leone (1980) points out that the verbal conjugations are affected by this intensive variation which even occurs in the same town: family background, age, education, dependence or independence of the dialect from Italian are all factors which contribute to the variance in the verbal morphology.

In order to present a brief overview of the verbal tense (especially past tenses) system of Sicilian, I will outline a general description of the verbal conjugations and of the basic organization of the tenses, keeping in mind that each variety of the dialect can diverge in some way from the presented one. In the third chapter, however, the analysis will focus only on a west variety of Sicilian, the Partiniese, which is the one considered during the experimental research which will be discussed.



Image 1. Sicilian provinces

The Sicilian infinitive form of the verb, different compared to Italian, has only two distinct inflections; consequently, there are only two verbal conjugations. In the phonetic development from Latin to Sicilian, both the long tonic \bar{E} of the Latin ending $-ēre$ and the atonic \check{E} of the ending $-ĕre$ converged to I . The reduction of the Latin infinitive forms to the Sicilian ones occurred, therefore, as depicted in the following schema

Lat. -ĀRE > Sic. -àri

Lat. -ĒRE

Lat. -ĔRE Sic. -iri

Lat. -ĪRE

Consequently, Sicilian has, on the one hand, verbs like *cantari* or *purtari* deriving from the Latin verbs in -āre and, on the other hand, verbs with the ending in -iri, like *pariri*, *curriri* e *sintiri*, which respectively derive from *parēre*, *currēre*, *sentīre*, i.e. from three different conjugations converging into a single one.

When compared to Italian, even the Sicilian verbal moods and tenses appear with less distinctions: concerning the finite moods, in fact, the dialect lacks the conditional and only has indicative, imperative and subjunctive; with regard to the tenses, instead, more gaps are displayed. The indicative mood lacks the future form in almost all the varieties of the dialect and the future meaning is expressed by mean of periphrasis.¹⁴ In this way, Sicilian can be considered as an extreme case of a prospective language, i.e. a language whose verbal system is based on the contrast between past and non-past.¹⁵ Moreover, the Sicilian indicative mood does not have any *Trapassato remoto*, i.e. the past perfect composed of the simple past form of the auxiliary and the past participle of the verb. Nevertheless, in some ancient documents of the 13th century, as pointed out by Ambrosini (1969), the existence of the past perfect in Sicilian is attested with a meaning comparable to the one of the past perfect employed in Tuscan texts of the same period: the *trapassato remoto* indicated a sudden event or a random occurrence. In the current spoken dialect, though, it does not exist anymore.

Concerning the subjunctive, it only has the simple and the compound form of the imperfect.¹⁶ In hypothetical constructions, the subjunctive is employed both in main and in conditional clauses, since it replaces the missing conditional form.

With regard to the indicative tenses I consider here, i.e. the simple past, the imperfect and in

14 For a detailed description of the future and of the periphrasis with future meaning in Sicilian see Bentley (1997) and Amenta (2010).

15 «Le système temporel du sicilien dialectal repose essentiellement sur les cases du présent et du passé.» Ebnetter (1966:38)

16 Some lexicalised forms of the present subjunctive are still identifiable in the spoken dialect. Examples are the expressions *maisìa*, *nzamài*, *nzammaiddio* or the form of greeting *sabbenerica* (Leone 1995: 34).

particular the present perfect, it is possible to affirm that they show aspectual and semantic characteristics differing in some cases from the ones of the standard language. The Sicilian present perfect will be analysed in more details in the next section.

The simple past is considered as the default past tense, largely prevailing over the present perfect in the expression of perfective meanings. The simple past is, in fact, also used in contexts in which the standard Italian language requires the compound form. Inclusiveness of the present moment of the utterance or recentness of the event, for instance, are not factors excluding the employment of the simple past: even events just occurred, in fact, are expressed in Sicilian by means of the simple form.

(26) Pino partìu ora ora.

Lit. Pino left just now.

According to Rohlfs's (1949: 672) theory, the origins of the almost exclusive use of the simple past in the southern areas of the Italian peninsula and in Sicily can be attributed to the influence of the Greek language. These extreme southern regions, i.e. Sicily, Calabria and Salento, in fact, experienced the domination of the Greeks, whose language, before the arrival of the Romans, merely had a perfective tense: the aorist. Rohlfs (1949: 672) hypothesizes that, once conquered by the Romans, the Greek speakers automatically transferred the generalized aorist meaning to the Latin language.

The Sicilian simple past has a rich and various morphology which maintains the Latin distinction between rhizotonic and non-rhizotonic forms, i.e. stem-stressed and not stem-stressed verbal forms. Regarding the non-rhizotonic simple past, the morphemes of the two Sicilian conjugations are: *-ái, -ásti, -áú, -ámu, -ástivu, -áru*, for the verbs in *-ari* and *-íi, -ísti, -íu, -ému, -ístivu, -eru*, for the verbs ending in *-iri*.

Nevertheless, within the non-rhizotonic paradigm of the simple past it is possible to recognize some divergences from the basic endings presented above. These modifications are related to the different and particular geographical varieties of the dialect and to other processes of phonetic variations. Mocciaro (1975) attests the variants *-aiu, -a, -ammu*, to the first and the third singular person respectively and to the third plural one, in few regions of the central area of Sicily; in the province of Agrigento, instead, *-avu, -a and -ammu* and, in some parts of the

province of Catania and Siracusa, *-ástuvu* and *-ánu* to the second and third plural persons. It was interesting to note, during the research, that some speakers in Partinico also use the variant with the stressed *-ó* for the third singular person replacing the ending in *-au*, probably because of the influence of the Italian morpheme of the simple past.

The Sicilian rhizotonic forms, on the other hand, follow the distinction of the three different Latin types of paradigm, i.e. in *-ui*, in *-si* and in *-i*. Examples of these three categories are respectively the verbs *veniri*, *diri* and *fari*, whose simple past conjugation is the following one

(27) vinni	dissi	fíci
vinísti	dicísti	facísti
vínni	díssi	fíci
vínnimu	díssimu	fícimu
vinístivu	dicístivu	facístivu
vínniru	díssiru	fíciru

A particular verb included in this category is *aviri*, i.e. to have, whose simple past conjugation reads as follow: *áppi*, *avísti*, *áppi*, *áppimu*, *avístivu*, *áppiru*. However, Leone (1995) points out that almost none of the speakers participating in his experiment used the simple past form of the verb *aviri*, relying, instead, on the imperfect or on the present perfect. According to the results of the afore-mentioned study, the forms of the Sicilian verb 'to have' presented above are rarely employed and survive mainly in the forms of the first and third plural persons. For the other persons, when not switched to the imperfect or the present perfect, the speakers used the weak form *avíi*.

Briefly looking at the Sicilian imperfect, it is easily comparable to the parallel tense of the standard language, since it is employed in all the varieties of the island to express the same imperfective meanings. The first conjugation deriving from the Latin imperfect such as *cantābam*, usually presents the forms *cantava*, *cantavatu*, *cantava*, *cantàvamu*, *cantàvavu* and *cantàvanu*, even if the variances dependent on the different local varieties are numerous. The second conjugation in *-iri* also has various forms and the three most common of these possibilities are the following ones, represented in (28) by means of the conjugation of the verb *aviri*, i.e. to have:

(28) av`iva	av`ia	aveva
av`i(v)utu	av`iatu	av`evatu
av`iva	av`ia	aveva
av`i(v)umu	av`iamu	av`evamu
av`i(v)uvu	av`iavu	av`evavu
av`i(v)unu	av`ianu	av`evanu

The rich morphology of the imperfect, along with the one of the simple past, mentioned before, has a large range of forms distributed across the different local varieties of the island. Since this work does not focus on a morphological analysis of the Sicilian tenses, the information given so far is designed as a general and basic overview of the two past tenses, the essential starting point for clarifying the background in which the Sicilian present perfect is set.¹⁷ In the next section the discussion will, therefore, focus on this latter tense of the indicative mood, referring to past literature concerning the question which I am interested in.

2.2.2 The present perfect in Sicilian: State of the art

Despite the common and widespread opinion concerning the non-existence of the present perfect in the Sicilian dialect, this tense seems to be identifiable in some particular circumstances, although it is less productive with respect to the simple form. The Sicilian present perfect, like the English and the Italian ones, is constructed using the present form of the auxiliary and the past participle of the verb. What differentiates the dialectal tense from the Italian standard correspondent is the exclusivity of the verb *aviri*, to have, and the exclusion of the verb *essiri*, to be, in the role of auxiliary. In Sicilian, for instance, the compound verbal forms are always formed by means of the auxiliary 'to have' and the only cases in which the verb 'to be' is employed are some forms of the past infinitive and the compound gerundive of intransitive verbs. With regard to the finite moods, the auxiliary 'to be' implies, instead, a change in the meaning: in these cases, in fact, the past participle assumes a nominal value and the verb 'to be' leaves the role of auxiliary, becoming a copula.

(29) a. Pino e Maria s'hannu sciarriatu.

¹⁷ For a more detailed description of the verbal morphology of Sicilian see Leone (1980, 1995) and Mocciano (1975).

Pino and Maria have argued.

b. Pino e Maria sunnu sciarriati.

Lit. Pino and Maria *are argued*.

Pino and Maria are not friends anymore because of a fight.

(29) a. expresses the past event of Pino and Maria's fight, whereas (29) b. refers to their condition of not being friend anymore because of a fight. To be more precise, actually, in my opinion, (29) a. does not refer to a single specific event of the past, but it gives the undefined information that at least once or many times Pino and Maria argued.¹⁸ For instance, in his description of the Italian dialects, Rohlfs (1949: 672) mentions the particular use in the southern part of Calabria and in Sicily of the present perfect as the past tense expressing an atemporal and undefined meaning. Whereas the simple past, in fact, refers to a punctual and definite past event, the compound form does not directly express the reference to a specific event occurring at a specific time.

(30) a. Nun m'a scrivutu.

He has not written to me.

b. Nun mi scrissi.

He did not write to me.¹⁹

In the example above, the use of the present perfect implies that the speaker does not have any news from the subject of the sentence who did not write anything, whereas in (30) b the use of the simple past refers to a specific time and circumstance in which the subject did not write.

Regarding the difference between simple past and present perfect, Leone (1995) also carried out an investigation aiming at the analysis of the Sicilian syntax. He argues that most of the speakers participating in the investigation are not able to explain the distinct use of the two forms, even if both of them are spontaneously employed in the spoken language. The results of Leone's test, which takes into account communities of different parts of Sicily, show that the present perfect is used more rarely in some areas than in others. The main distinction

18 It is comparable to the experiential use of the perfect which we will consider as one of the conditions of the experiment in chapter 3.

19 The example mentioned by Rohlfs is taken from the spoken dialect of Calabria, but consider it valid also for Sicilian.

which he finds between the two tenses is related to the perception of the event by the speaker: according to Leone, if the event is conceived as concluded and perceived from a certain distance, the use of the simple past is required; conversely, if the effects of the event still hold and influence in a certain way the present moment of the speaker, then, the present perfect is employed.

(31) a. Cchiè u viristi a ma figghiu?

Did you maybe see my son?

b. Cchiè l'a vistu a ma figghiu?

Have you maybe seen my son?

(example from Leone 1995: 37)²⁰

According to Leone's interpretation, in (31) a. the verb purely indicates the event of seeing as concluded, whereas sentence b. displays the interest of the speaker in receiving information in the present. I assume that the type of perfect which Leone (1980, 1995) refers to is the resultative interpretation which requires the use of the present perfect to express effects or connections of the past event to the present time. Relying on my dialectal competence, which is limited to the varieties of Sicilian spoken in the town of Partinico and in the neighbouring municipalities of Alcamo and Balestrate, I do not consider the resultative meaning as a relevant factor in the use of the compound form of the past. As shown by the results of my experimental research, in fact, the current relevance of the event can only in few cases be taken into account in the use of the Sicilian present perfect. Since the examples mentioned by Leone refer to varieties which are geographically and linguistically far from mine, the resultative meaning which they express cannot be excluded.

This interpretation seems, moreover, to show some ambiguity, if we consider another example mentioned by Leone

(32) a. Avannu nunn-ha chiuvtutu.

Lit. This year it has not rained.

b. Avannu nun chiuviù.

Lit. This year it did not rain.

(example from Leone 1995: 38)

²⁰ The example is in the dialectal variety of Assoro, in the province of Enna.

Leone points out that, on the one hand, the present perfect, in this case, expresses the hope of having rain in the next part of the year which is not concluded yet and, on the other, the use of the simple past is motivated by the observation of the poor harvest obtained so far. This interpretation seems to display ambiguity, since both past forms seem to show connections with the present effects of the past event.

Nevertheless, Leone (1980) assumes that the contrast between simple past and present perfect cannot be based on the distance or closeness of the event from the present and that is evident, since the simple form can even express recently occurred events. Moreover, an additional and interesting element deriving from the results of Leone's investigation is the iterative or durative interpretation: the responses of the speakers of Ucria, Castelbuono and Pantelleria suggest, in fact, that the event expressed by the verb occurred many times or has been carried out over an extended time span. This iterative and durative meaning has been, indeed, also suggested by many participants in my research, as we will see in the next chapter.

Bertinetto & Squartini (2000) in their classification of the distribution of the simple past and the present perfect, mentioned in chapter 1, also allude to the iterative and durative aspectual values of the Sicilian present perfect, locating it in the second stage of their list, i.e. in the category including languages with a present perfect expressing durative meaning, such as Portuguese. The categorization which they refer to is the one by Harris (1982), who instead identifies the vernacular language of Sicily in the first stage of the classification, together with the Calabrian dialect, i.e. in the category including languages where the present perfect expresses present states resulting from past events. This classification relates the use of the compound form to the present states resulting from past events. In contrast, Bertinetto and Squartini exclude the possibility for the Sicilian present perfect to express current relevance or recentness of the event. They assume, rather, that it is comparable to some interpretations of the same tense in the Mexican Spanish language and that it indicates «iterative or durative situations encompassing the speech time» Bertinetto and Squartini (2000: 11).

(33) a. Aju manciatu tanti voti u pisci spata e m'ha fattu sempri beni.

I have eaten swordfish many times, and it has always done me well.

b. M'u manciài oj e mi fici mali.

I ate swordfish today and it made me sick.

(example from Bertinetto&Squartini 2000:11)

A similar example is proposed by Giorgi & Pianesi (1997: 134) in the appendix about the Catanese and Vicentino dialects. The example is not only used in order to discuss the contrast between simple past and present perfect, but also to show that their sequence is opposite to the one required in the standard language. As already pointed out in section 2.1.2, in fact, the sequence present perfect-simple past is ungrammatical in Italian, but is perfectly grammatical in Sicilian.

(34) a. Mangiai u pisci spada e mmi fici mali.

I ate swordfish and it made me sick.

b. Haju mangiatu u pisci spada e mma ffattu mali.

I have eaten swordfish and it made me sick.

c. Haju mangiatu u pisci spada e mmi fici mali.

I have eaten swordfish and it made me sick.

d. *Mmi mangiai u pisci spada e mma ffattu mali.

I ate swordfish and it made me sick.

(example 165 from Giorgi and Pianesi 1997: 134)

As demonstrated by the example above, the only variant which cannot be accepted in Catanese is the (34) d., where the present perfect follows the simple past form. I agree with the analysis of Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 135) who assume that the contrast between the two tenses is not produced by temporal factors, rather it has an aspectual nature. Moreover, they affirm that the present perfect has no current relevance meaning, whereas the simple past, whose usage totally diverges from the standard one, can have it. As we will see in the description of the experimental research in chapter 3, I have also provided the speakers with the same examples, excluding the variant in (34) a. which is the version at any rate accepted in Sicilian. Sentence (34) b., though, has not been unanimously approved and many speakers accepted it only referring to its possible iterative meaning: the use of the present perfect in (34) b. would, therefore, imply that the event of eating swordfish and being sick has occurred more than once.

One of the few studies focused on the Sicilian present perfect described so far is represented by the research of Mocciaro (1978). The author hypothesizes that the main factor influencing the speaker's choice between present perfect and simple past is given by the opposition present perfect-aorist. According to her analysis, in fact, the compound form is used to recount events which are included in the so-called *grammatical present*, whose definition and limits are, though, not clearly defined in the study. Mocciaro's theory assumes that if the time of the utterance is included in the reference time, the present perfect is therefore required;

(35) a. Stamatina aiu sparatu cinqu voti e unn'aiu pigghiatu nenti.

This morning I have shot five times and I have not got anything.

b. Stamatina sparavi cinqu voti e un pigghiavi nenti.

This morning I shot five times and I did not get anything.

(example a. from Mocciaro 1978: 345)

In the example above, according to the author's interpretation, the speaker uses the present perfect if he is talking about the event during the morning. If the time of the utterance is located in the evening of that day, the speaker has to use the simple past. Another example proposed by Mocciaro is the following one:

(36) a. Lu friddu aguannu ha duratu tri ssimani.

It has been cold for three weeks this year.

b. Lu friddu aguannu durau tri ssimani.

It was cold for three weeks this year.

The same explanation is given for the example (36): in a. at the moment of the utterance it would still be cold and in b., on the other hand, the cold period would be over.

Nevertheless, my personal interpretation of the difference between the use of the simple or the compound form in the examples mentioned above does not rely on the inclusive meaning. I do not consider in the examined sentences the inclusion of the time of the utterance in the reference time as a determining factor for the grammaticality of the present perfect, but I rather attribute more relevance to the adverbials present in the sentences. *Cinqu voti* and *tri simani*, in fact, imply the iterative and durative meaning mentioned before and permit the use of the present perfect in this circumstance. The grammaticality of the simple past, on the other

hand, can be explained keeping in mind that the simple form always represents the *default* and automatically correct choice for a Sicilian speaker in expressing perfective meanings, except for few cases which I will discuss later.

I also do not agree with the proposal that, if the present perfect refers to iterated events, the iteration must be undefined, otherwise the imperfect would be used. The example used to support this theory reads as follows:

(37) a. L'amu circato tanti voti.

We have looked for him many times.

b. U circavamu sempri.

lit. We always looked (IMP.) for him.

According to Mocciaro's opinion, (37) b. would be ungrammatical with the present perfect and, consequently it is expressed by means of the imperfect. The results in chapter 3, on the other hand, will demonstrate that both the present perfect and the imperfect are largely accepted in co-occurrence with the adverbial *sempri*.

Mocciaro also points out that the present perfect occurs in negative sentences with an atemporal meaning such as, for instance, in *un c'aiu statu mai 'n Palermo*, i.e. I have never been in Palermo. Rohlfs (1969) also identifies this category, providing several examples. I did not consider it as condition of the test, since negative sentences have been excluded, but I agree that sentences such as the mentioned one would require the present perfect.

Some information concerning the present perfect is also provided in the literature focussing on the dialect of the last centuries. Ambrosini (1969), in his study regarding the use of the past tenses in ancient Sicilian, affirms that it is not possible to find the present perfect with temporal meaning in ancient Sicilian texts, not even in literary ones. Ambrosini refers especially to written material of the 13th and 14th centuries, whereas Skubic (1976), analyses Sicilian texts from the 16th to the 20th century, investigating whether the original opposition present perfect-aorist was relevant in choosing between the compound and the simple past forms. The results of this diachronic research show that, regardless of the type of documents, in texts whose language is close to the original vernacular variety, the present perfect is used

in order to express the value of non-punctual events. In contrast, in texts whose language tends to imitate the Tuscan variety, the present perfect is sometimes also used to express temporal values based on the opposition present perfect-aorist.

With regard to the analysis of the actual spoken Sicilian dialect, Skubic (1976) resorts to data collected by means of interviews, data extracted by two different linguistic atlas, i.e. the AIS and the ALI and, last but not least, to translations of the Parable of the Prodigal Son coming from several different areas of the island. These latter texts, in particular, provided really interesting results, which allow one to describe a general overview of the distribution of the simple past and the present perfect. In almost all the translations, the simple forms outnumber the compound one, with the exception of some communities in the extreme south-east part of Sicily, where the use of the present perfect appears to be very frequent. The present perfect is also used more in the cities and this factor does not allow one to exclude the possibility of a certain influence exerted by the standard language. Nevertheless, according to Skubic's interpretation, the present perfect is purely employed to express non-punctual events and it never suggests a meaning opposite to the aorist aspectual value.

The only sentence of the Parable of the Prodigal Son, which has in all the cases been translated using the present perfect is the one in (38), which confirms Skubic's assumption concerning the relation of the present perfect to the non-punctuality of the event:

(38) Ho fatto sempre quello che avete voluto voi.

I have always done what you have wanted.

(example from Skubic 1976: 396)

The results of my research, indeed, also show an intensive co-occurrence of the present perfect with the adverbial *sempre*. The simple past seems, in fact, not to be grammatical if combined with this adverbial and Skubic motivates this phenomenon by means of the opposition punctual-non punctual event, on which the use of the two tenses would be based.

The data taken from the two linguistic atlas and from the investigations confirm the theory already demonstrated in relation to the translations of the Parable. They show, in fact, that the present perfect does not express any present state, but it rather indicates a non-punctual event, whose circumstance can sometimes be interpreted considering the iterative and durative values. Once again, in the sentences containing the adverbial *sempre*, the speakers always

prefer the present perfect, which is only sometimes replaced by the imperfect. Even these examples highlight the particularity of the extreme southern area of Sicily, near the city of Siracusa, where the amount of compound forms is extremely large if compared to the rest of the island, where the simple past always supersedes the present perfect.

Skubic's results, therefore, support the evidence which is also partially shown by the data collected through the experimental research of this work that I am going to present and which refer to the dialectal variety of the town of Partinico, located in the north part of Sicily, in the region of the city of Palermo.

3. Experimental investigation on the dialectal variety of Partinico

It has been shown in the previous chapter that the question regarding the distribution of the present perfect in Sicilian displays, despite the limited nature of its field of competence, some contradictions, which do not permit to outline a clear and general description of the subject. In order to shed some light on the question and to collect data concerning the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past in my dialectal variety, I carried out some research in Partinico, a town in the province of Palermo. Located on the north coast of the island, Partinico has a population of about 32.000 inhabitants and a strategic position between the municipalities of Palermo and Trapani.



Image 1. Location of Partinico and Palermo

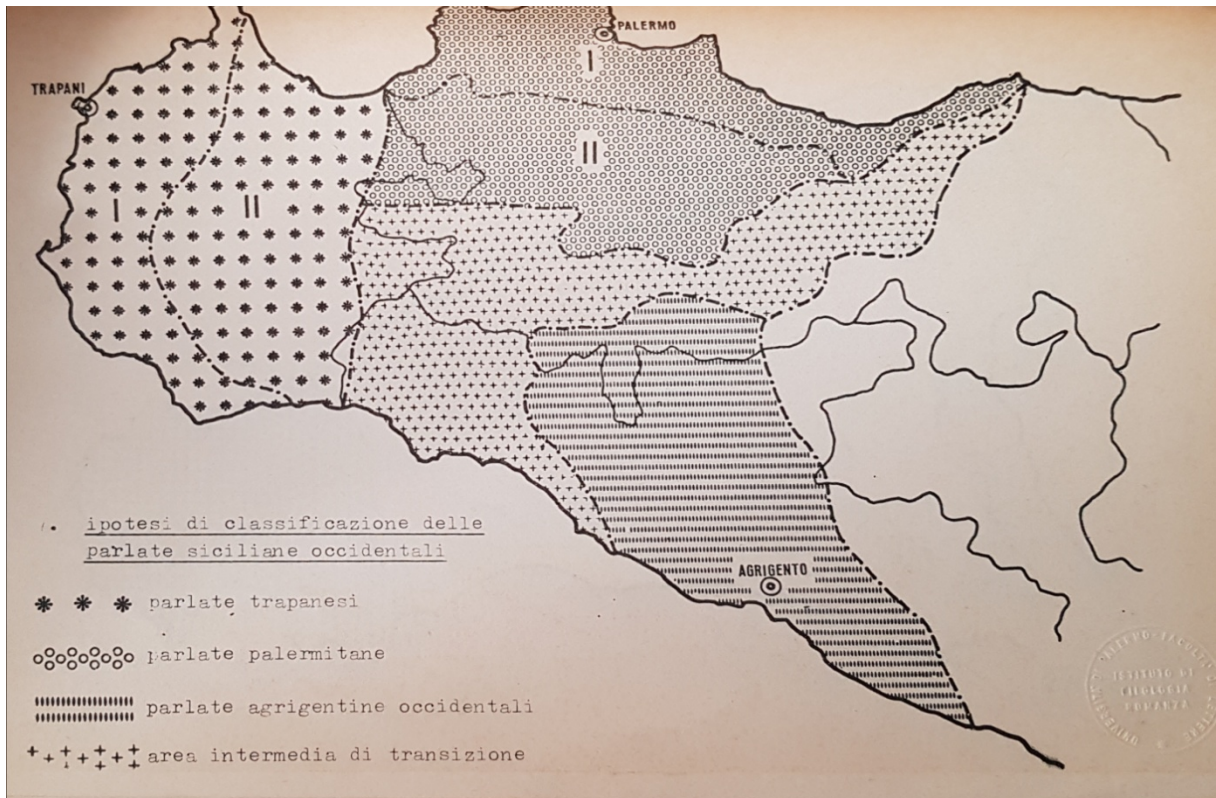
Just like the rest of Sicily, the area of Partinico, inhabited since early prehistory, has also been a crossroads of different people. The two communities of Inico and Camico, founded between

the 13th and the 10th century B.C., were conquered by the Romans in the 3rd century B.C. and received the name of Parthenicum, mentioned in the III century A.D., during the kingdom of Caracalla, in the *Itinerarium Antonini Augusti*. The town took the name of B.r.t.niq during the Arabian domination and, then, in the Northmen period its territory was donated to the Church by Frederick II in 1307. Only in 1800, through a royal ordinance from Ferdinand I of Bourbons, did the King of the two Sicilies, Partinico obtained the state of municipality and became a rich and important centre for the kingdom, because of the wine business managed in the Real Cantina Borbonica, built at the beginning of the 19th century. The town, whose population grew especially after the Italian Unification, has always been a predominantly agricultural centre and its economy is still based on the production of agricultural goods and wine.²¹

Despite this agricultural background of the community, even the adult generations have had access to school education, thanks to the presence of various professional and high schools. The same situation did not occur, however, in the neighbouring communities, where the presence of purely primary schools has made it impossible for many people to obtain a high school diploma. Most of the school-educated adult inhabitants of Partinico are bilingual, having learnt Italian specifically during the school period. In contrast, most of the adults who did not attend secondary school, use in everyday life only dialect and a very marked regional variety of Italian. The situation regarding the young generations is quite different and it is evident that there is a spread of the standard language, especially in relation to school-educated people. The dialect is, however, still spoken with friends and, mostly, also in the family, but it often endures re-standardization processes, which involve in particular the lexicon, as well as all the other sectors of the language.

According to Ruffino (1978)'s hypothesis of classification of the dialectal varieties of western Sicily, the dialect of Partinico is included in the category of the Palermitan varieties. As shown in the following map on the classification of the western dialectal groups, though, because of its geographical position on the western border of the province of Palermo, the town is also located near the area comprising the group of the varieties of Trapani.

21 M. Di Bartolomeo, *Storia di Partinico. Manoscritto inedito del 1805*, Regione Siciliana, Assessorato Beni Culturali Ambientali e Pubblica Istruzione, 2007; V. Bonni, *Partinico nella storia*, 1969, GE, Roma



(Image 2 from Ruffino 1978: 109, classification of the western Sicilian varieties)

The research which is going to be presented was carried out merely in Partinico and the results obtained so far can be considered, therefore, valid only for the variety spoken in the town taken into account. Nevertheless, thanks to the similarities between the different neighbouring local dialects of the area, this data could represent an important point of comparison for potential future research concerning the present perfect in the western Sicilian dialects.

3.1 The experiment design

Given the unclear situation of the previous research concerning the Sicilian present perfect and given the conventional opinion of the exclusive existence of the simple past as past tense indicating perfective meanings in Sicily, the idea of experimental research arose with the aim of collecting more data in this field and to make the question clearer.

The starting point for the analysis concerned the identification of the particular circumstances and cases in which the Sicilian speakers choose to employ the present perfect at the expense of the widespread simple past.

The initial hypotheses on which the research was based, were expressed as follows:

- the present perfect in the Sicilian dialect exists and its usages and characteristics are different from the ones of the same tense in the standard language;
- the contrast between present perfect and simple past in Sicilian is not based on temporal factors: rather it has an aspectual nature;
- the expression of the current relevance does not play any role in the distinction between present perfect and simple past;
- the Sicilian present perfect assumes durative and iterative aspectual values;
- in the local variety taken into account, i.e. the one of Partinico, in sentences such as the ones proposed by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997:134) and mentioned in section 2.2.2, ex. (34), the present perfect is not accepted as a grammatical choice at any point.²²

The process I followed in order to identify the conditions taken into consideration in my experiment started from the analysis of two studies: Comrie (1976) and Bertinetto (1986). In these works, in fact, it is possible to find a description of the various perfect types and

22 The example mentioned by Giorgi Pianesi (1997: 134) is the following one:

i. *a. Mangiai u pisci spada e mmi fici mali.*

I ate swordfish and it made me sick.

b. Haju mangiatu u pisci spada e mma ffattu mali.

I have eaten swordfish and it made me sick.

c. Haju mangiatu u pisci spada e mmi fici mali.

I have eaten swordfish and it made me sick.

*d. *Mmi mangiai u pisci spada e mma ffattu mali.*

I ate swordfish and it made me sick.

meanings included in the range of the English and Italian present perfect. I, therefore, reviewed and sorted through the types of perfect analysed by the afore-mentioned studies, assuming them as benchmark and reference points for identifying the existing examples of usage of the present perfect in the Sicilian dialect. In addition to this, naturally, the direct observation of spontaneous speech of monolingual and bilingual Sicilian speakers gave me the opportunity to recognise the particular and rare -if compared to the frequency of use of the simple past- usages of the present perfect.²³

Negative past sentences, in particular those with atemporal meaning, have been excluded from the test and only affirmative utterances with transitive verbs have been used as items for investigation. It has already been demonstrated by Rohlfs (1969), Skubic (1976) and Mocciaro (1979) that negative sentences with atemporal meaning, i.e. sentences whose temporal reference is not punctual and is rather undefined, always require the use of the present perfect instead of the simple past.

(1) a. Maria un c'ha ghiutu mai a Venezia.

Maria has never been to Venice.

b. * Maria un ci iù mai a Venezia.

Lit. Maria never went to Venice.

The types of perfect considered for the experiment are the experiential and the habitual perfect. As already pointed out in the previous chapters, the experiential perfect refers to an event occurred at least once in the past. Habituality, on the other hand, is normally a category expressed by means of the imperfective aspect, but even the present perfect can in some cases indicate habitual events, i.e. events that the subject performed ordinarily.

Moreover, referring to the examples from Catanese proposed by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997:134), where the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past in a sequence is tested, I considered the same kind of sentences as extra conditions of the experiment, in order

23 With the term monolingual I refer, in this case, to all the speakers who only speak dialect in the everyday life and, at most, a very marked regional variety of Italian. Bilinguals are those speakers who employ both the Sicilian dialect and the standard language, which is, nevertheless, always a regional variety of the standard. For instance, I can be considered bilingual, since I speak dialect with my relatives and with some friends, but I always speak Italian out of these circumstances.

to check possible differences displayed by my variety in contrast with Catanese and the standard language. From the four distinct possibilities proposed in the afore-mentioned example, already quoted in 2.2.2, the one with the sequence simple past-simple past, i.e. *Mangiai u pisci spata e mmi fici mali*, has been excluded, since it represents the basic default choice, always accepted. Therefore, the tested versions have been the sequences present perfect-present perfect, simple past-present perfect and present perfect-simple past.

The test also aimed to collect data concerning the pertinence of the current relevance in choosing between the present perfect and the simple past in Sicilian. For that reason, both for the experiential and the habitual perfect, the test items have been divided into two different categories: one expressing current relevance and the other explicitly expressing non-current relevance.

The identified conditions for the test are, consequently, seven and they are divided as follows:

- Condition 1: experiential perfect without current relevance

(2) ex. Ita. Gianni ha abitato un anno a Londra e adesso abita a Parigi

Lit. Gianni has lived in London for a year and now he lives in Paris.

(3) ex. Sic. Pino ha chiantatu/ chiantau pi tri anni pumarori e ora chianta milinciane

Lit. Pino has planted/planted for tomatoes for three years and now he plants eggplants.

- Condition 2: experiential perfect with current relevance

(4) ex. Ita. Gianni ha abitato un anno a Londra e ci abita ancora.

Lit. Gianni has lived in London for a year and he still lives there.

(5) ex. Sic. Pino ha chiantatu/chiantau pi tri anni pumarori e st'annu i chianta arré.

Lit. Pino has planted/planted tomatoes for three year and this year he plants them again.

- Condition 3: habitual perfect with the adverb *sempre*, without current relevance.

(6) ex. Ita. Gianni ha corso sempre la maratona di New York e quest'anno corre quella di Boston.

Gianni has always run the New York marathon and this year he runs the one in Boston.

(7) ex. Sic. Pino ha fattu/fici sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte e st'annu u fa o Romiteddu.

Lit. Pino has always made/made the pilgrimage to the Madonna del Ponte and this year he makes it to Romitello.

- Condition 4: habitual perfect with the adverb *sempre* and with current relevance.

(8) ex. Ita. Gianni ha corso sempre la maratona di New York e quest'anno la corre di nuovo.

Lit. Gianni has always run the New York marathon and this year he runs it again.

(9) ex. Sic. Pino ha fattu/fici sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte e st'annu u fa arré.

Lit. Pino has always made/made the pilgrimage to the Madonna del Ponte and this year he makes it again.

- Condition 5: sequence simple past-present perfect

(10) ex. Sic. Pino manciau u pisci spata e c'ha fattu mali.

Lit. Pino ate sword fish and it has made him sick.

- Condition 6: sequence present perfect-simple past

(11) ex. Sic. Pino s'ha manciatu u pisci spata e ci fici mali.

Lit. Pino has eaten sword fish and it made him sick.

- Condition 7: sequence present perfect-present perfect

(12) ex. Sic. Pino s'ha manciatu u pisci spata e c'ha fattu mali.

Lit. Pino has eaten sword fish and it has made him sick.

On establishing the conditions, the experiment design was developed. The experiment

consisted of two different tasks, a grammaticality judgement and a task of elicited production, i.e. the cloze task, both inserted in a written questionnaire which the informants were asked to fill out.

In the grammaticality judgement task the subject hears or reads a stimulus and is asked to give a judgement on its grammaticality. It should not be confused with the truth-value judgement task, which is a comprehension test where the informant must judge whether the proposed sentence is true or not. In the grammaticality judgement task, the subject judges the grammatical correctness of sentences. In this first task, for each of the conditions from 1 to 4, four sentences were proposed to the participants. Each of these sentences was provided twice, once with the present perfect and once with the simple past. Consequently, for each of the experiential and habitual perfect conditions, the informants had to judge eight stimuli. For the conditions 5, 6 and 7, four sentences were provided to the speakers in the three different versions of sequence of present perfect and simple past, with a total, therefore, of twelve stimuli. For each of the proposed sentences, the informants were asked to attribute a judgement using a scale of three different choices: *sì*, *no* or *insomma*, i.e. yes, no or so-so.²⁴

The second task elicited the production of tensed verb forms missing in the stimuli provided. In this part of the questionnaire, in fact, the participants were asked to fill the gaps present in the sentences, conjugating the verbs suggested in the Italian infinitive form. For each of the first four conditions, four stimuli were provided, whereas for the conditions regarding the sequence of present perfect and simple past, the stimuli were eight in total.

24 As pointed out by Blume & Lust (2017: 158), the grammaticality judgement task has the advantage of being available for testing various linguistic phenomena, collecting data reflecting the grammatical intuitions of native speakers. Moreover, the obtained data are simple to evaluate, since they are normally binary data, i.e. *yes* or *no* (in our case, instead, the possible judgements were *yes*, *no* and *so-so*). Nevertheless, Blume & Lust (2017: 158) affirm that «it is difficult to convey to the informant that the researcher is requesting a judgment about the grammar (e.g., the syntax) underlying the sentence, rather than the meaning or pragmatics of the sentence. Thus, it may be difficult to determine from an informant's answer whether he or she is ruling in (or out) a sentence because of its grammar or semantics or by judging whether the sentence is appropriate for a particular given or imagined pragmatic context». With regard to this latter issue, the informants participating to my experiment were asked to judge whether the proposed sentences "sound good", "don't sound good" or "sound so-so".

The test also needed a certain amount of fillers, i.e. non-experimental stimuli, which were constructed using three Sicilian syntactic phenomena, i.e. the prepositional accusative, the double negation and the transitive use of intransitive verbs. The group of fillers displaying the afore-mentioned phenomena were built one half in a grammatical way and the other half ungrammatically, in order to check the reliability of the speakers participating in the experiment.

Regarding the Sicilian prepositional accusative, it consists of placing the preposition *a* before the direct object.²⁵

(13) Pino chiamao a Ciccio.

Pino called Ciccio.

Regarding the double negation, I structured this category of fillers building sentences with the construction formed by the pre-verbal negative element *un* and a post-verbal negative element such as *nuddu*, nobody, and *nenti*, nothing.

(14) Pino assira un vosi manciari nenti.

Last night Pino did not want to eat anything.

Moreover, as mentioned before, I also built sentences using intransitive verbs which are typically used in transitive structures both in the Sicilian dialect and in the local variety of the standard language. The verbs I used are, for instance, *uscire*, *entrare*, *salire e scendere*, i.e. respectively to go in, to go out, to go up and to go down, which are used in Sicilian both in

25 In Sicilian, it involves animated objects, whereas non-animated ones are normally expressed through simple direct accusative. Rohlfs (1969: 632) identifies the origin of this morpho-syntactic phenomenon through the necessity of a clearer distinction between subject and object. In reality, as pointed out by Leone (1995: 49), this explanation cannot be sufficient for clarifying the reasons of the use of the prepositional accusative. For instance, it is employed even in unambiguous cases, such as in co-occurrence with personal pronouns, whose nominative and accusative forms are already clearly distinct. The prepositional accusative, also present in other languages such as Spanish and Portuguese, seems therefore merely to signal a border between animated and non-animated objects.

transitive and intransitive structures.

(15) Pino trasìò a machina no malaseno.

Pino put the car into the garage.

In addition to these three categories of non-experimental stimuli, three other extra-conditions were inserted in the questionnaire as controls:

- sentences without any context expressing current or non-current relevance, once with the present perfect and once with the simple past form of the verb;

(16) Pino fici/ha fattu u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte.

Pino made/has made the pilgrimage to the Madonna del Ponte.

- sentences with the adverbial *sempre*, without any context expressing current or non-current relevance, once with the present perfect and once with the simple past form of the verb;

(17) Pino fici/ha fattu sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte.

Lit. Pino made/has made always the pilgrimage to the Madonna del Ponte

- sentences both with experiential and habitual meaning, where it is made explicit that the subject is not alive anymore, once with the present perfect and once with the simple past form of the verb.

(18) Maria, paci all'anima sua, ha fattu/fici tanti viaggi nta la so vita.

Lit. Maria, may she rest in peace, has travelled/travelled a lot in her life.

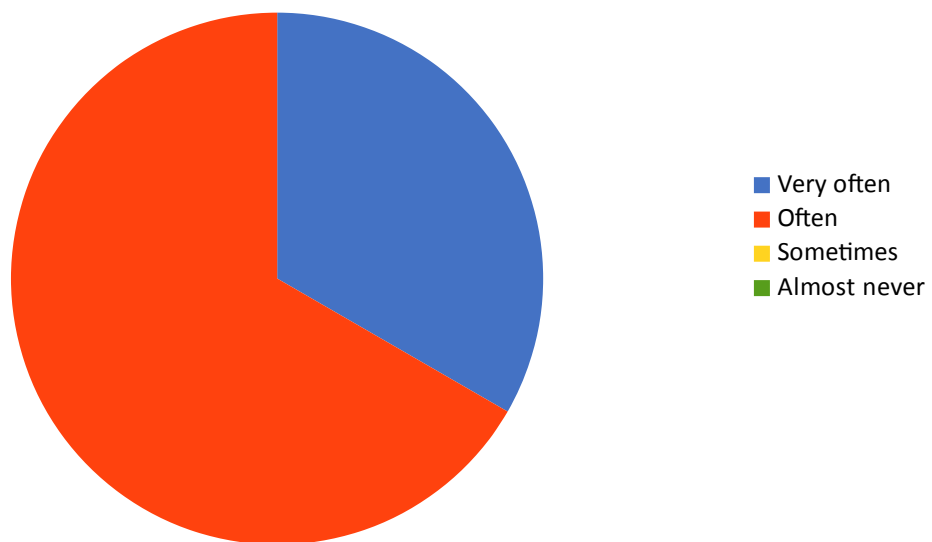
The first part of the test, i.e. the grammaticality judgement task, therefore, consisted of a total of sixty-four stimuli, whereas the cloze task of thirty-six.²⁶

The questionnaire was then submitted to thirty Sicilian speakers divided into two groups: fifteen young informants, aged 20 to 30 years (mean age 26), and fifteen adults, aged 50 to 70

26 See *Appendix B*

years (mean age 58,3). The main requirement needed to participate in the test concerned the origins of the speakers: only people living in the town of Partinico whose parents came from the same community could take part. In both groups the number of women and men was equally balanced. Only speakers with an education up to high school diploma level participated, consequently excluding university students and people with an academic degree. All the informants were asked to fill out a form, provided at the beginning of the questionnaire, where they had to indicate the amount of dialect spoken in their everyday life, their employment and their education level.²⁷

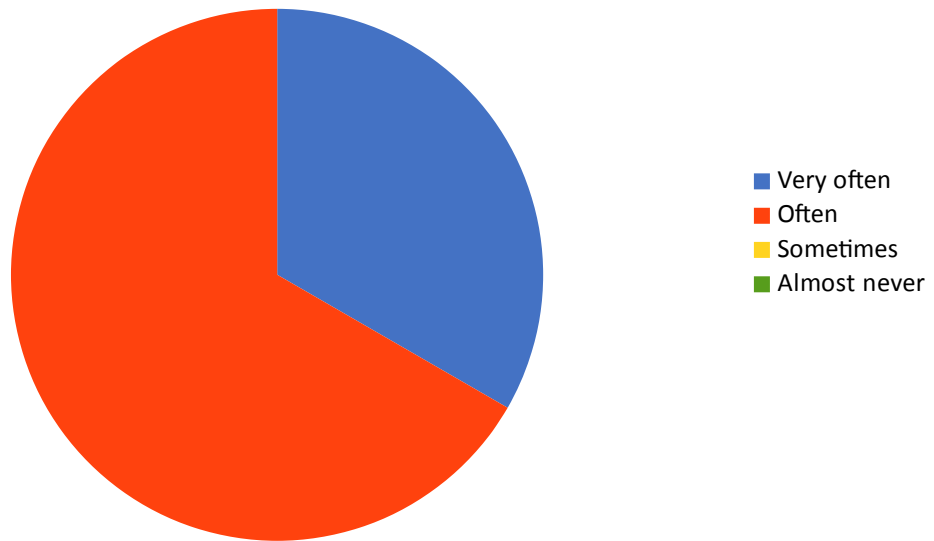
Amount of spoken dialect: group 20-30 y.o.



Graph 1. Amount of spoken dialect: group 20-30 y.o.

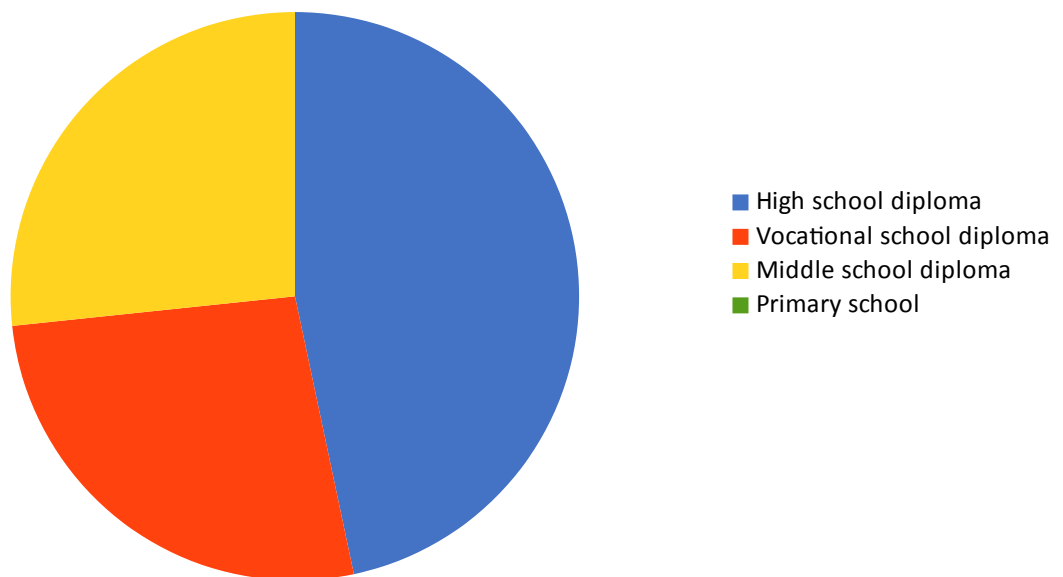
²⁷ See *Appendix A*

Amount of spoken dialect: group 50-70 y.o.



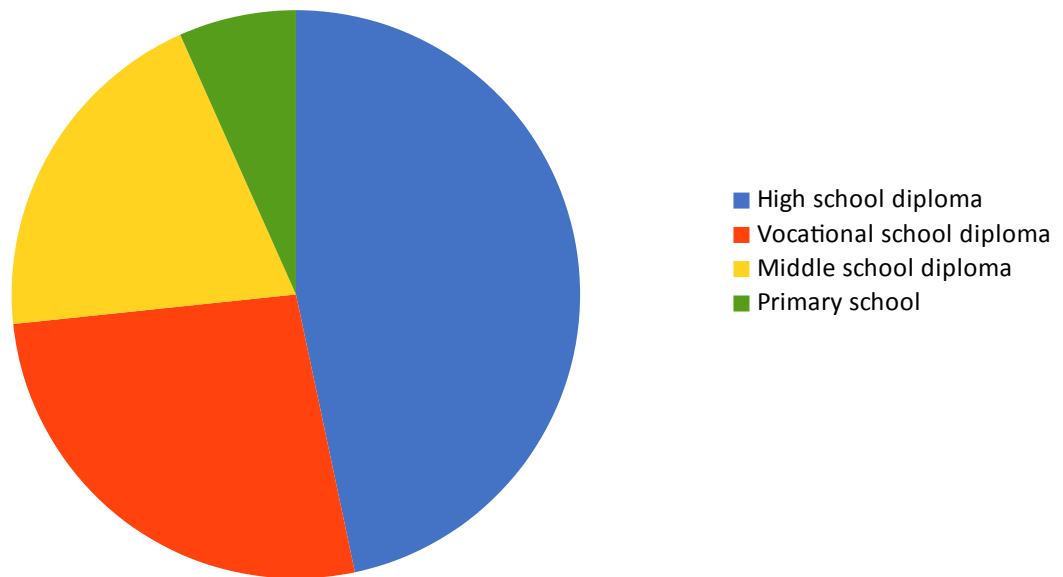
Graph 2. Amount of spoken dialect: group 50-70 y.o.

Education level: group 20-30 y.o.



Graph 3. Education level: group 20-30 y.o.

Education level: group 50-70 y.o.



Graph 4. Education level 50-70 y.o.

Since the investigation was performed by means of a written questionnaire to be filled out and since the stimuli consisted of sentences provided out of context, the results can obviously be considered more limited than data collected from spontaneous speech. Nevertheless, the combination of two different tasks, the grammaticality judgement and the elicited production, gave the possibility of testing the grammatical intuition of the speakers from different perspectives. Moreover, despite the limited number of participants, the results of this research can be considered as an interesting starting-point for possible semantic and syntactic interpretations of the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past.

3.2 Results and discussion

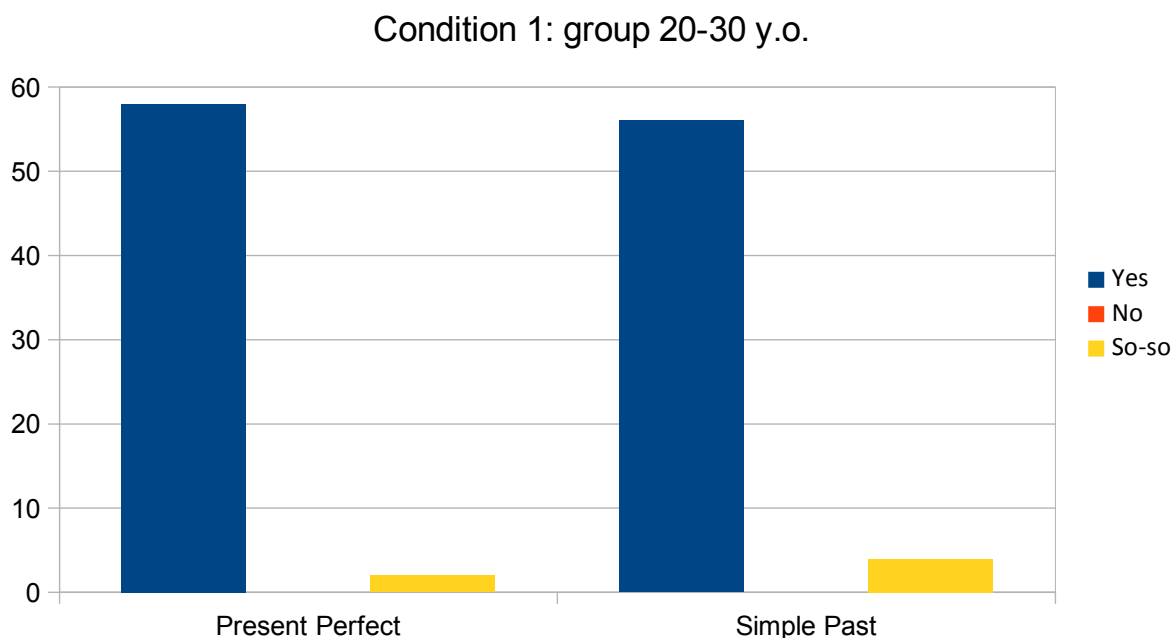
In this section, I will focus on the results obtained from the experiment and on the discussion and interpretation of the collected data. The results will be presented by means of graphs, which can easily show the differences depending on the two informants groups, on the various conditions and on the two different tasks.

3.2.1 Results

Grammaticality Judgment Task

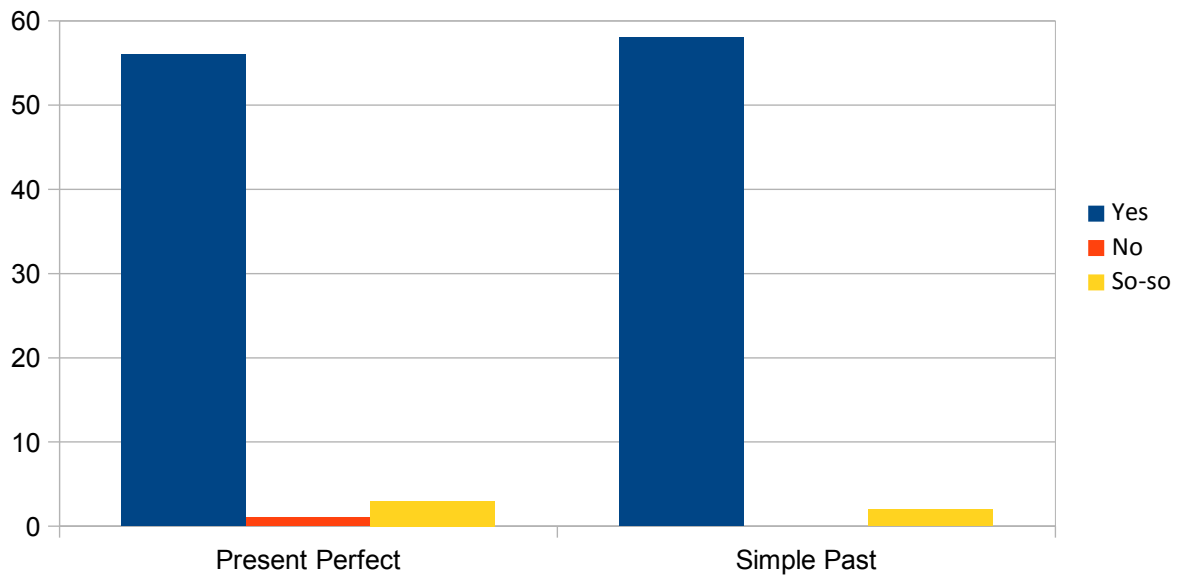
The first condition concerned the experiential perfect without current relevance. The results obtained from the two groups of informants through the grammaticality judgement task are displayed in the following graphs.

- Condition 1: experiential perfect without current relevance
(19) ex. Sic. Pino ha chiantatu/ chiantau pi tri anni pumarori e ora chianta milinciane
Lit. Pino has planted/planted for tomatoes for three years and now he plants eggplants.



Graph 5. Condition 1: experiential perfect without current relevance, group 20-30 y.o.

Condition 1: 50-70 y.o.



Graph 6. Condition 1: experiential perfect without current relevance, group 50-70 y.o.

As shown by the two graphs, for the experiential perfect without current relevance the two informants groups accepted as grammatical both the present perfect and the simple past almost in all the sentences provided by the test.

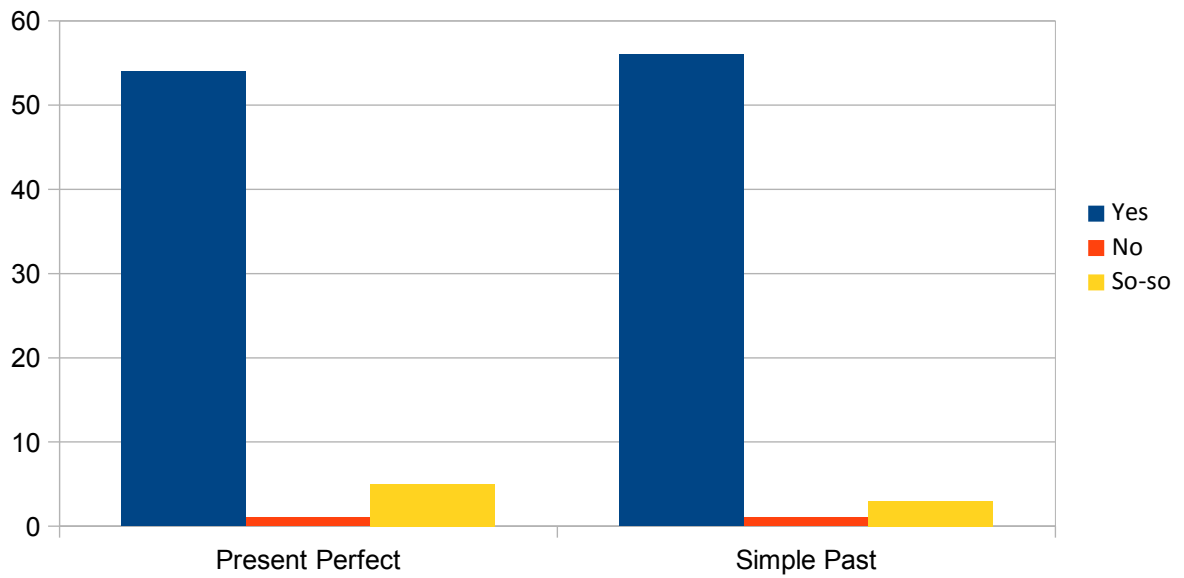
The situation displayed by the results of the second condition does not largely differ from the one of the previous two graphs, since even with current relevance, both present perfect and simple past seem to be mostly accepted.

- Condition 2: experiential perfect with current relevance

(20) ex. Sic. Pino ha chiantatu/chiantau pi tri anni pumarori e st'annu i chianta arré.

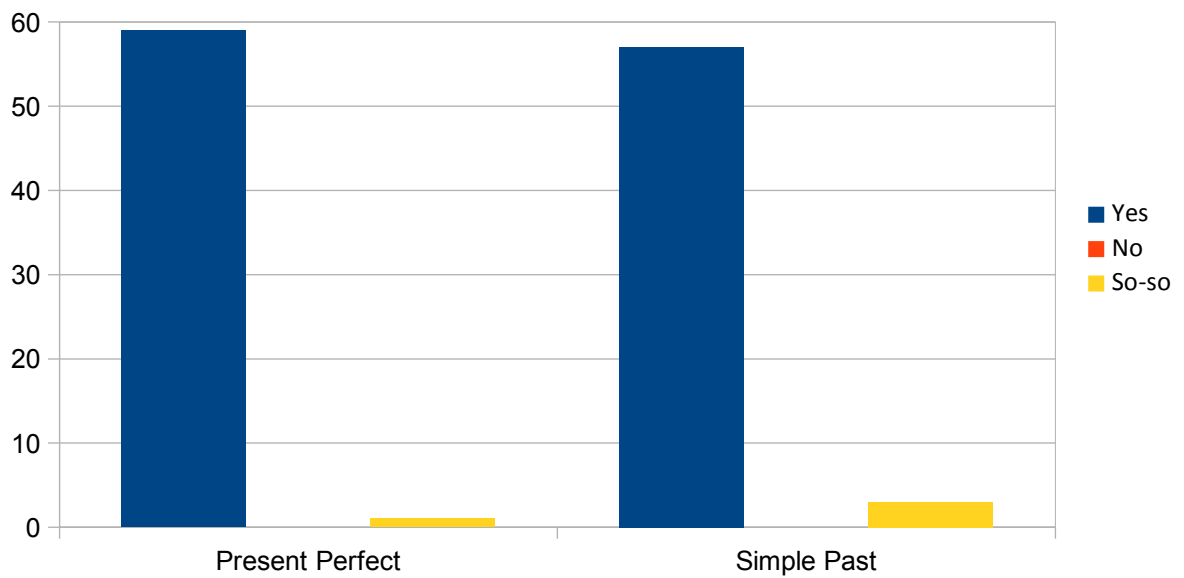
Lit. Pino has planted/planted tomatoes for three year and this year he plants them again.

Condition 2: group 20-30 y.o.



Graph 7. Condition 2: experiential perfect with current relevance, group 20-30 y.o.

Condition 2: 50-70 y.o.



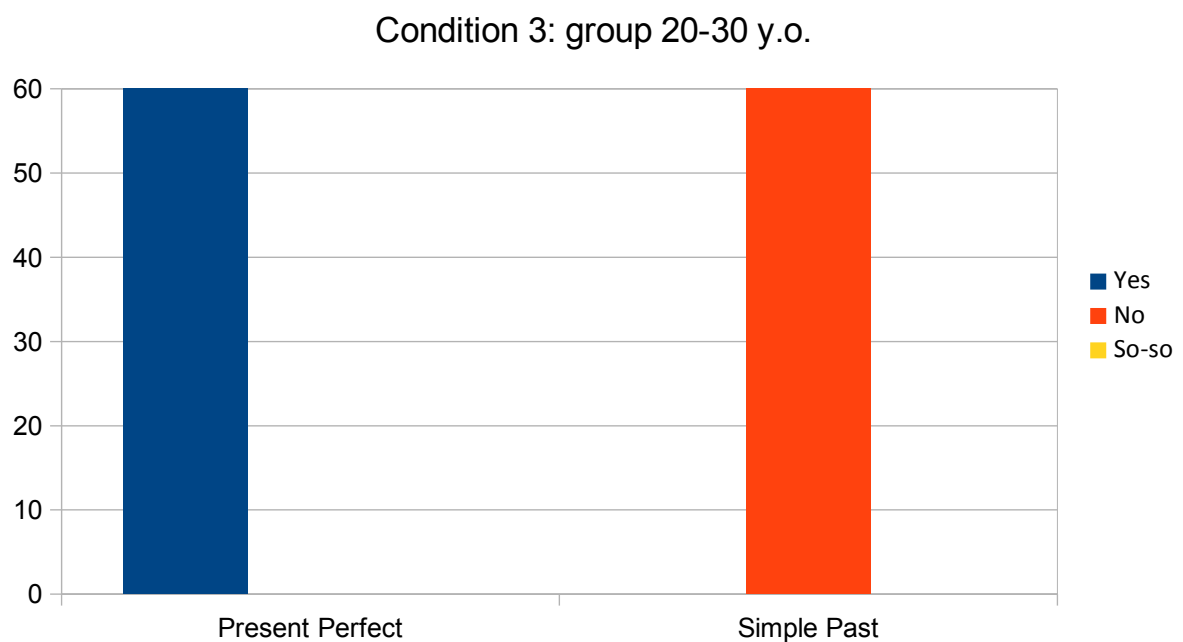
Graph 8. Condition 2: experiential perfect with current relevance, group 50-70 y.o.

A very clear distinction of the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past is, instead, displayed by the results of the conditions 3 and 4, i.e. the habitual perfect respectively without and with current relevance.

- Condition 3: habitual perfect with the adverb *sempre* without current relevance

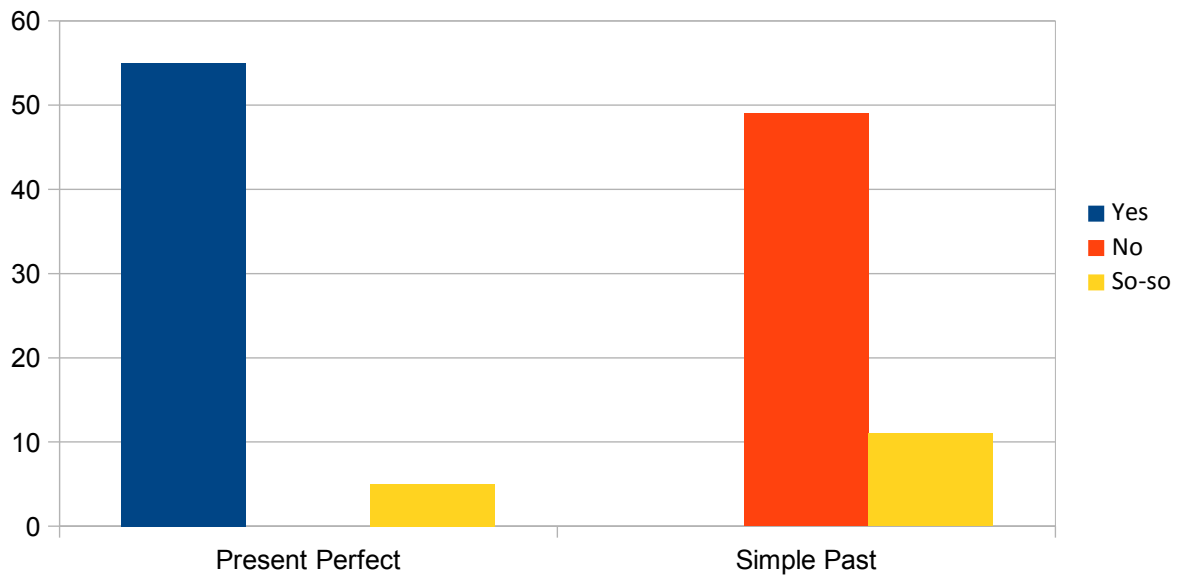
(21) ex. Sic. Pino ha fattu/fici sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte e st'annu u fa o Romiteddu.

Lit. Pino has always made/made the pilgrimage to the Madonna del Ponte and this year he makes it to Romitello.



Graph 9. Condition 3: habitual perfect without current relevance, group 20-30 y.o.

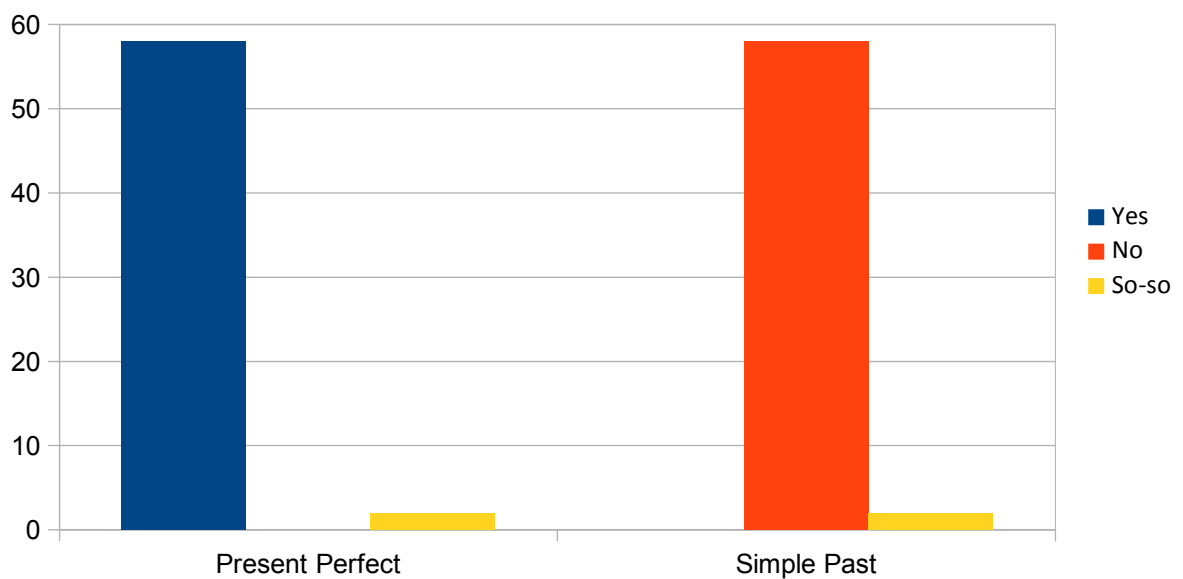
Condition 3: group 50-70 y.o.



Graph 10. Condition 3: habitual perfect without current relevance, group 50-70 y.o.

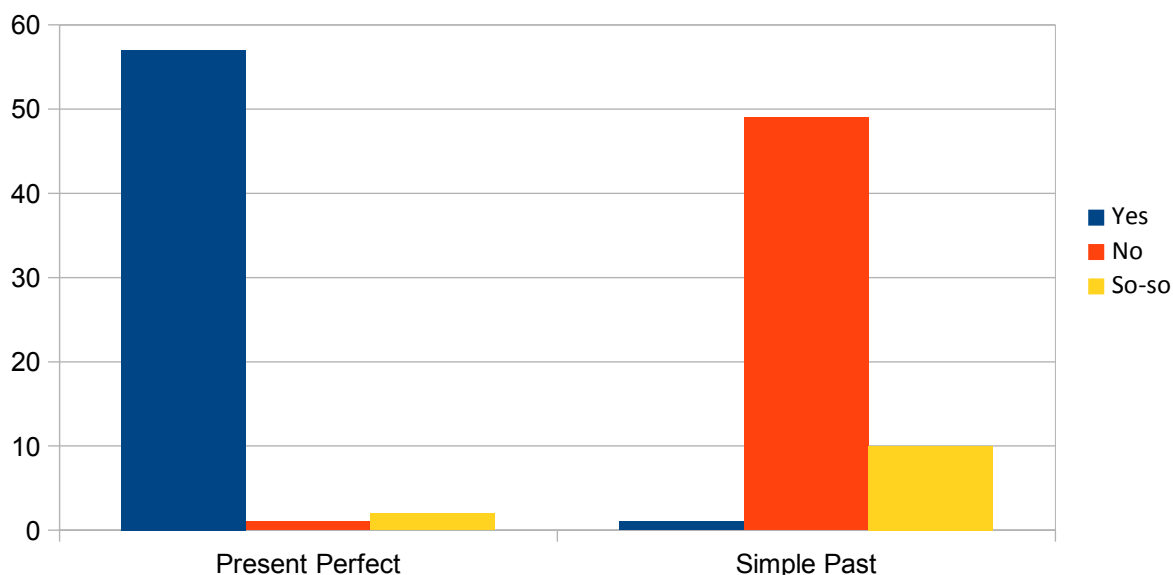
- Condition 4: habitual perfect with the adverb *sempre* with current relevance (22) ex. Sic. Pino ha fattu/fici sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte e st'annu u fa arré.
Lit. Pino has always made/made the pilgrimage to the Madonna del Ponte and this year he makes it again.

Condition 4: group 20-30 y.o.



Graph 11. Condition 4: habitual perfect with current relevance, group 20-30 y.o.

Condition 4: group 50-70 y.o.



Graph 12. Condition 4: habitual perfect with current relevance, group 50-70 y.o.

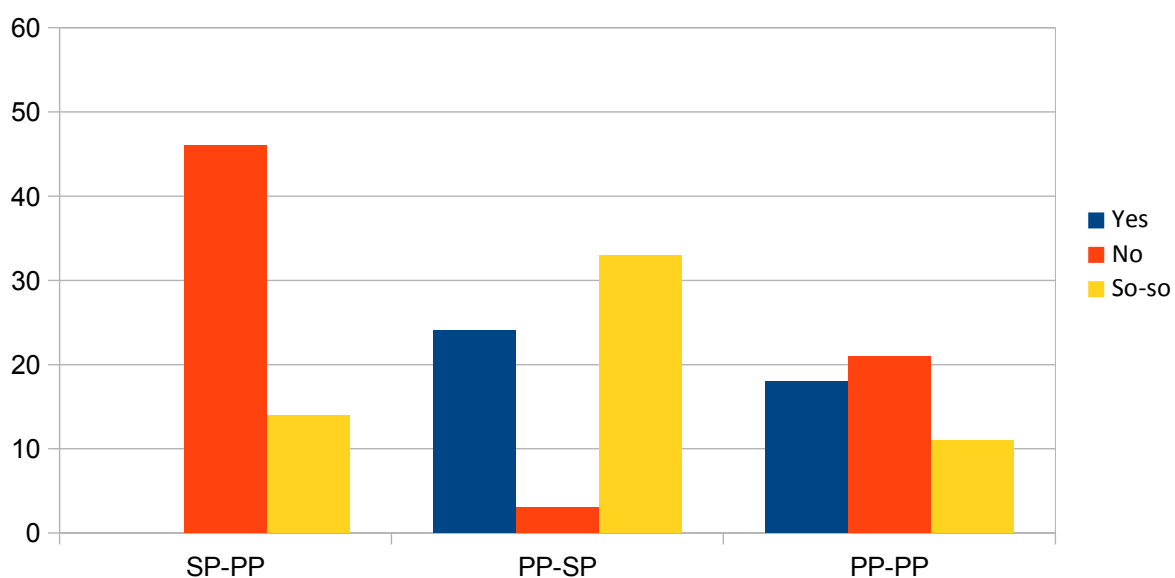
It is possible to note from the graphs of conditions 3 and 4 that, in the case of the habitual perfect with the adverbial *sempre*, the simple past is almost never accepted as a grammatical option. The group of informants aged 20 to 30 show a clear preference for the present perfect and an absolute refuse of the simple past in the context of the habitual perfect both with and without current relevance. The group of adults show a slightly higher amount of *so-so* responses which, though, cannot be considered relevant in comparison to the *yes* and *no* responses regarding respectively the compound and the simple form.

With regards to the conditions 5, 6 and 7, the results display, on the one hand, a categoric refuse of the sequence simple past - present perfect and, on the other hand, various and uncertain responses for the other two proposed options.

- Condition 5: sequence simple past-present perfect
(23) ex. Sic. Pino manciau u pisci spata e c'ha fattu mali.
Lit. Pino ate sword fish and it has made him sick.

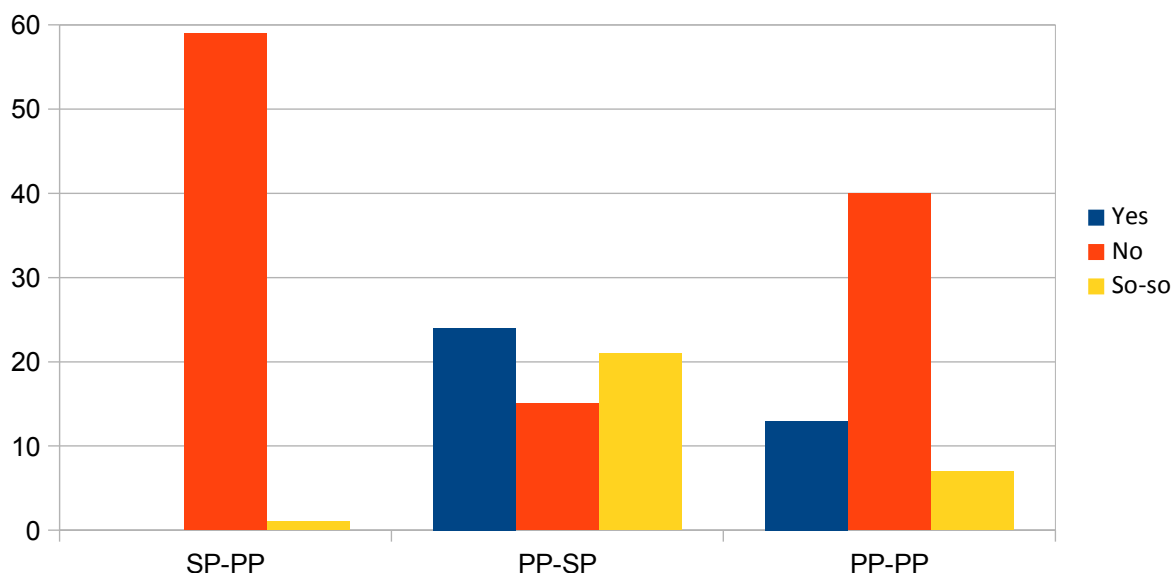
- Condition 6: sequence present perfect-simple past
(24) ex. Sic. Pino s'ha manciatu u pisci spata e ci fici mali.
Lit. Pino has eaten sword fish and it made him sick.
- Condition 7: sequence present perfect-present perfect
(25) ex. Sic. Pino s'ha manciatu u pisci spata e c'ha fattu mali.
Lit. Pino has eaten sword fish and it has made him sick.

Conditions 5, 6, 7: group 20-30 y.o.



Graph 13. Condition 5, 6, 7: sequences simple past - present perfect; present perfect - simple past; present perfect - present perfect. Group 20-30 y.o.

Conditions 5, 6, 7: group 50-70 y.o.

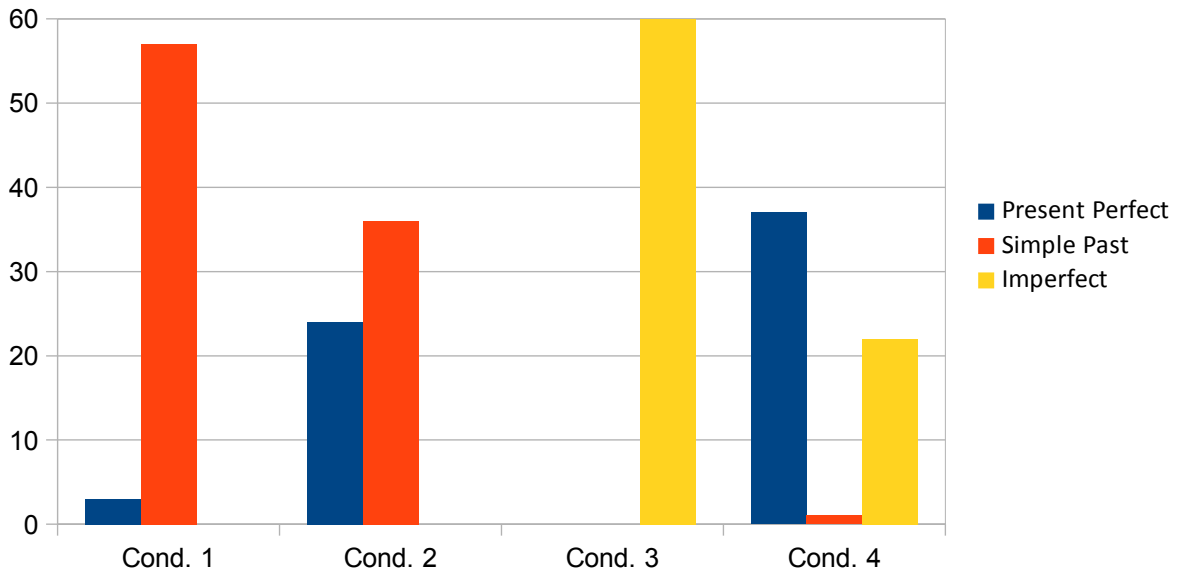


Graph 14: Condition 5, 6, 7: sequences simple past - present perfect; present perfect - simple past; present perfect - present perfect. Group 50-70 y.o.

Elicited production: Cloze task

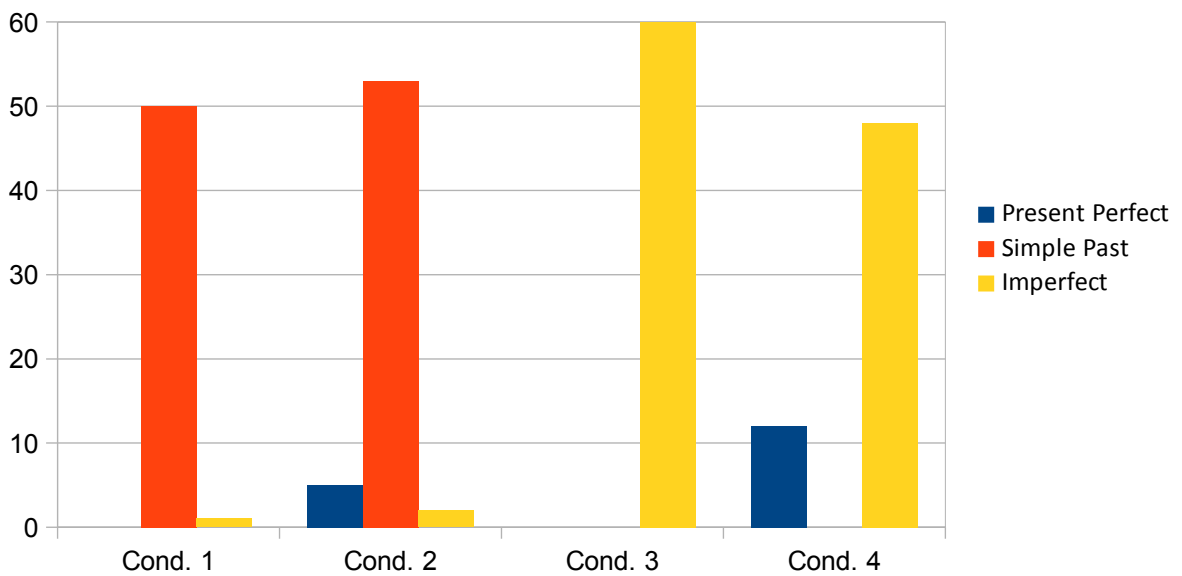
Concerning the second task of the experiment, i.e. the cloze task, the results obtained from the two groups seem to describe a different situation of the distributions of the Sicilian past tenses. This divergence derives from the different perspective of the two proposed tasks, which investigate respectively, on the one hand, the grammatical intuition of the informants and, on the other hand, their spontaneous and productive use of the tenses taken into account. The following graphs show, indeed, the results of the cloze task performed by the two groups of participants, indicating on the x-axis the conditions of the experiment.

Cloze task: group 20-30 y.o.



Graph 15. Condition 1, 2, 3, 4: group 20-30 y.o.

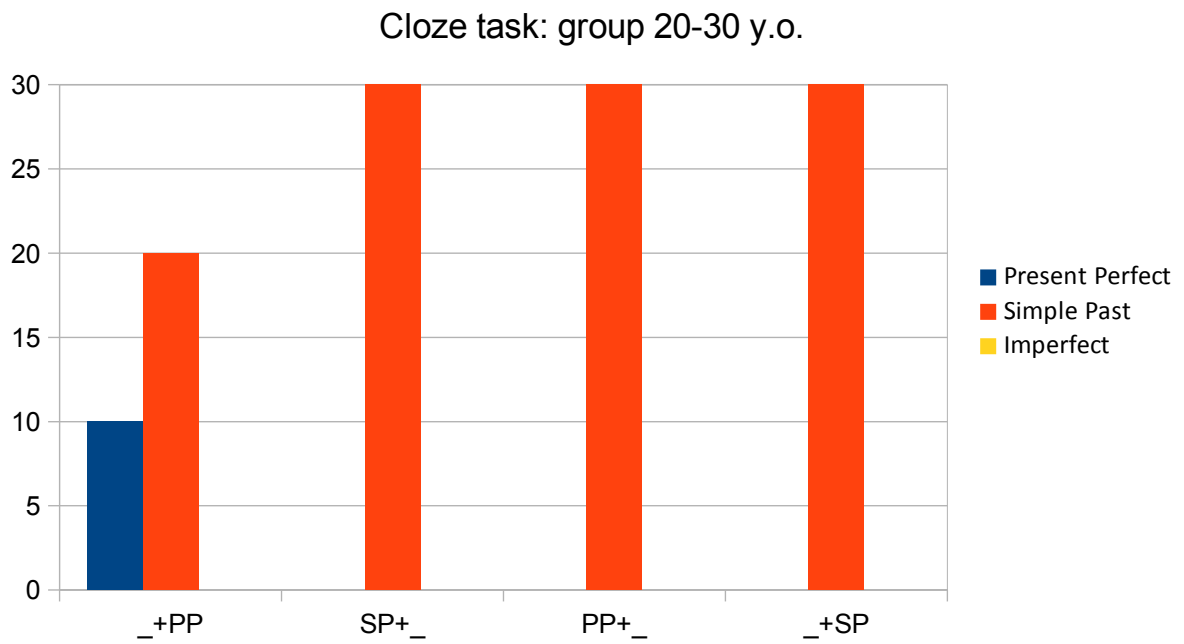
Cloze task: group 50-70 y.o.



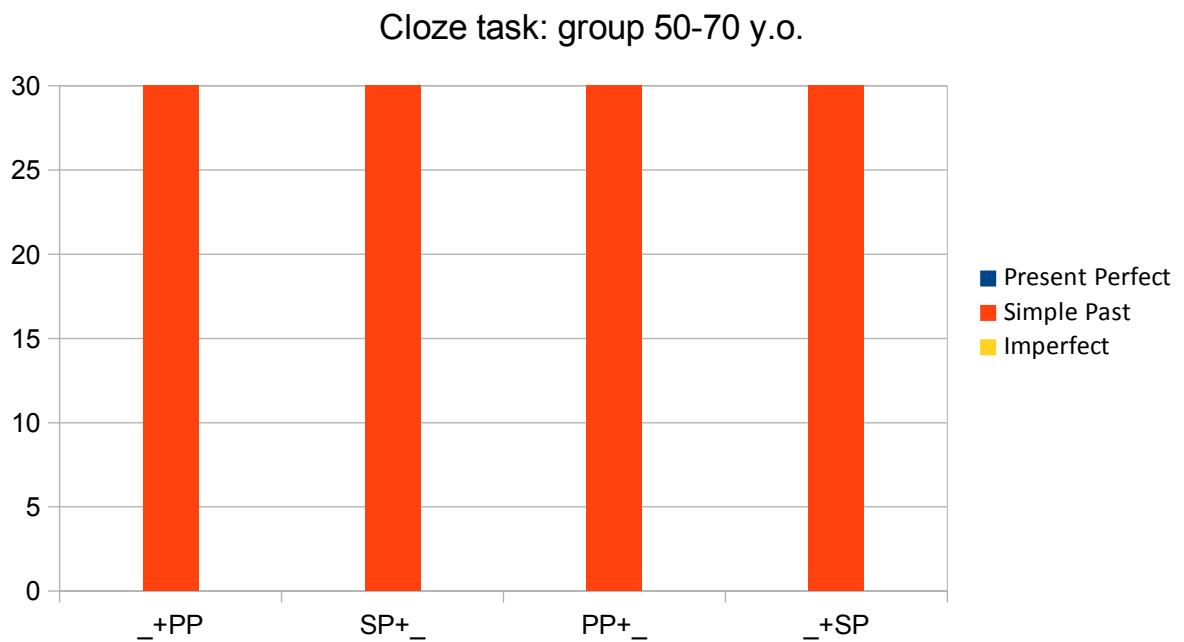
Graph 15. Condition 1, 2, 3, 4. Group 50-70 y.o.

The items of the cloze task regarding the conditions 5, 6 and 7 were divided in four different categories (represented in the x-axis of the following graphs), in order to check the responses of the informants in all the potential options of the distribution of present perfect and simple

past in a sequence. The symbol '_' employed in the definition of the variables of the x-axis in the following graphs indicates, therefore, the missing verb form, i.e. the gap to be filled out by the speakers in the cloze task.



Graph 16. Condition 5, 6, 7. Group 20-30 y.o.



Graph 17. Condition 5, 6, 7. Group 50-70 y.o.

3.2.2 Discussion and interpretation of results

The first and main evidence appearing from the results presented so far is the existence of the present perfect in the Sicilian dialect. Contrary to the conventional claim of the purely use of the simple past for expressing perfective meanings in Sicilian, in fact, it has been shown that the present perfect also finds room in the tenses range of this dialect. Even if the simple past seems to remain the default choice for the speakers in almost all the cases, the present perfect have been mostly accepted as a grammatical option in its experiential and habitual meanings.

In evaluating the collected data, it is first of all necessary to assume a sociolinguistic perspective, in order to signal the differences coming out from the results of the two informants groups. Comparing the responses of the young speakers with the ones of the adults, in fact, there is in evidence an imbalance in the use of the present perfect. The young informants, indeed, demonstrated a more frequent employment of the present perfect in the cloze task and a higher level of acceptability of the same tense in the grammaticality judgement task. In this part of the test, in fact, with regards to the conditions 5, 6 and 7, speakers aged 20 to 30 accepted the use of the present perfect with a much higher percentage than adults, in particular in the sequences present perfect-present perfect and present perfect-simple past. Informants aged 50 to 70, on the other hand, demonstrated a more "conservative" preference for the simple past, employed in almost all the contexts expressing perfective meaning in the cloze task.

Moreover, there are in evidence distinctions in the responses in dependence on the education level of the informants. The use of the present perfect is more frequent in the responses of speakers with a high school diploma than in the ones of speakers with an inferior education level. In particular with regards to the group aged 50 to 70, a relevant predominance of the simple past form is shown by the choices of the informants with a primary or middle school diploma.

Therefore, I hypothesize that speakers who are more exposed to the influence of the standard language have the tendency to consider and employ the present perfect more frequently. Nevertheless, even in the cases in which it is used with more frequency, the Sicilian present perfect, as we will later see, expresses different meanings than the same standard tense. The

afore-displayed distinctions in the use of the present perfect could be explained through the idea, pointed out by Berruto (1987:70), that a re-standardization process is producing an evolution of the local varieties of Italian in direction of the standard language. Moreover, it has been assumed by Berretta (1988: 765) that the verbal system tends to extend the use of the compound past form because of its more stable morphological regularity in comparison to the simple form. The tendency demonstrated by the young and more school-educated speakers to choose the present perfect more recurrently than the other informants could be, therefore, a concrete manifestation of the afore-mentioned language evolution processes. Since the data provided by my experiment are limited, they do not permit to express clear assumption in this regard. A comparative study on the re-standardization processes endured by the different Italian dialects would be useful to obtain more general, interesting and clearer material concerning the mentioned evolution.

A further interesting evidence resulting from the collected data and supporting one of my hypotheses is that the current relevance does not play a crucial role in the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past in the Sicilian dialect. As already pointed out in chapter 2 referring to Skubic's (1976) assumption, in fact, neither the present effects resulting from a past event nor the inclusion of the time of the utterance in the reference time are influencing factors for the employment of the present perfect in Sicilian. The collected data show, in fact, that for the experiential interpretation, both the present perfect and simple past are grammatically correct with and without current relevance. For the habitual perfect combined with the adverb *sempre*, instead, the simple past seems to be considered ungrammatical both with and without current relevance. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that in the cloze task, instead, the current relevance seems to wield a certain influence on the choices of the informants. In the young speakers group, for instance, the present perfect with experiential meaning has been preferred to the simple past twenty-four times in sixty responses when expressing current relevance; on the contrary, without current relevance, it has been employed only twice to fill the gap in the sentences. Concerning the habitual perfect, moreover, the verb forms inserted in the items expressing current relevance and in the ones expressing not-current relevance display a more evident distinction: the 100% of the informants used the imperfect to fill the gap of the stimuli without current relevance, whereas, for the items expressing current relevance, thirty-six responses were with the present perfect and twenty-

four with the imperfect form. In contrast to the results of the young group, the data collected from the group aged 50 to 70 do not present any relevant difference depending on the expression of the current relevance.

Since the results of the grammaticality judgement task clearly exclude any possible role played by the current relevance in the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past in Sicilian, in my opinion they support the initial hypothesis of the experiment on this regard and match with Skubic (1976)'s assumption presented in chapter 2. Nevertheless, the evidence deriving from the responses of the young group to the cloze task items deserve to be taken into account, since they show a tendency which is, even if still limited, innovative if compared to the choices of the adult speakers. The group of informants aged 20 to 30, in fact, seem to attribute significance to the current relevance of a past event expressed by the verb and start associating it to the use of the present perfect, especially in contrast to the imperfect used for the habitual meaning. It would be interesting to conduct further investigations in order to collect more data for clarifying this situation regarding the use of tenses of young speakers.

With regards to the conditions 5, 6 and 7, the results of the experiment do not completely support the hypothesis presented at the beginning, since the present perfect has been accepted and used in some cases. Analysing with more detail the various options, as already shown by the examples in Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 134) from Catanese, even in the dialect of Partinico the sequence simple past - present perfect was excluded in all the proposed items. That means that, even in a western variety of Sicilian such as the one of Partinico, the distribution of simple past and present perfect differs from the standard language where, as seen in the example (13) of chapter 2, the grammatical distribution is opposite than the Sicilian one.

(26) a. Gianni emigrò negli Stati Uniti, ma poi è tornato.

Lit. Gianni emigrated to the States, but then he has come back.

b. *Gianni è emigrato negli Stati Uniti, ma poi tornò.

Lit. Gianni has emigrated to the States, but then he came back.

These data support our initial hypothesis and agree with Giorgi and Pianesi's (1997: 134)

assumption regarding the difference between simple past and present perfect in Sicilian: the two tenses do not differ because of temporal factors, they rather have a different aspectual nature. As shown, in fact, the present perfect does not express any temporal recentness and it has not to follow the simple past in a sequence.

Considering the other two proposed options, i.e. the sequences present perfect - simple past and present perfect - present perfect, the results do not design a clear and uniform situation, since the responses of both groups are mixed and also vary depending on the items.

The data collected from the cloze task clearly demonstrate that the simple past represents a default choice in the use of the past tenses by native Sicilian speakers. Adult informants, in fact, limited their responses to the production of simple past forms. This choice, which excludes the use of the present perfect, produced in the cloze task even sentences which were refused by the same speakers in the grammaticality judgement task. As explained before, in fact, the cloze task also proposed items in which the first verb form of the sequence was missing and the second one was represented by a compound past form. Even in this case, adults always conjugated the provided verb in the simple past form, producing in this way the sequence simple past - present perfect, which is grammatical in the standard language and ungrammatical in Sicilian. In the same context, the results of the group of young speakers, on the other hand, show the employment of the present perfect corresponding to one-third of the given responses.

The data collected from the grammaticality judgement task on the same two conditions, i.e. the sequences present perfect - simple past and present perfect - present perfect, are various, since they show an almost equal amount of *yes*, *no* and *so-so* responses. Nevertheless, in order to shed some light on this situation, it is essential to look at the reasons provided by the speakers to explain their choices in the experiment and to some of the theories on the Sicilian present perfect elaborated so far. Both young and adult informants, in fact, when at the end of the questionnaire were asked to explain some of their choices, justified the employment of the present perfect in the items of conditions 6 and 7 by means of a durative and iterative interpretation. That means that the present perfect could be employed in those cases, because it indicated an event occurring more than once in the past or occurred for an extended time span. Taking into account, for instance, the example proposed by Giorgi and Pianesi

(1997:134), in fact, the use of the present perfect in both parts of the sequence could be accepted only assuming that the event of eating fish and feeling sick occurred more than once.

Consequently, the informants considered ungrammatical all the stimuli of the test indicating events which could not occur many times or be extended for a long-term time span. It is the case, for instance, of the following item of the test, which have been judged ungrammatical by all the speakers:

(27) Maria ha priatu a Maronna e c'ha fattu a razia

Lit. Maria has prayed the Virgin Mary and she has made her the grace.

The item presented in (27) has been unanimously rejected as ungrammatical, because the event of donating the grace made by the Virgin Mary only occurred once. The object of the second compound form of the verb, *a razia*, in fact, it is singular and cannot, thus, indicate an iterated event. This explanation provided by the informants fits with Skubic's (1976) assumption, discussed in chapter 2. Skubic supports, in fact, the idea of the durative and iterative aspectual nature of the Sicilian present perfect which cannot express a punctual event. The whole range of results of the experiment seem to support this theory, since even the items of the experiential and habitual perfect conditions express a durative meaning. All the sentences of the experiential perfect, in fact, contain an adverbial expressing duration such as *pi ru anni*, i.e. for two years, and the habitual perfect stimuli express habituality by means of the adverbial *sempre*. The presence of these adverbials would justify, in my opinion, the grammaticality of the present perfect. As discussed in chapter 2, the same occurs in the examples proposed by Mocciaro (1978), where the relevant factor for the employment of the present perfect is not represented by the current relevance, but rather by the use of adverbials expressing duration or iteration of the event.

This aspectual nature of the Sicilian present perfect has been also suggested by Bertinetto and Squartini (2000: 5), who locate the dialect of Sicily with languages such as Portuguese in their classification of the distribution of simple and compound past forms. They describe the use of the present perfect in the languages included in this category as strictly specific for circumstances expressing durative and repetitive aspectual values. The same stage of

Bertinetto and Squartini (2000)'s classification also includes other languages and varieties, such as Portuguese. According to the analysis of Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 47-52), indeed, I have noticed similarities between the Sicilian and the Portuguese verbal systems, which could not only semantically connect the compound past forms of the two languages, but also provide a syntactic explanation of the distribution of simple past and present perfect in Sicilian.

The starting point for this parallelism between the two languages can be represented by the Reichenbach's (1947) assumption quoted in Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 48) and regarding the distribution of simple past and present perfect: in the languages which have both a simple and a compound past forms, the present perfect can co-occur with the adverb *now*, since it expresses current relevance. The simple past is, instead, ungrammatical if associated with the afore-mentioned adverb. This condition is valid for languages such as English or Italian:

- (28) a. Now I have eaten enough.
- b. Adesso ho mangiato abbastanza.
- c. * Now I ate enough.
- d. * Adesso mangiai abbastanza.

(example 19 from Giorgi and Pianesi 1997: 47)

The same condition does not hold, instead, for Portuguese, where the grammatical past tense form occurring with the adverb *now* is the simple past:

- (29) Agora ja comi o suficiente.

(example 20 from Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 47)

Considering the same example, the Sicilian translation does not correspond to the Italian one, rather it works exactly as the Portuguese construction:

- (30) Ora manciai assae.

As already pointed out, thus, current states are not expressed in Sicilian by means of the present perfect form, which has instead a durative and iterative aspect. With regards to the Portuguese compound past form, it also differs from the corresponding form in English or in the other Romance languages. The Portuguese present perfect indicates, in fact, a habit or, as assumed by Bertinetto and Squartini (2000: 6), it refers to a durative or iterative situation. This tense, if considered in co-occurrence with punctual temporal adverbials, indicates therefore a habitual event:

(31) a. Ho mangiato alle quattro.

b. Tenho comido as quatro.

Lit. I have eaten at four

(example 26 from Giorgi and Pianesi 1997: 50)

The sentence in (10 b.), for instance, means that the subject took the habit of eating at four. If translated in Sicilian, the same sentence would not have the same meaning of the Italian version, but it would rather indicate that the event of eating at four occurred more times in an extended time span. Moreover, Sicilian shares with Portuguese a peculiarity of the verbal system, i.e. the unavailability of the past perfect. Neither Sicilian nor Portuguese have in fact a verbal form consisting of the simple past form of the auxiliary plus the past participle of the verb. All these data concerning the verbal system of Portuguese demonstrate, according to Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 50), that the simple past of this language is not a T1, as the simple past of English or Italian, but it is rather a T2, since it expresses perfect meaning. This hypothesis would explain the non-existence of the periphrastic past perfect in the tense inventory of Portuguese, since the past participle is a T2 and the co-existence of two T2 forms is not allowed.

In my opinion, this analysis perfectly fits with the case of Sicilian which shows surprising parallel characteristics and which I consider, thus, to be a T2. This hypothesis is, moreover, confirmed by another evidence, i.e. the use of the simple past in Sicilian for expressing future perfect meanings. As well as in Portuguese, even in Sicilian, in fact, the present perfect cannot be employed in order to indicate event located in the future.

- (32) a. Un altro esame ancora e hai finito il corso.
 One more examination and you have finished with your course,
 b. *Un altro esame ancora e finisti il corso.
 One other examination and you finished with your course.
 (example 30 from Giorgi and Pianesi 1997: 51)

The Italian, the sentence proposed in (32) is grammatical only with the present perfect, but the Portuguese and Sicilian translations would require, instead, the use of the simple past form.

All the mentioned evidences shed light on a similarity between the verbal systems of the two languages which could derive from a parallel evolution of the Latin perfect. As pointed out by Giorgi and Pianesi (1997: 45), the synthetic form of the perfect in Latin, for instance *laudavit*, is composed by the verbal stem *laud(a)*, by the morpheme *-vi-* expressing tense and aspect and realising T2 and by the final ending *-t* indicating the ϕ -features and lexicalising AGR1. According to the authors, this synthetic form would correspond to the Italian compound past form, even if it does not require any AGR2, because of its verbal nature, different from the adjectival nature of the Italian past participle.²⁸ Such as the Portuguese one, the Sicilian simple past would, therefore, also represent an equivalent of the Latin synthetic perfect form.

To summarise, I propose that the results of the experiment performed in the town of Partinico confirmed, first of all, the existence of the present perfect in Sicilian and the aspectual nature of the distinctions in the distribution of simple and compound past forms. Moreover, there is evidence that the Sicilian present perfect, which differs from the same standard tense, does not express current states and that, therefore, the current relevance is not an influencing factor in the distribution of the two tenses taken into account. Nevertheless, from the results of the young speakers, it is possible to notice a certain limited tendency to consider the current relevance as significant in employing the present perfect. Another important piece of evidence is represented by the durative and iterative aspect of the considered compound past form which cannot indicate punctual past events. Last but not least, the final evidence consists of the parallelism between the Sicilian and the Portuguese verbal systems, which give a semantic

²⁸ For a more detailed description of the verbal system and verbal morphology of Latin compared to the Italian ones, see Giorgi and Pianesi (1991)'s article on Probus.

and syntactic explanation of the distribution of the present perfect and the simple past. This latter tense can be, therefore, considered as a T2 and as an equivalent of the Latin perfect, which evolved in a parallel way in Portuguese and in the Sicilian dialect.

Conclusions

This work addressed the issue of the existence and the usages of the present perfect in the Sicilian dialect. It has been shown that the previous research concerning the question proposed various interpretations, which did not facilitate to outline a general explanation of the distribution of this tense, in comparison to the more widespread simple past form. The investigation I carried out aimed, therefore, at collecting data for a new analysis of the Sicilian present perfect, a tense employed in strictly specific circumstances that I intended to identify. At the beginning of the research it was hypothesized that the Sicilian present perfect does not express any current relevance or recentness of the event time, but rather indicates durative and iterative meaning. With reference to the distribution of the compound form in comparison to the simple form, it was also hypothesized that the distinction is not based on temporal factors but indeed has an aspectual nature.

According to the results obtained, the common opinion regarding the dominance of the simple past in the Sicilian dialect turned to be true at a very large extent, since this tense represents the default choice of the speakers to express perfective meaning. Nevertheless, it has been demonstrated that the present perfect does exist in the Sicilian dialect and that it differs from the aspectual values expressed by the corresponding tense in the standard language. The compound form, in fact, is employed to indicate events which occurred in an extended time span or which occurred more than once in the past. The influence of the current relevance in the distribution of the considered tense appeared to be significant merely in the responses of some young participants, but, in general, it did not play any crucial role in the speakers' choices.

The most surprising finding and the final proposal of this work is the similarity which I noticed between the Siciliana and the Portuguese verbal systems, which show a parallel

distribution of the simple past and the present perfect, differing from most of the other Romance languages. Just like the Sicilian present perfect, in fact, the same Portuguese tense also expresses iterative and durative aspectual values and the simple past of both languages is, rather, the tense employed to express perfect meaning. The Sicilian and the Portuguese simple past forms can be considered as the equivalent tenses of the synthetic form of the Latin perfect. In the two languages, therefore, the Latin perfect evolved into the simple past form, rather than in the present perfect form.

The results obtained through the experiment presented in this work are limited, since they do not exhaust the whole spectrum of the possible values and meanings which can be assigned to the present perfect and the simple past in Sicilian and since they are limited to the area of the town of Partinico, where the investigation was carried out. Nevertheless, they can be considered as a valid starting point for potential further researches.

Appendix A

INCHIESTA DIALETTALE PARTINICO

Ringraziandola vivamente per la preziosa collaborazione alla ricerca, la prego di compilare il seguente questionario.

Ha modo di parlare dialetto? molto spesso poco quasi mai

Dove? in famiglia al lavoro con gli amici

Luogo di nascita della madre.....

Lingua parlata in famiglia dalla madre.....

Luogo di nascita del padre.....

lingua parlata in famiglia dal padre.....

Autorizzazione al trattamento dei dati personali in conformità alla legge 675/96, art. 13, finalizzato alla ricerca sperimentale per una tesi di laurea magistrale presso l'Università Ca' Foscari di Venezia.

NOME.....

COGNOME.....

NATO A.....IL.....

INDIRIZZO.....

TEL.....

E-MAIL.....

PROFESSIONE.....

DATA.....

Appendix B

TEST 1

Leggere e dare una valutazione alle seguenti frasi scegliendo tra le opzioni: Sì, No, Insomma.

- 1 Pino manciau u pisci spata e c'ha fattu mali.
- 2 U picciriddu fece pi tri anni a collezione ri figurine e st'anno a fa arré.
- 3 Maria, paci all'anima sua, ha cuciutu sempri liccumarie pi tutti i so niputi.
- 4 Pino ha manciatu u pisci spata e ci fici mali.
- 5 Maria ha manciatu rosticceria nPalermo e c'ha fattu àcitu.
- 6 Pino taliau sempri l'opra ri pupi a ruminica, ma ora un ci piaci chiù.
- 7 Maria ha ricamatu linzola pi vint'anni e continua sempri a fallu.
- 8 Pino ogni sira trase a machina no malaseno picchì si scanta ca cia pigghianu.
- 9 Maria ha manciatu rosticceria nPalermo e ci fici àcitu.
- 10 U picciutteddu si tirau fora a cammisa ru pantalone accussì eni chiù sbrechisi.
- 11 Pino ù a piscari cu a varca ma pigghiau nenti e turnau scunsulato.
- 12 U picciutteddu fici sempri i compiti cu so matri e i fannu ancora nzemmula.
- 13 U picciriddu ha fattu pi tri anni a collezione ri figurine e st'anno a fa arré.
- 14 Pino chiamao Ciccio e ora si nni vannu nzemmula a spiaggia.
- 15 Pino ha manciatu u pisci spata e c'ha fattu mali.
- 16 Pino ha chiantato pi tri anni pummarori e st'annu chianta milinciane.
- 17 Maria ha vinnuto robbe na putìa nto cassaru pi cinq'anni e travagghia ancora dà.
- 18 Maria ricamau linzola pi vent'anni e continua sempri a fallu.
- 19 U picciriddu scinne sempri u cani a passiare e poi u porta arré a casa.
- 20 Pino vinnìo frutta e virdura pi ru anni e ora fa u murature.
- 21 Maria ha priatu a Maronna e ci fici a razia.
- 22 U picciutteddu aiutau a so patri o travagghiu pi tutta l'estate e ora ci siddiau.
- 23 Pino fici sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte e st'anno u fa o Romiteddo.
- 24 U picciutteddu ha aiutatu a so pà o travagghiu pi tutta l'estate e ora ci siddiau.
- 25 Maria ha purtatu i picciriddi a scola pi cinq'anni e ora iddi ci vannu sulì.
- 26 Pino ha chiantato pi ru anni citrola e st'annu i chianta arré.
- 27 Maria, paci all'anima sua, ha fattu tanti viaggio pi lu munnu nta so giuvinezza.

- 28 La bon'arma di Pino ha fattu tanti opiri ri bene pi li puvireddi nta so vita.
- 29 Maria ha cusutu sempri sula i robbe spunnate e fa ancora accussì.
- 30 U picciutteddu ha fattu sempri i compiti cu so matri e i fannu ancora nzemmula.
- 31 U picciriddu voli stare cu nuddu e chianci sempri como un fodde.
- 32 Pino fici sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte.
- 33 Pino ha pigghiatu sempri pisci bono a Terrasini e va pisca ancora spissu dà.
- 34 Maria ha priatu a Maronna e c'ha fattu a razia.
- 35 Maria ha fattu u viaggiu a Maronna ru Rumiteddo.
- 36 Maria ha cugghiutu sempri i milinciani nta so campagna e st'annu i cogghie arré.
- 37 Pino assira un vosi manciari nenti e ora ave un pititto ri morire.
- 38 Maria purtau i picciriddi a scola pi cinq'anni, ma ora iddi ci vannu suli.
- 39 Maria porta a ghiusu a munnizza e poi passano chiddi a pigghiarisilla.
- 40 Pino ha vivutu assai vinu russia e ha fattu dannu.
- 41 Maria sta circanno a so figghiu picchè iddu unn'arrispuone o telefono.
- 42 Maria priau a Maronna e c'ha fattu a razia.
- 43 U picciriddu vippe sempri sulu u latte ri so matri, ma ora si mancia i pappette.
- 44 Pino ha vinnuto frutta e viridura pi ru anni e ora fa u murature.
- 45 Pino ha taliatu sempri l'opra ri pupi a ruminica e ora un ci piaci chiù.
- 46 Pino ha fattu sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte e st'anno u fa o Romiteddo.
- 47 Pino chiantau pi tri anni pummarori e st'annu chianta milinciane.
- 48 Maria ha manciatu sempri a viridura ra so campagna e ora l'accatta a putìa.
- 49 Pino, bon'arma, ha pigghiatu sempri tri pinnule pa prissione a matina prima ri manciari.
- 50 Pino ha vivutu assai vinu russia e fici dannu.
- 51 Maria talìa so figghiu nta l'occhi e subito capisci tutti cosi.
- 52 Maria cughhù sempri i milinciani nta so campagna e st'annu i cogghie arré.
- 53 Maria maciau rosticceria nPalermo e c'ha fattu àcitu.
- 54 Pino vippe assai vinu russia e ha fattu dannu.
- 55 U picciriddu vitte a so matri e ora eni cuntentu e un chiance chiù.
- 56 Maria manciau sempri a viridura ra so campagna e ora l'accatta a putìa.
- 57 Maria fici u viaggiu a Maronna ru Rumiteddo.
- 58 Maria cusù sempri sula i robbe spunnate e fa ancora accussì.
- 59 Pino ha fattu sempri u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte.

- 60 Maria cu sti occhiali vecchi e lordi un vire nenti e s'ave a accattare chiddi novi .
- 61 Pino pigghiau sempri pisci bono a Terrasini e va pisca ancora spissu dà.
- 62 Pino chiantau pi ru anni citrola e st'annu i chianta arré.
- 63 Maria vinnìo robbe na putìa nto cassaru pi cinq'anni e travagghia ancora dà.
- 64 U picciriddu ha vivutu sempri sulu u latte ri so matri e ora si mancia i pappette.

TEST 2

Inserire in dialetto la parte mancante nella frase. I verbi vanno inseriti sempre al passato.

- 1 U picciutteddu _____ (*pulire*) pi ru anni a spiaggia a Balestrate e u chiamaru pi fallu puru st'estate.
- 2 Pino _____ (*comprare*) sempri u pane re Parrini e accatta ancora sulu chiddu.
- 3 Maria un voli aiuto _____ (*di nessuno*) picchè ci piace fari i cosi sula.
- 4 Pino _____ (*raccogliere*) pi cinc'anni l'alive a settembre e st'annu fa arré accusì.
- 5 U picciriddu unn _____ (*portare su*) a valigia a primo piano picchè era troppu pisante.
- 6 U picciriddu ha fattu na partita ri pallune e _____ (*stancarsi*).
- 7 Maria aiutava _____ (*sua madre*) a fari i pannelle e accusì s'insignao puru idda.
- 8 Pino _____ (*badare*) cu so patri malato pi tri anni, ma ora ci pensa so soro.
- 9 Maria si scurdau u foco addumatu e _____ (*bruciare*) a carni.
- 10 U picciriddu _____ (*non*) vulìa manciari nenti e era siccu siccu.
- 11 Maria _____ (*vendere*) gelati o bar pi du anni, ma ora travagghia a n'atra banna.
- 12 U picciriddu _____ (*prendere*) sempri l'autbusso pi ghire a scola e ci va ancora accusì.
- 13 Maria _____ (*friggere*) sempri milinciane nta l'estate, ma ora i fa sulu arrustute.
- 14 Maria, paci a l'anima sua, _____ (*cucire*) sempri i vistiti pi so figghi.
- 15 Maria _____ (*fare*) sempri u viaggiu o Romiteddu a maggio.
- 16 U picciutteddu _____ (*fare*) danza pi tri anni, ma ora voli jucari o pallune.
- 17 Maria _____ (*preparare*) pi quarant'anni casateddi cu i ceci e ci venno ancora troppu boni.
- 18 Pino _____ (*prendere*) tanti abbanniatu ri so ma pi vint'anni, ma ora addivintao un bravu

picciotto.

- 19 Pino _____ (*mangiare*) a sasizza e c'ha fattu mali.
- 20 U picciutteddu _____ (*leggere*) sempri u Topolino e ancora ora si l'accatta tutti i simane.
- 21 U picciriddu _____ (*aiutare*) pi un anno a so zio all'officina e ancora ci va a aiutallo.
- 22 Pino _____ (*portare fuori*) a machina ru cancello e stricau tutta a fiancata.
- 23 Maria, paci a l'anima sua, _____ (*scrivere*) poesie bellissime.
- 24 Maria _____ (*leggere*) un libbru fino a tardu e si stancau l'occhi.
- 25 Pino, bon'arma, _____ (*comprare*) sempri un munzeddu ri regali ai so niputi.
- 26 Pino _____ (*bere*) sempri nanticchia di vinu russu a menzjorno, ma ora vive sulu acqua.
- 27 Maria _____ (*bere*) sempri u caffè cu i viscotta a matina e ave ancora st'abitudine.
- 28 Pino _____ (*fare*) u viaggiu a Maronna ru Ponte dopu Pasqua.
- 29 Pino chiamao _____ (*suo fratello*) e ci risse ri venere subito a casa.
- 30 La bon'arma ri Pino _____ (*fare*) tanti travagghi nna so vita.
- 31 Pino s'ha ghittatu u cafe rincoddu e _____ (*sporcare*) a cammisa.
- 32 Pino _____ (*prendere*) sempri a machina pi ghire nPalermo, ma ora ci va cu u treno.
- 33 Pino _____ (*ricevere/prendere*) un pagnittune e ci carero i renti.
- 34 U picciutteddu _____ (*mangiare*) sempri arancine cu a carni, ma ora ci piaciunu sulu chidde o burro.
- 35 Maria _____ (*comprare*) assai robbi e ha spinnutu tutti i picciuli.
- 36 U picciriddu si vippe u latti accattatu e _____ (*fare*) mali.

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