Perfects studied across the European languages are most commonly of resultative origin (Bybee, Perkins & Pagliuca 1994: 53-74). Haber + past participle is an example of a resultative construction that evolved into a perfect form, known as the present perfect, which originated from the Latin periphrastic perfect. It derived from “a possessive construction consisting of transitive habere followed by a direct object and agreeing past passive participle” (Lopez-Couso & Seoane 2008: 135-136), and was originally used similarly to tener + past participle, which may be employed in the peninsular variety of Spanish to denote the present result of a past action (Harre 1991; Kato 1993). Gradually, as haber + past participle began to signify perfect actions more frequently than resultative actions, the agreement between the direct object and the past participle was lost (Holmes & Balukas 2011), and this construction began to extend its use to motion and stative verbs (Bybee et al. 1994: 69). However, this form has evolved further, and has grammaticalized as the default past perfective in modern Peninsular Spanish (Schwenter & Torres Cacoullos 2008), following the widely recognized perfect to perfective path of grammaticalization (Bybee et al. 1994; Squartini & Bertinetto 2000).

The present study considers whether the construction tener + past participle is following the same evolution as haber + past participle by diachronically extending into the realm of the perfect. Given the use of this construction with some psychological verbs, such as entender, as in (1a), with motion verbs, as in (1b), and without agreement, as in (1c), it is hypothesized that this form has extended semantically into the perfect. This evolution is suggested to be a functional compensation for haber + past participle, due to its past perfective meaning.

550 tokens of tener + past participle and 1083 of haber + past participle were extracted from the Corpus de Referencia del Español Actual (CREA), a Spanish-language database developed by the Real Academia Española. These tokens were coded according to various factors, including verb type and grammatical person, to determine if tener + past participle demonstrates any, or all, of the four prototypical uses of the perfect (Dahl 1985: 132; Comrie 1976: 56-61). The data were then statistically analyzed using the program Goldvarb X (Sankoff et al. 2005).

Preliminary results reveal that tener + past participle remains highly constrained by verb type, given that 76% of all tokens occur with dynamic non-motion verbs. Additionally, most other occurrences of this form are distributed amongst three fixed expressions: tener + entendido, tener + pensado, and tener + previsto. Yet, upon comparing these two constructions when they occur solely with dynamic non-motion verbs, other variables indicate perfect uses. For example, when examining grammatical person, tener + past participle occurs more often with first and second person, suggesting a current relevance aspect to this construction. The complete results will be further analyzed and discussed in terms of grammaticalization, renewal, and tense and aspect systems.

Keywords: grammaticalization, tense, aspect, perfect

(1)   a. Y, por ejemplo, lo que pasó en este esto, bueno, según tengo entendido yo, que se pelearon delante del pub. (CREA)
      ‘And, for example, what happened with this this, well, according to what I understand, is that they fought in front of the pub.’
   b. Yo tengo ido tenemos ido a Muros, varias veces. (CREA)
      ‘I have gone we have gone to Muros several times.’
   c. Canalla, yo tengo investigado una cosa rara por ahí. (CREA)
      ‘Canalla, I have investigated something strange there.’