

# Perfect, *already*, and the case against iamitives



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ARC CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE FOR  
THE DYNAMICS OF LANGUAGE

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  - aspectual coercion
  - paradigmatic blocking
  - meaning compatibility

# Readings of the English perfect

- (1)
- resultative (perfect of result)
  - experiential (existential)
  - universal (perfect of persistent situation)
  - 'hot news' (perfect of recent past)
  - anteriority readings: past/future perfect

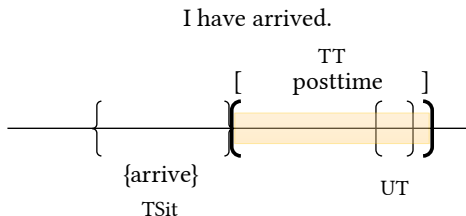


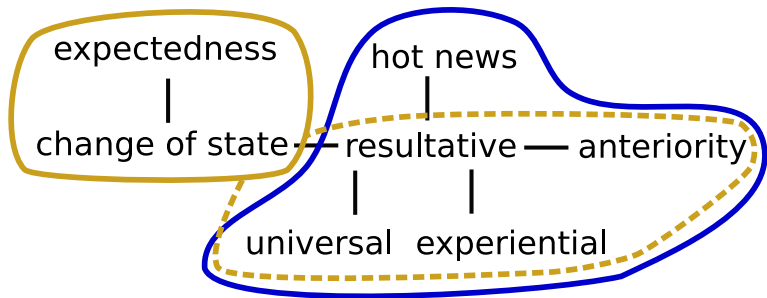
Figure 1: Representation of the present perfect (Klein, 1994)



# Already

Vander Klok & Matthewson (2015) argue that, in contrast to the perfect, *already* can be identified through:

- change-of-state meaning
- presence of duality with negation
- presence of the “earlier than expected” implicature
- co-occurrence with past temporal adverbs with the “present perfect” interpretation

Perfect and *already*

**Figure 2:** Semantic map of the English Perfect in blue and the English *already* in yellow (full outline: core meanings, dotted outline: perfect meanings with which it can combine)

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  - lack of experiential, universal, and anteriority functions
  - presence of an additional change-of-state meaning (*My hair is long now* vs. *My hair has been long*)

# Iamitives

(2) [Jakarta Indonesian]

*Kamu tidak bisa memakan-nya. Itu sudah busuk.*

2SG NEG can eat-3 it IAM rotten

‘You can’t eat this one. It is rotten.’ (Olsson, 2013:18)

(3) [Mandarin Chinese]

*nǐ bù néng chī zhè-ge. tā làn le*

2SG NEG can eat this-CL 3SG rotten IAM

‘You can’t eat this one. It is rotten.’ (Olsson, 2013:18)



## Iamitives

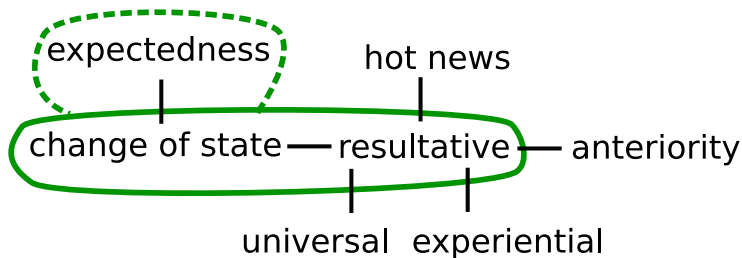


Figure 3: Semantic map of the proposed iamitive functions (Olsson, 2013)

# Definition of iamitives (Dahl & Wälchli, 2016; Dahl, 2019)

Dahl & Wälchli (2016) identify iamitives as grams being grammaticalized from *already* to perfect:

- used with change-of-state predicates such as ‘old’, ‘rotten’, etc.
- more frequent than *already*
- iamitives are a gram type – clusters in the grammatical space

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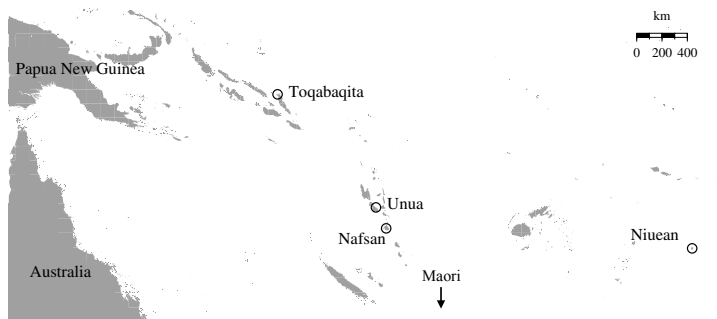
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However, if we want to describe the semantics of a given category in a given language:

- we need a synchronic definition of that category
- frequencies are not decisive for synchronic description
- iamitives are not only a gram type – they are being used in language descriptions (e.g. Döhler, 2018; Arnold, 2018)

# Our study

- we carried out detailed semantic studies of the Nafsan (Oceanic) perfect and Paciran Javanese *wes* based on our fieldwork, including
  - corpus work (Thieberger, 1995–2018), storyboards, questionnaires (Dahl, 2000; Olsson, 2013; Veselinova, 2018), elicitation
- we considered several other Oceanic languages



# The spread of perfect-like functions in Melanesia

**Table 1:** Perfect values in Nafsan and other Oceanic languages (+ attested, ? unclear, - not attested, -/+ restricted to certain environments, e.g. needing to occur with another marker)

Meanings	Nafsan <i>pe</i>	Toqabaqita <i>naqa</i>	Unua <i>ju/ goj nu</i>	Niuean <i>kua</i>	Maori <i>kua</i>
Resultative	+	+	+	+	+
Anteriority	+	+	+	+	+
Experiential	+	+	+	+	+
Universal	+	+	+	-	+
Hot news	-	-	-	+	+
Change of state	+	+	+	+	+
Expectedness	-/+	-	-/+	-	?
Duality	-/+	-/+	-/+	?	?
Temp. adverb	-/+	+/?	?	-	?

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Temp. adverb	-/+	+/?	?	-	?

## Change of state in Nafsan

- (4) *Malfane nal-u-k            ki=pe            taar.*  
 now      hair-V-1SG.DP 3SG.PRF=PRF white  
 ‘My hair is blond now.’ (AK1-146-03, 00:03:31.991-00:03:33.853)
- (5) *ku=lek    faat   ne   faat   nen   i=top*  
 2SG=look stone this stone that 3SG=big  
 ‘You look at that stone. That stone is big.’ (015.033)



## Change of state in Nafsan

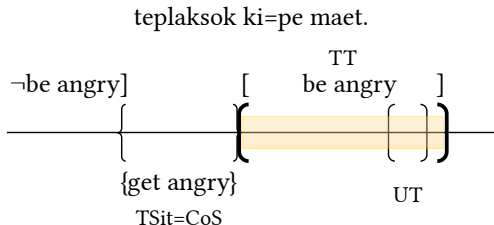
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- Koontz-Garboden (2007) notes the meaning of change of state easily arises with the perfect in languages without any change-of-state morphology
- property concepts denoting states can be aspectually coerced into changes of states in languages which do not distinguish adjectives from verbs in the predicate position (Koontz-Garboden, 2005)

# Change of state in Nafsan

- (6) Context: all the kids in the classroom are misbehaving:  
*Teplaksok i=maet pelpel.*  
 teacher 3SG=angry quickly  
 ‘The teacher got angry quickly.’ (Lionel Emil, 28/11/2018)
- (7) *teplaksok ki=pe maet.*  
 teacher 3SG.PRF=PRF angry  
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# Blocking principles

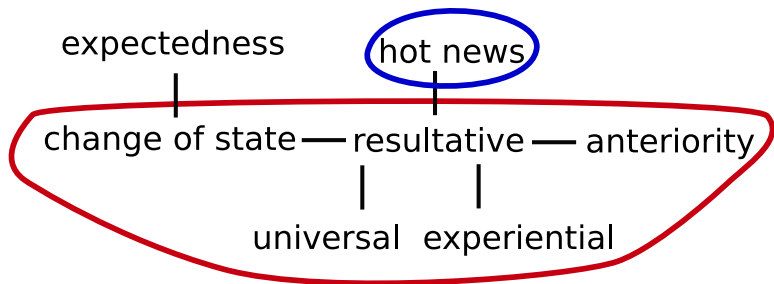


Figure 5: Semantic map of the perfect in red for Nafsan, Toqabaqita, and Unua and the markers expressing hot news in blue

## Toqabaqita

- (8) \**Kera biqi lae na=kau.*  
 3PL.NFUT IMM go PRF=AND  
 ('They have just left.') (Lichtenberk, 2008:711)
- (9) *Kera biqi lae bo=kau.*  
 3PL.NFUT IMM go ASRT=AND  
 'They have just left.' (Lichtenberk, 2008:165)

## Maori

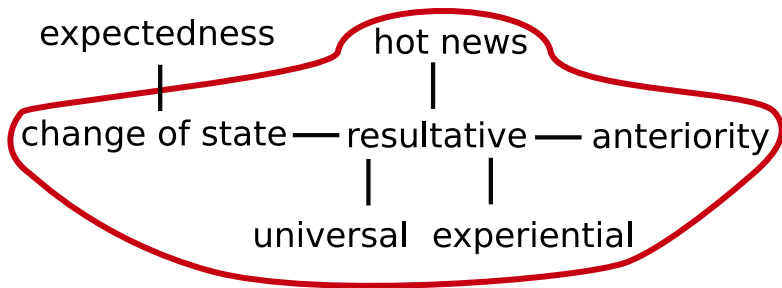


Figure 6: Semantic map of the perfect *kua* in Maori

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Change of state	+	+	+	+	+	+
Expectedness	-/+	-	-/+	-	?	+
Duality	-/+	-/+	-/+	?	?	+
Temp. adverb	-/+	+/?	?	-	?	+

Paciran Javanese: *wes* as *already*

The core meaning of *wes* is *already* (Vander Klok & Matthewson, 2015).

- (10) *Mbok wes jam setengah wolu ndak-an engko kari*  
 grandmother already hour half eight to-AN later left.behind  
*reng pasar.*  
 at market  
 ‘Grandmother, it’s already 7:30 a.m. so there won’t be anything at the market soon.’ (Vander Klok & Matthewson, 2015:187)
- (11) *Gek ngi aku wes ngomong... sik pak Arif iku loh.*  
 just yesterday 1SG already AV.speak Mr. Mr. Arif DEM PRT  
 ‘I already spoke to Mr. Arif yesterday.’ (Vander Klok & Matthewson, 2015:192)

Paciran Javanese: *wes* as *already*

It occurs in experiential contexts, but only in combination with the anterior *tau* (Chen et al., 2019), and it does not contribute the experiential reading itself:

- (12) a. *opo wes tau toh mbak Halima ketemu SBY?*  
 PRT already PST PRT Miss Halima meet SBY  
 A: ‘Has Miss Halima ever met SBY?’
- b. *Iyo, mbak Halima wes tau.*  
 yes Miss Halima already PST  
 B: ‘Yes, Miss Halima once has.’ (Vander Klok, 2012:195)



## Paciran Javanese: semantic map

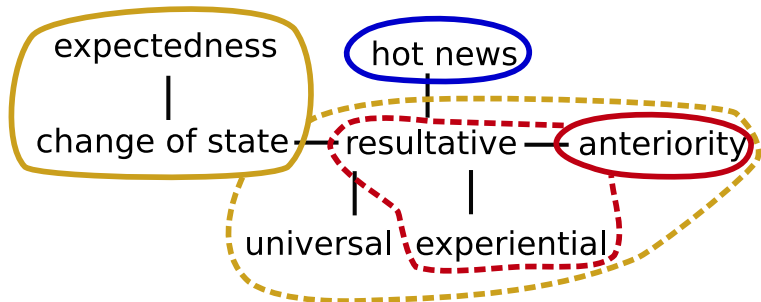


Figure 7: Semantic map of *wes* in yellow, *lagek* in blue, and *tau* in red in Javanese

## Conclusion

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- aspectual coercion in languages with underspecified verbal aspect can explain the presence of change of state
- paradigmatic blocking can explain the lack of some perfect functions
- compatibility in meaning can explain certain overlaps in distribution between perfect and *already*

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## Definition of *already*

- Krifka (2000): *already* expresses a restriction on the alternatives of the focus to be considered
- the “expected” age is the average of the alternatives – implicature: the age is greater than expected (Krifka, 2000)
- *already* requires that the asserted event has a faster development speed than the alternatives (Krifka, 2000)

(13) Lydia is **already** 3 months old. (Krifka, 2000:405)

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Alternatives asserted: 3 months old

(14) Lydia **already** arrived at 3 p.m. (Krifka, 2000:200)

Alternatives considered: 3 p.m. 4 p.m. 5 p.m.

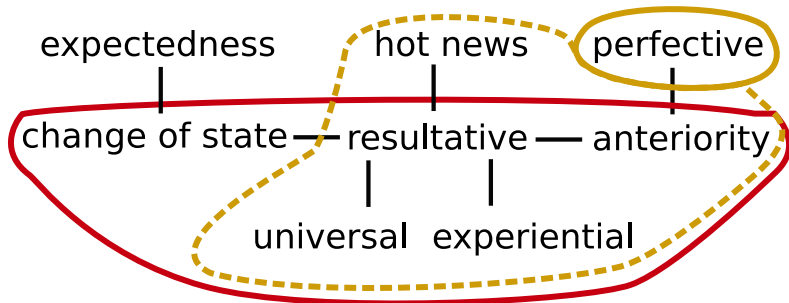
Alternatives asserted: 3 p.m.

# Melanesian markers

Table 5: The languages and their TMA markers studied in this chapter

Language	TMA marker	Label	
Toqabaqita	<i>naqa</i>	perfect	grammar (L...
Niuean	<i>kua</i>	perfect/inchoative	article (Matth...
Unua	<i>ju/ goj nu</i>	<i>already/</i> 'FOC.already now'	grammar (Pearce, 20...
Maori	<i>kua</i>	perfect	grammar

# Meaning compatibility in Nafsan



**Figure 8:** Semantic map of the Nafsan Perfect in red and the perfective *su* in dashed yellow outline signaling the perfect functions with which it combines

# Meaning compatibility in Nafsan

- (15) *Kineu kai=pe pag-ki ntaf i=skei su.*  
 1SG 1SG.PRF=PRF climb-TR mountain 3SG=one PFV  
 ‘I have climbed a mountain.’ (AK1-147-04, 00:00:57.590-00:01:01.796)
- (16) *Kineu kai=pe maa ntaf su.*  
 1SG 1SG.PRF=PRF grate taro PFV  
 ‘I have grated the taro.’ (AK1-146-02, 00:02:32.335-00:02:41.410)