Tense, mood, and aspect expressions in Nafsan (South Efate) from a typological perspective

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HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT
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   - debated categories of perfect aspect and realis/irrealis mood
   - focus on Nafsan, Vanuatu, as a language described to have these categories

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2. When the realis/irrealis mood is expressed by portmanteau subject markers, as in Nafsan, one of the two paradigms can be semantically underspecified.
   - this reanalysis explains some of the "unexpected" behavior of this category

Methodology

Nafsan: Previous work

- grammatical description by Thieberger (2006) and other published work
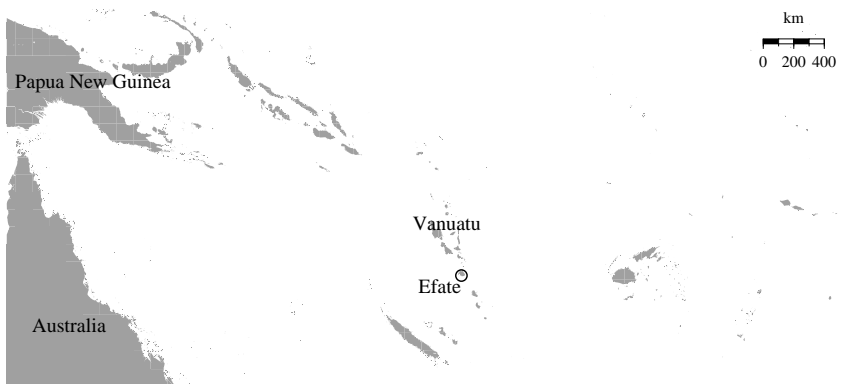- corpus (Thieberger, 1995–2018)

Figure 1: Location of Vanuatu and the island of Efate

Nafsan: Fieldwork

- storyboards (von Prince, 2017; Krajinović, 2018)
- questionnaires (Dahl, 2000b; Olsson, 2013; Veselinova, 2018) and elicitation
- archived in PARADISEC (Krajinović, 2017)

Figure 2: Efate with locations where Nafsan is spoken

Structure of Nafsan

Table 1: Exemplified verbal complex in Nafsan, based on Thieberger (2006)

SBJ=	TMA	AUX	NEG1	BEN	**V**	PFV	NEG2
rui= (3PL.PRF)	*pe* (PRF)	*mer* ('again')	*ta(p)*	*ga* (3SG)		*su*	*mau*

Subject proclitics in Nafsan

Table 2: Reanalyzed subject proclitics in Nafsan, based on Thieberger (2006)

	General (realis)	Irrealis	Perfect-agreeing (perfect)
1SG	*a=*	*ka=*	*kai=*
2SG	*ku=*	*p̃a=*	*kui=*
3SG	*i=*	*ke=*	*ki=*
1DU.INCL	*ta=*	*tak=*	*takai=, tai=*
1DU.EXCL	*ra=*	*rak=*	*rakai=*
2DU	*ra=*	*rak=*	*rakai=*
3DU	*ra=*	*rak=*	*rakai=, rai=*
1PL.INCL	*tu=*	*tuk=*	*tui=, tukoi=*
1PL.EXCL	*u=*	*ko=*	*ui=, koi=*
2PL	*u=*	*ko=*	*koi=*
3PL	*ru=*	*ruk=*	*rui=, rukui=*

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Nafsan:

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- methodology: semantic maps

Perfect aspect

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  - paradigmatic blocking
  - meaning compatibility

Readings of the English perfect

(1)   a.   resultative (perfect of result)
      b.   experiential (existential)
      c.   universal (perfect of persistent situation)
      d.   'hot news' (perfect of recent past)
      e.   anteriority readings: past/future perfect
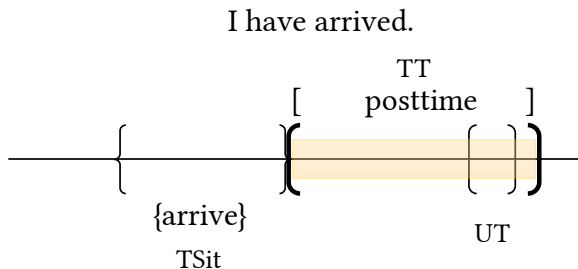
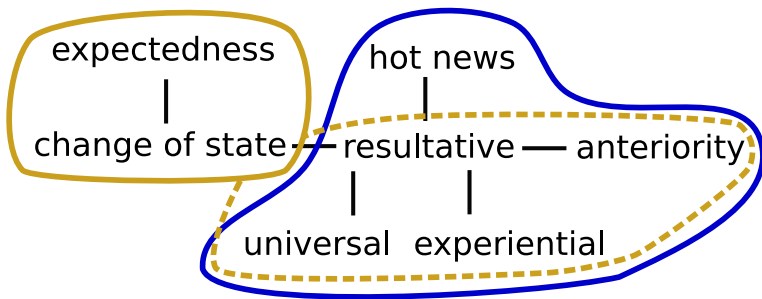I have arrived.

Figure 3: 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 "earlier than expected"

Perfect and *already*

Figure 4: 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)

The problem

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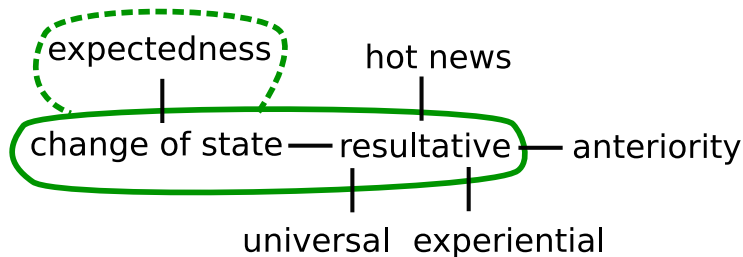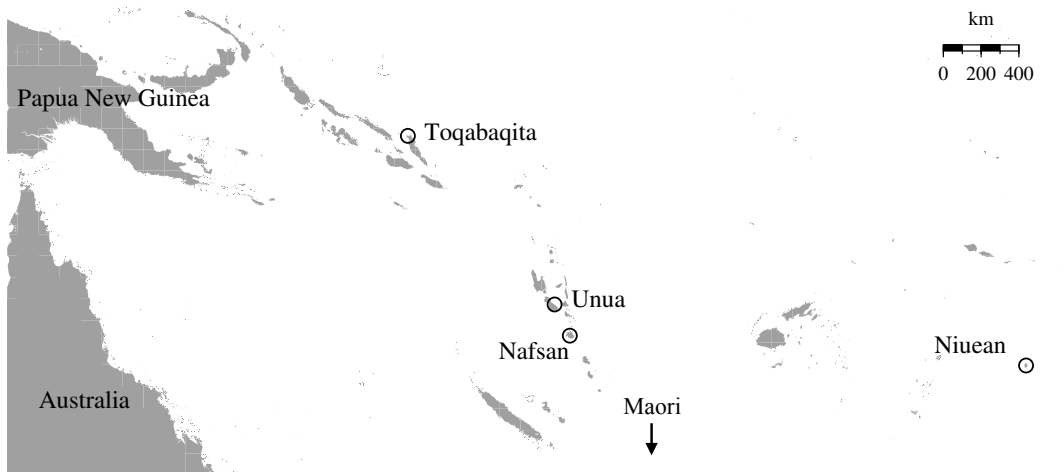   'You can't eat this one. It is rotten.' (Olsson, 2013:18)

Iamitives

Figure 5: Semantic map of the proposed iamitive functions (Olsson, 2013)

Nafsan and other Oceanic languages

Perfect in Nafsan

(4)   [Experiential] Question: You MEET my sister (at any time in your life up to now)? (Dahl, 2000b:801, PQ4)

kui=pe   *paatlas kore-k*   *te-mal?*
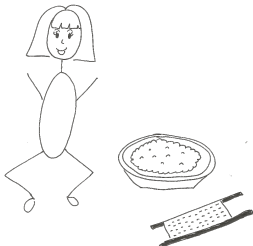2SG.PRF=PRF meet   sister-1SG.POSS one-time
'Have you met my sister?' (AK1-115-01)

(5)   [Resultative]
*Kineu **kai=pe***   *maa ntal su.*
1SG   1SG.PRF=PRF grate taro PFV
'I have grated the taro.' (AK1-146-02, 00:02:32.335-00:02:41.410)

Perfect in Nafsan: temporal adverbs

(6)   Context: A question asked at 9 o'clock a.m.: Why do you look so tired? Answer: I WAKE
      UP at 4 o'clock this morning (TT). (Dahl, 2000b:TMAQ 16)
      *kai=pe/   **a=pilo   4 oklok p̃ulp̃og**.
      *1SG.PRF=PRF 1SG=wake.up 4 o'clock morning
      'I woke up at 4 o'clock this morning.' (AK1-119-01)

(7)   Context: If your alarm is set for 5 a.m. (TT), but by chance you woke up at 4 a.m. (TSit).
      Kai=pe   pilo   4 oklok p̃ulp̃og.
      1SG.PRF=PRF wake.up 4 o'clock morning
      'I had woken up at 4 o'clock in the morning.' (AK1-119-01)

The spread of perfect-like functions in Melanesia

Table 3: 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 *pe*	Toqabaqita *naqa*	Unua *ju/ goj nu*	Niuean *kua*	Maori *kua*
Resultative	+	+	+	+	+
Anteriority	+	+	+	+	+
Experiential	+	+	+	+	+
Universal	+	+	+	-	+
Hot news	-	-	-	+	+
Change of state	+	+	+	+	+
Expectedness	-/+	-	-/+	-	?
Duality	-/+	-/+	-/+	?	?
Temp. adverb	-/+	+/?	?	-	?

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

Change of state in Nafsan

(8) *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)

(9) *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)

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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)
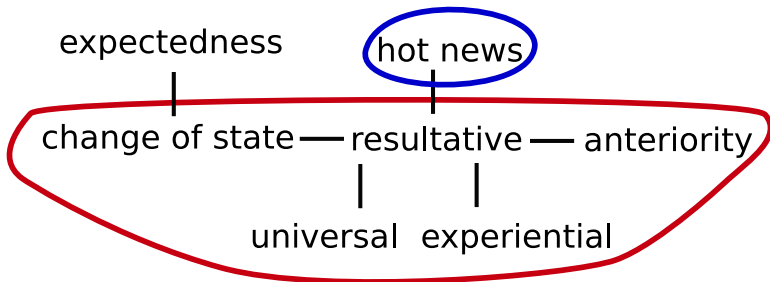
Change of state in Nafsan

(10) 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)

(11) *teplaksok **ki=pe** maet.*
   teacher   3sg.prf=prf angry
   'The teacher got angry.' (Lionel Emil, 28/11/2018)

teplaksok ki=pe maet.
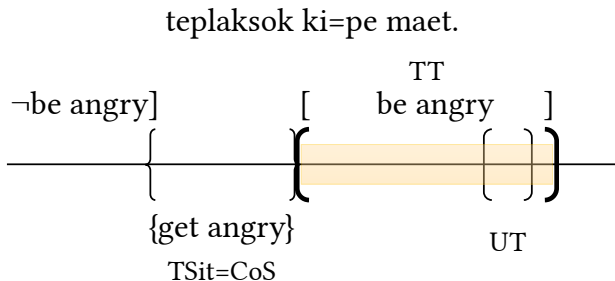
Blocking principles

Figure 7: Semantic map of the perfect in red for Nafsan, Toqabaqita, and Unua and the markers expressing hot news in blue

Blocking principles: Nafsan

(12)   (Talking about a teenager who didn't come home on time) Max JUST COME (Veselinova,
       2018:NQ 53)
       *Max **i=po**   mai   kia.*
       Max 3SG=PSP.REAL come DET
       'Max has just come.' (AK1-156)
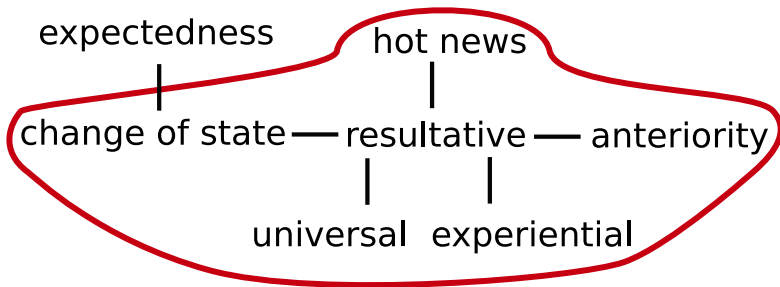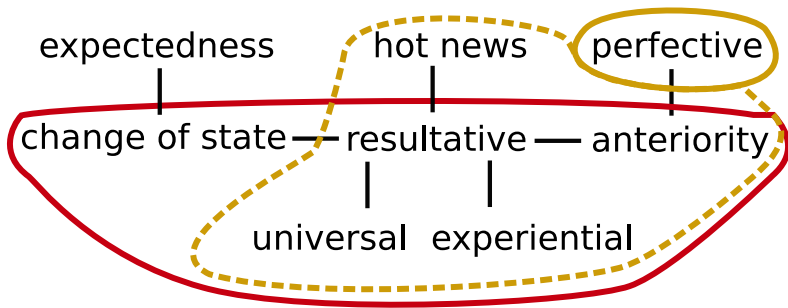
Maori

Figure 8: Semantic map of the perfect *kua* in Maori

Meaning compatibility in Nafsan

Figure 9: Semantic map of the Nafsan Perfect in red and the perfective *su* in dashed yellow outline signalizing the perfect functions with which it combines

Meaning compatibility in Nafsan

(13)   *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)

(14)   *Kineu **kai=pe***   *maa ntal **su**.*
       1SG   1SG.PRF=PRF grate taro PFV
       'I have grated the taro.' (AK1-146-02, 00:02:32.335-00:02:41.410)

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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*

Realis and irrealis mood

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Is realis/irrealis a meaningful cross-linguistic category? (Bybee, 1998; de Haan, 2012; Cristofaro, 2012)

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- I argue that one of the two categories (realis or irrealis) is not necessarily semantically expressed by the subject markers
- the TMA interpretations of subject markers underspecified for mood are derived from a **competition** with true portmanteau subject markers, which are specified for mood
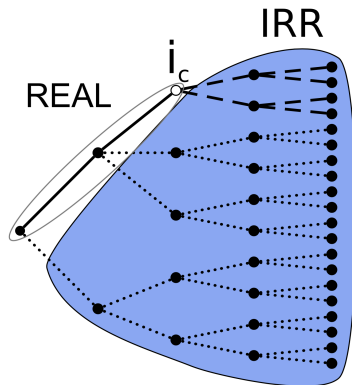
Realis/irrealis: a definition

Figure 10: Braching-times model by von Prince (2016); Krifka (2016), based on Thomason (1984)

Realis/irrealis debate

Problematic categories in typology and description:

1. Irrealis
   - "polifunctionality" of modal markers: irrealis is often interrelated with other TAM categories, such as **future** tense (see Velupillai, 2016)

Realis/irrealis debate

Problematic categories in typology and description:

1. Irrealis
   - "polifunctionality" of modal markers: irrealis is often interrelated with other TAM categories, such as **future** tense (see Velupillai, 2016)

2. Realis
   - problematic classifications: "realis" is often found in modal contexts, such as future (Chafe, 1995), directives (Mauri & Sansò, 2012), or **counterfactuals**

Problematic portmanteau markers: Wogeo

(15) a. *m-**o**-lako*
        FUT-1SG.REAL-go
    b. *mo-**go**-lako*
        FUT-1SG.IRR-go
        'I will/can/may go.' (Exter, 2012:182)

(16) *s-**e**-vá   iko sa-**k**-lako,   katé mo-**la**-moet*
    CF-3SG.**REAL**-happen you CF-2SG.**REAL**-go thus FUT.2SG.**REAL**-INCH-disappear
   'If you had gone, you would have been lost.' (Exter, 2012:186)

Nafsan subject markers

Table 6: Subject proclitics in Nafsan by Thieberger (2006:150)

	General (realis)	Irrealis	Perfect-agreeing
1sg	*a=*	*k**a=*	*ka**i=*
2sg	*ku=*	*p̃a=*	*ku**i=*
3sg	*i=*	*k**e=*	*ki=*
1du (incl)	*ta=*	*ta**k*=	*ta**kai**=*
1du (excl)	*ra=*	*ra**k*=	*ra**kai**=*
2du	*ra=*	*ra**k*=	*ra**kai**=*
3du	*ra=*	*ra**k*=	*ra**kai**=, ra**i=*
1pl (incl)	*tu=*	*tu**k*=	*tu**i**=, tu**koi**=*
1pl (excl)	*u=*	*k**o=*	*u**i**=, k**oi**=*
2pl	*u=*	*k**o=*	*k**oi**=*
3pl	*ru=*	*ru**k*=	*ru**i**=, ru**kui**=*

Realis/irrealis in Nafsan

(17) *Komam **rak**=tap   fam   mau me **rak**=to.*
      1PL.EXCL 1DU.IRR=NEG eat.IRR NEG2 but 1DU.IRR=stay
      We won't eat, but we'll stay. (Thieberger, 2006:164)

(18) *Nanom   p̃og, **u**=mai   praktis.*
      yesterday night 1PL.EXCL=come practice
      Yesterday evening we came to practice. (Thieberger, 2006:151)
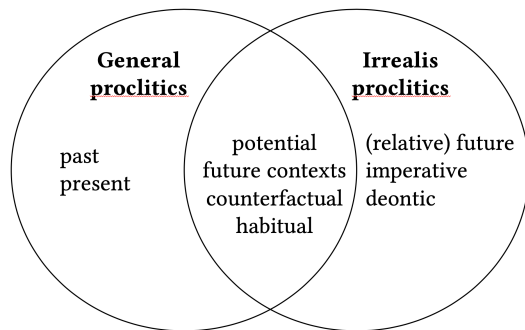
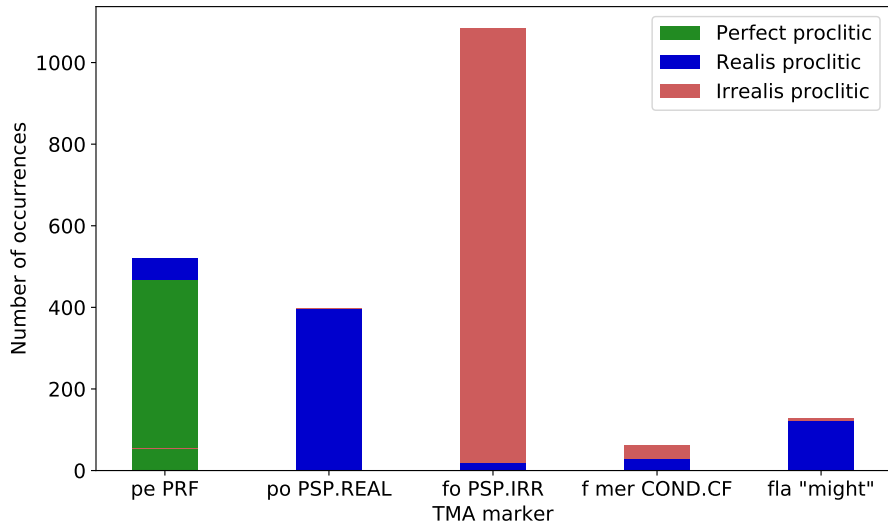# Distribution of subject proclitics in Nafsan

Figure 12: Co-occurrences of subject proclitics and TMA markers in two Nafsan corpora

General (realis) in Nafsan

(19) *Malnen p̃a=ler,*   **a=pe**   *mtir   natus su.*
      when   2SG.IRR=return 1SG=PRF write letter PFV
      'When you come back, I will have finished writing the letter.' (AK1-083-01, based on Dahl
      2000a:FQ 17)

General (realis) in Nafsan

(20) **a=f**   mer mes matol,   go nfag nen kin a=tai   nakn-i-k
      1sg=cond cf   play tomorrow and sore rel comp 1sg.real=cut finger-v-1sg.poss
      ke=fo   *mer*   *makot*
      3sg.irr=psp.irr again break
      'If I played tomorrow, the sore I cut on my finger would bleed again.' (AK1-098-01,
      00:03:39.185-00:03:57.063)

(21) **ka=f**   mer mes volibol   matol,   nakn-i-k   ke=fo   mra
      1sg.irr=cond cf   play volleyball tomorrow finger-v-1sg.poss 3sg.irr=psp.irr bleed
      'If I played volleyball tomorrow, my finger would bleed.' (AK1-004-01,
      00:03:27.921-00:03:33.286)

Frame from the story "Competitions" (von
Prince, 2018)
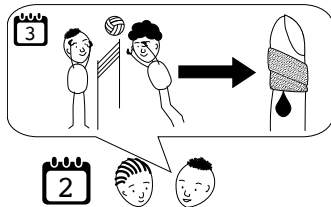
The mechanism of deriving realis meanings

How can we account for the appearance of "realis" in non-actual contexts?

- I propose that "realis" in Nafsan is only a person and number marking semantically unmarked for TMA values.

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- Realis and irrealis are interchangeable in non-actual contexts with other modal markers, such as the conditional *f* or counterfactual *mer* in Nafsan. Thus, these elements determine the modal interpretations.
- the modal expressions can either agree with the irrealis subject markers in modal features, or simply attach to the unmarked subject markers

The mechanism of deriving realis meanings

If the "realis" paradigm is underspecified for TMA, how can we explain that the unmarked subject marking in the absence of modal marking has realis interpretations?

- I argue that the realis meaning in sentences with past/present reference is derived pragmatically by contrasting the underspecified subject markers with the specified irrealis subject marking category.

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(22)   Maximize Presupposition: Make your contribution presuppose as much as possible! (Heim, 1991)

Realis and irrealis: Conclusion

- in Nafsan and possibly many other Oceanic languages, the forms underspecified for TMA are often just subject person and number markers

Realis and irrealis: Conclusion

- in Nafsan and possibly many other Oceanic languages, the forms underspecified for TMA are often just subject person and number markers
- the realis/irrealis distinction can arise as a consequence of a pragmatic inference triggered by the competition of a semantically underspecified form with a semantically specified form (Nafsan and Wogeo)

Conclusion

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The study of perfect and realis/irrealis in Nafsan and comparison with other Oceanic languages made contributions to the semantics and typology of these categories:

- there are semantic explanations for additional functions or the lack of functions associated with the perfect

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- it is not necessary to postulate the iamitive category
- the realis/irrealis distinction is a valid linguistic category whose debated features can be resolved by:
  - semantic underspecification
  - inherent meanings of irrealis related to other categories, e.g. future

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