

Tense, Aspect and Modality in Xhosa

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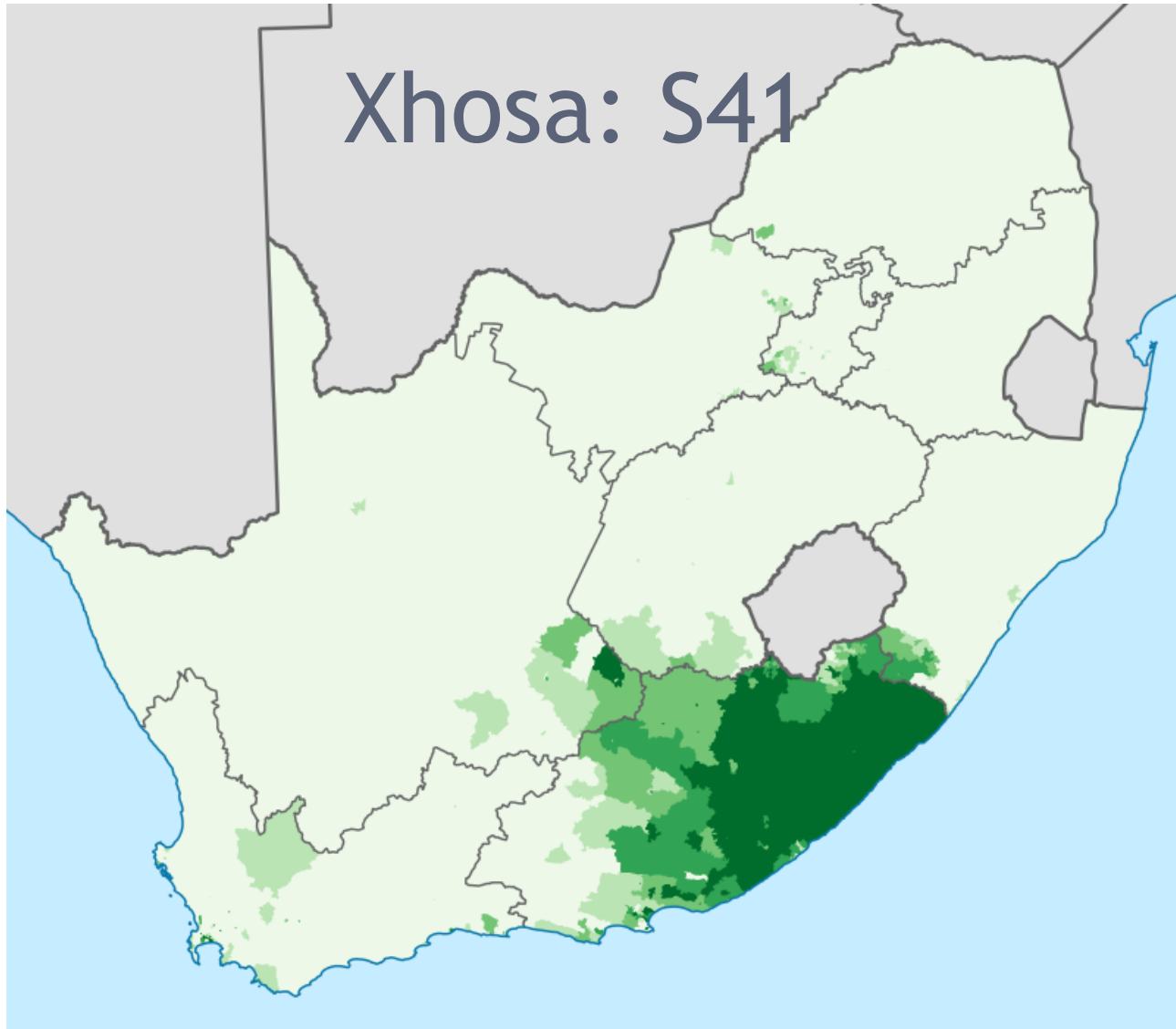
Outline

1. Xhosa
2. Verbal paradigm
3. Corpus data
4. Remoteness in the past tenses
5. Aspect
6. Modality in the future tenses

1. Xhosa

- Niger-Congo
 - Bantu
 - Bantu Zone S
 - Nguni group S40:
Zulu S42, Ndebele S44/S407/S408, Swati S43,
Xhosa S41
- Xhosa: ~8 million speakers

Xhosa: S41



2. Verbal paradigm of Xhosa

	UNMARKED = perfective		imperfective	perfect, anterior	
	short	long		short	long
?FUTURE	<i>ndobaleka</i>				
REMOTE FUTURE	<i>ndiya kubaleka</i>		<i>ndiya kuba ndibaleka</i>	<i>ndiya kuba ndibaleke</i>	<i>ndiya kuba ndibalekile</i>
NEAR FUTURE	<i>ndiza kubaleka</i>		<i>ndiza kuba ndibaleka</i>	<i>ndiza kuba ndibaleke</i>	<i>ndiza kuba ndibalekile</i>
PRESENT	<i>ndibaleka</i>	<i>ndiyabaleka</i>			
RECENT PAST	<i>ndibaleke</i>	<i>ndibalekile</i>	<i>bendi baleka</i>	<i>bendi baleke</i>	<i>bendi balekile</i>
REMOTE PAST	<i>ndabaleka</i>		<i>ndandibaleka</i>	<i>ndandibaleke</i>	<i>ndandibalekile</i>

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remoteness

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3. Corpus data

Resource Management Corpora

- Genre Classification Corpus (Snyman et al. 2012)
- AST Text Corpus (Roux et al. 2001),
- NCHLT Text Corpus (Eiselen & Puttkammer 2014)

- Tenses: Recent past, Remote past, Near future, Remote future
- Aspects: Perfective, Imperfective

- No inherent boundary:
hamba (walk), *sebenza* (work), *bhala* (write), *funa* (want);
- Inherent boundary:
fumana (get), *thatha* (take), *bamba* (catch), *fika* (arrive), *wa* (fall),
gqiba (finish), *phila* (live, be well)

4. Remoteness

	Recent past	Remote past
perfective	ndi-balek- ile	nd- a -balek- a
imperfective	bendi -balek- a	ndandi -balek- a
Possibilities:		

1. Cut-off point on the timeline between the recent past and the remote past:

McLaren (1936), Bennie (1953), Louw (1963), Davey (1973), Du Plessis (1978), Mncube (1957: hodiernal+hesternal vs. pre-hesternal); Posthumus (1983), Hall (2005)

2. Reichenbach's (1947) E,R,S: E_R,S vs. E_R_S: Nxopo (1993)

3. P-domain vs. D-domain: (Botne & Kershner 2000)

4. Discontinued past vs. General past: (van der Auwera & Plungian 2006)

4. Remoteness: Analysis

Cut-off points

- Cut-off point on the timeline between the recent past and the remote past: several days before S?

4. Remoteness: Analysis

Cut-off points

- RECENT PAST: seconds/minutes ago

Ama-khosi am a-thi **si-fik-ile** kwaye asi-gqith-i.
Powers my say 2SG-arrive-ANT and we.are.not.going.further
'My powers say we have arrived and we are not going any further.'

- REMOTE PAST: more than 20 years ago, event from before 1991, article from 2011

UMalefane **w-a-hamb-a** efama waya kusebenzela i-VKB [...]
Malefane 1-REM.PST-walk-FV at.farm and.went to.work at.VKB
'Malefane left the farm and he went to work at VKB.'

4. Remoteness: Analysis

Cut-off points

Recent past: 101		Remote past: 43	
Several days ago or less	A week or longer	Several days ago or less	A week or longer
39	60	42	0
2 unresolved		1 unresolved	

4. Remoteness: Analysis Discontinued Past

- Discontinued Past vs. General Past
- Discontinued Past represents a situation as non-existent or no more relevant at S.
(van der Auwera & Plungian 2006)
- Imperfective (IPFV): event finishes before S.
- Perfective (PFV): the non-existence of a consequent state at the moment of speech (or its “current irrelevance”)
- Botne & Kershner’s (2000) D-domain vs. P-domain?

4. Remoteness: Discontinued Past

- Do IPFV verbs reach S?

Recent past: 50		Remote past: 23	
yes	no	yes	no
44	6	23	0

4. Remoteness: Analysis Discontinued Past

- Do PFV verbs hold true at S?

Recent past: 51		Remote past: 20	
yes	no	yes	no
50	1	20	0

- Do PFV verbs have results which hold true at S?

Recent past: 51		Remote past: 20	
yes	no	yes	no
21	30	18	2

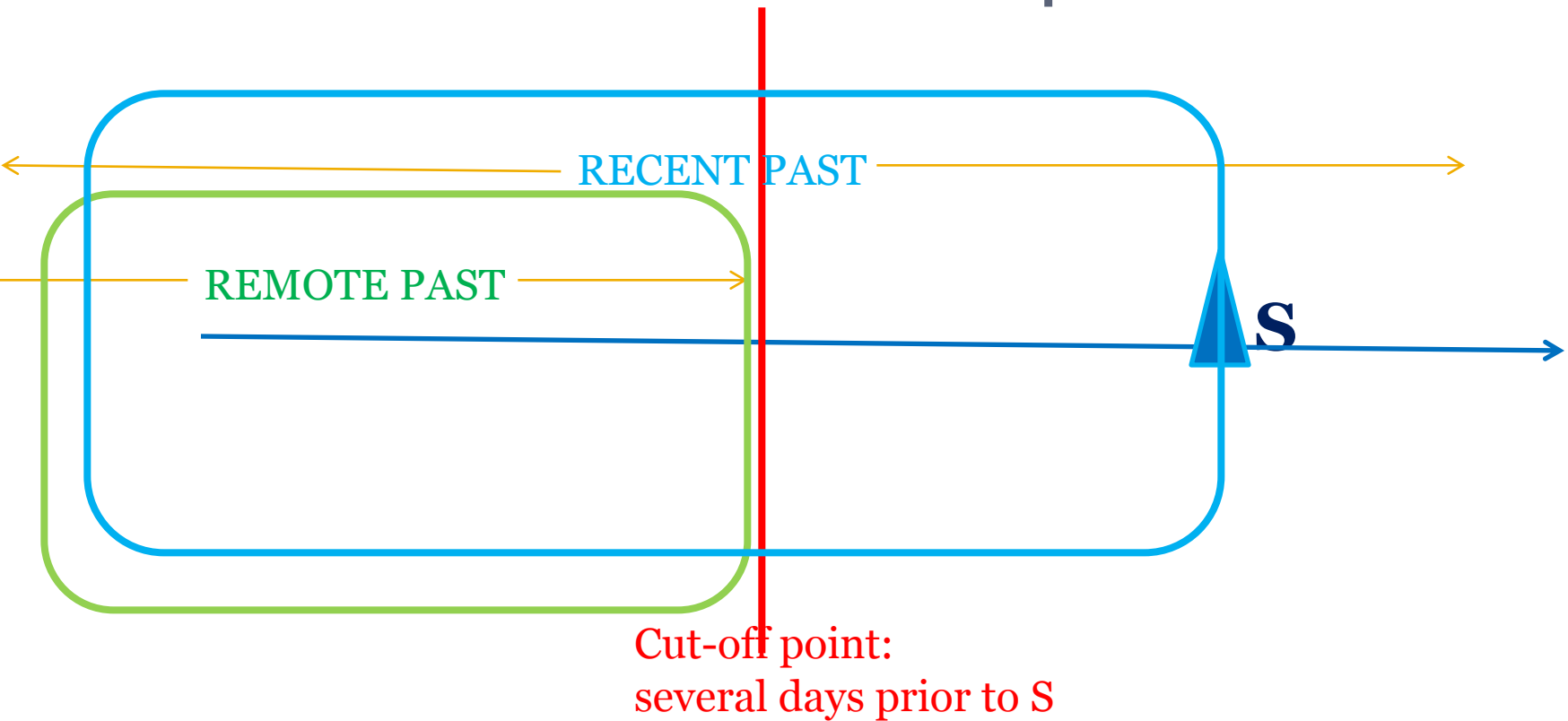
4. Remoteness: Conclusions

- The imperfective verbs of the general past **do not specify** whether the event holds true at S (van der Auwera & Plungian 2006);
- Recent past perfective: does **not** have to have a result which still holds true at S;
- Remote past perfective: may or may **not** have a result which still holds true at S;
- Remote past imperfective: may not last until S.

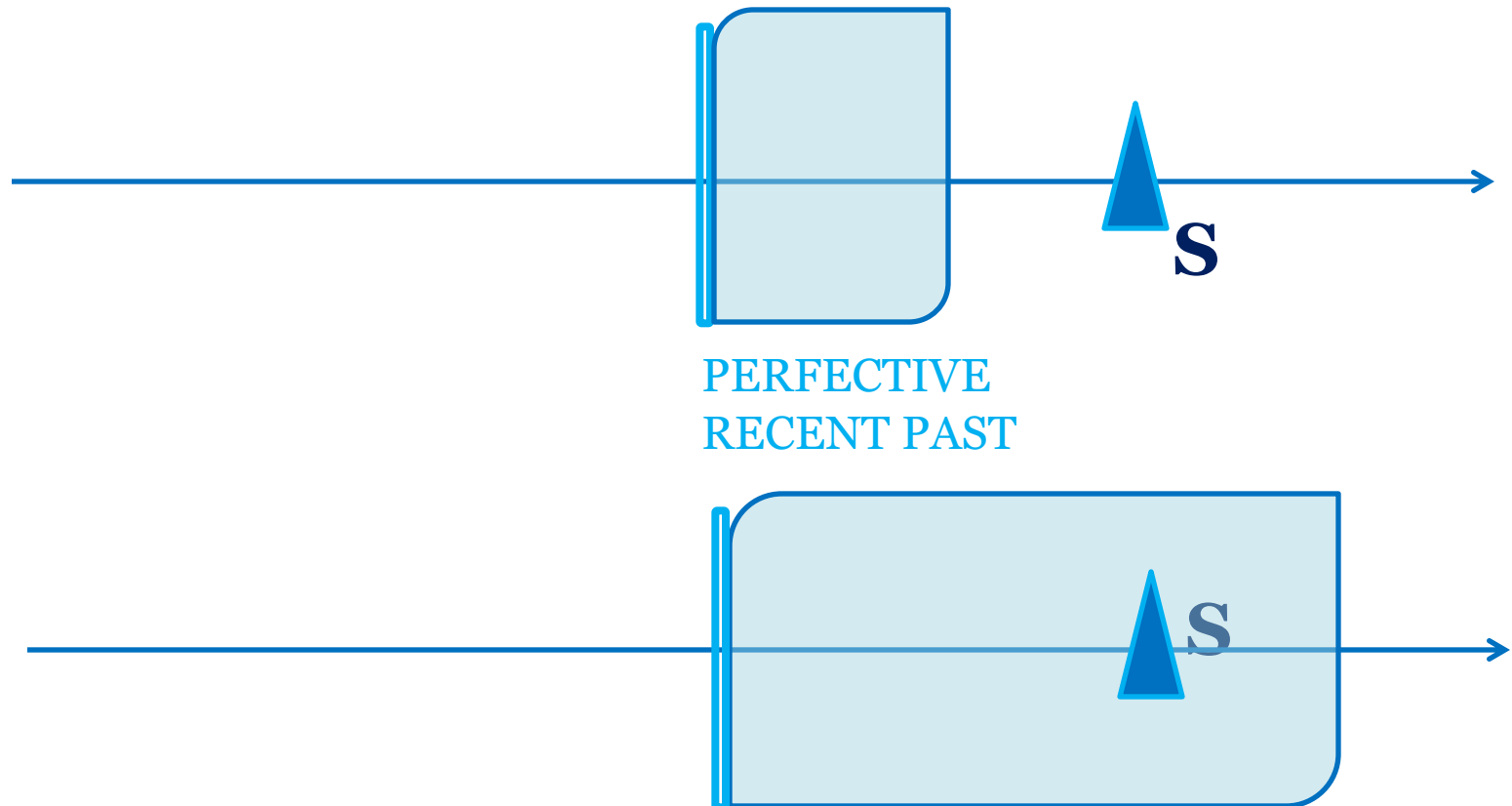
4. Remoteness: Conclusions

- Recent past: covers all time references;
Often used in narrations with the remote past to indicate events that are expected;
- Remote past: only those time references which are several days prior to S.

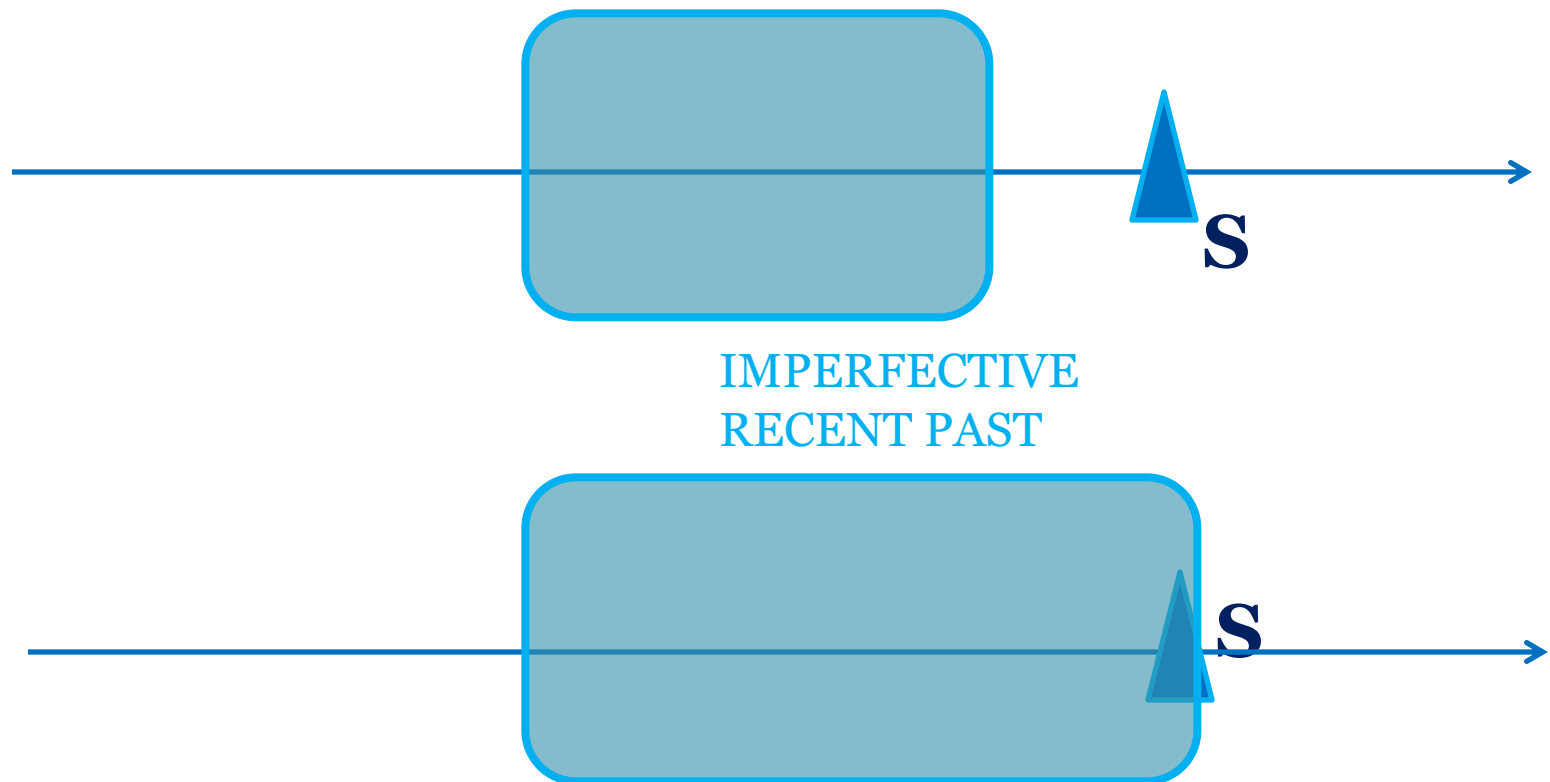
4. Remoteness: Conclusions - Cut-off points



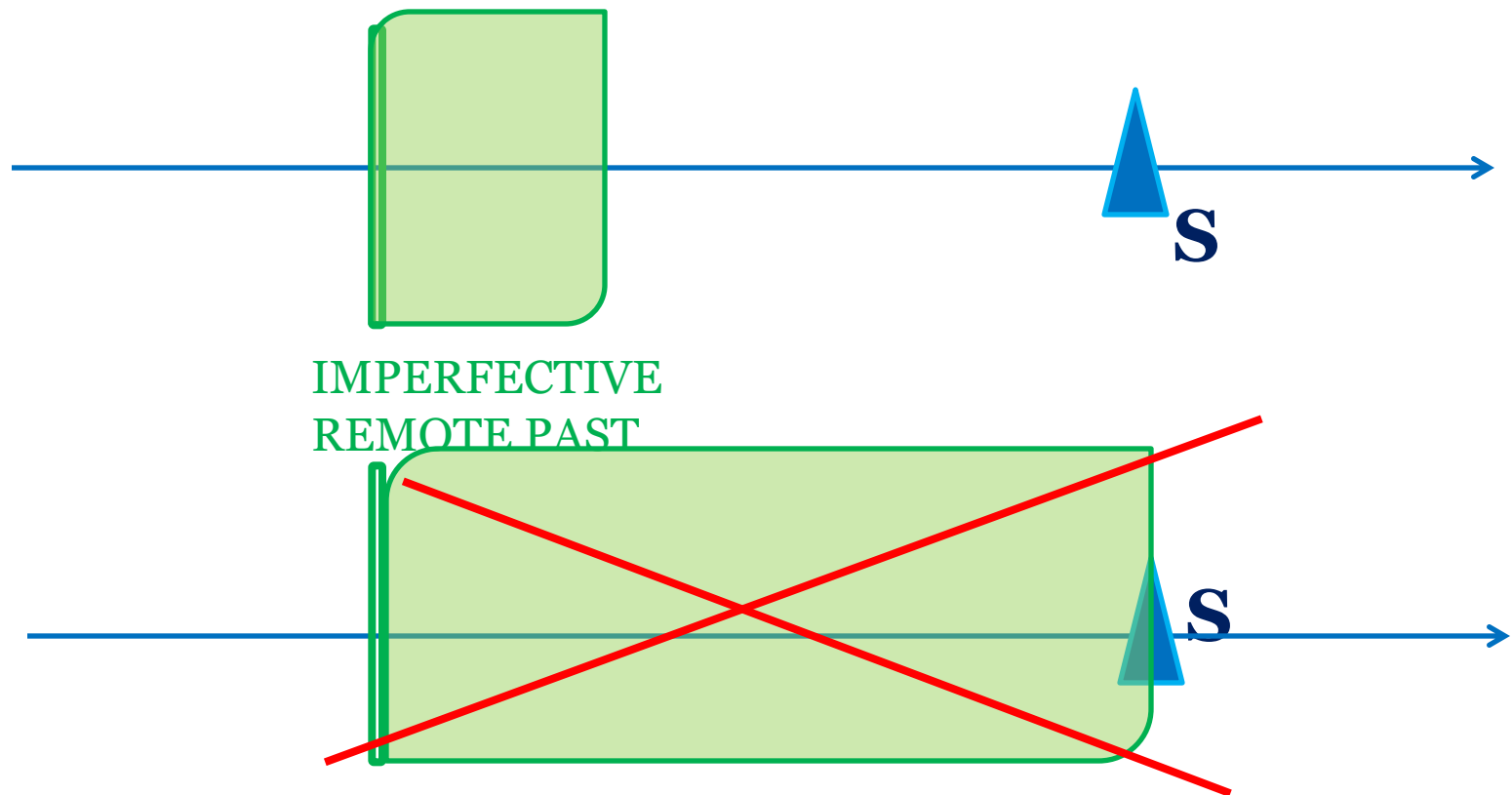
4. Remoteness: Conclusions - Results and Truth- conditionality at S



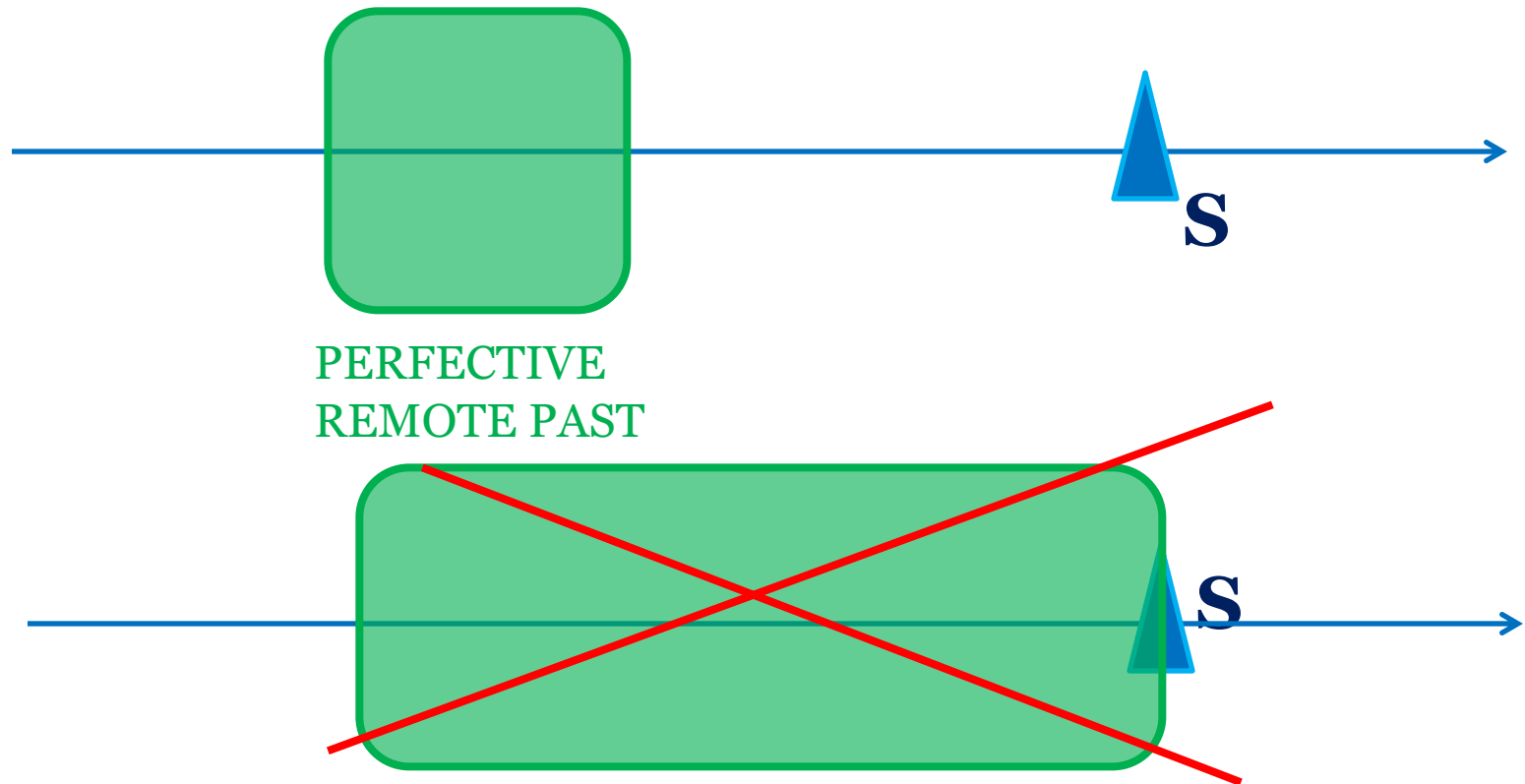
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4. Remoteness: Conclusions - Results and Truth- conditionality at S



5. Aspect

- time adverbials:

- Punctual



- Durative

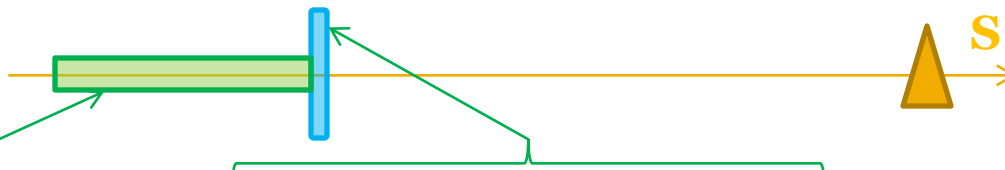


- Frequentative



5. Aspect: Punctual

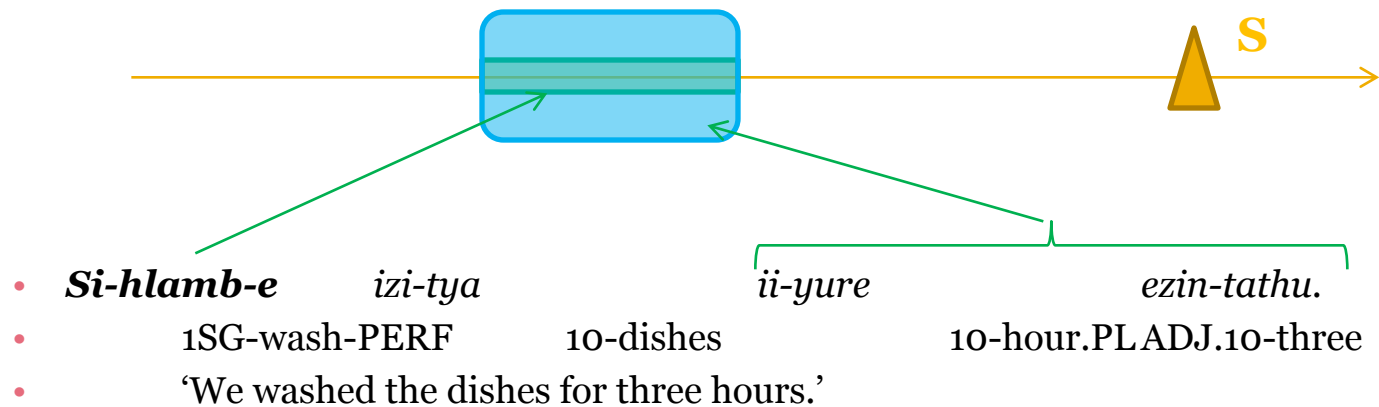
PERFECTIVE



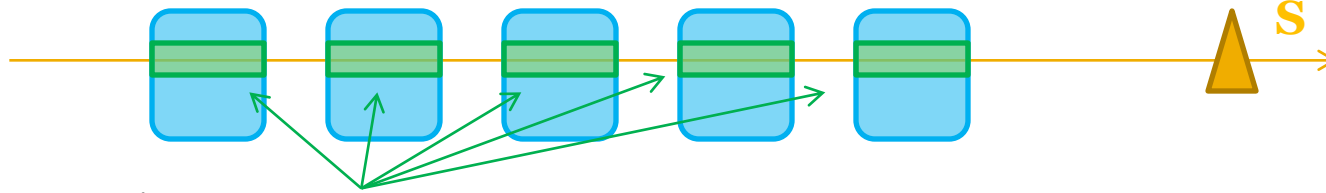
- **Si-hlamb-e** izi-tya kw-ii-yure ezin-tathu ezi-dlul-ile-yo.
- 1SG-wash-PERF 10-dishes LOC-10-hour ADJ.10-three ADJ.10-pass-PERF-REL
- 'We washed the dishes three hours ago.'

5. Aspect: Durative

PERFECTIVE



6. Aspect: Iterative



- **Ndi-y-e** e-venkile-ni ka-hlanu namhlanje.
- 1SG-go-PERF LOC-9.store-LOC ADV-five today
- 'Today I went to the store five times'



- **Ebe-soloko e-si-ya** e-venkile-ni ngaphandle kwe-walethi y-akhe.
- AUX.1-always=do PART.1-si-go-FV LOC-9.store-LOC without
- LOC-9.wallet POSS.9-1
- 'He always went to the store without his wallet'

- *Rhoqo e-kus-eni* **besi-hlamb-a** izi-tya.
- always LOC-15.morning-LOC AUX.1PL-wash-FV 10-dishes
- 'We washed dishes every morning.'

5. Aspect: Analysis

- Recent past forms only
- Perfective, imperfective aspect

- Does the denoted event holds true at one point in time only?

- *hamba* (walk), *sebenza* (work), *bhala* (write), *funa* (want);
- *fumana* (get), *thatha* (take), *bamba* (catch), *fika* (arrive), *wa* (fall), *gqiba* (finish), *phila* (live, be well)

5. Aspect

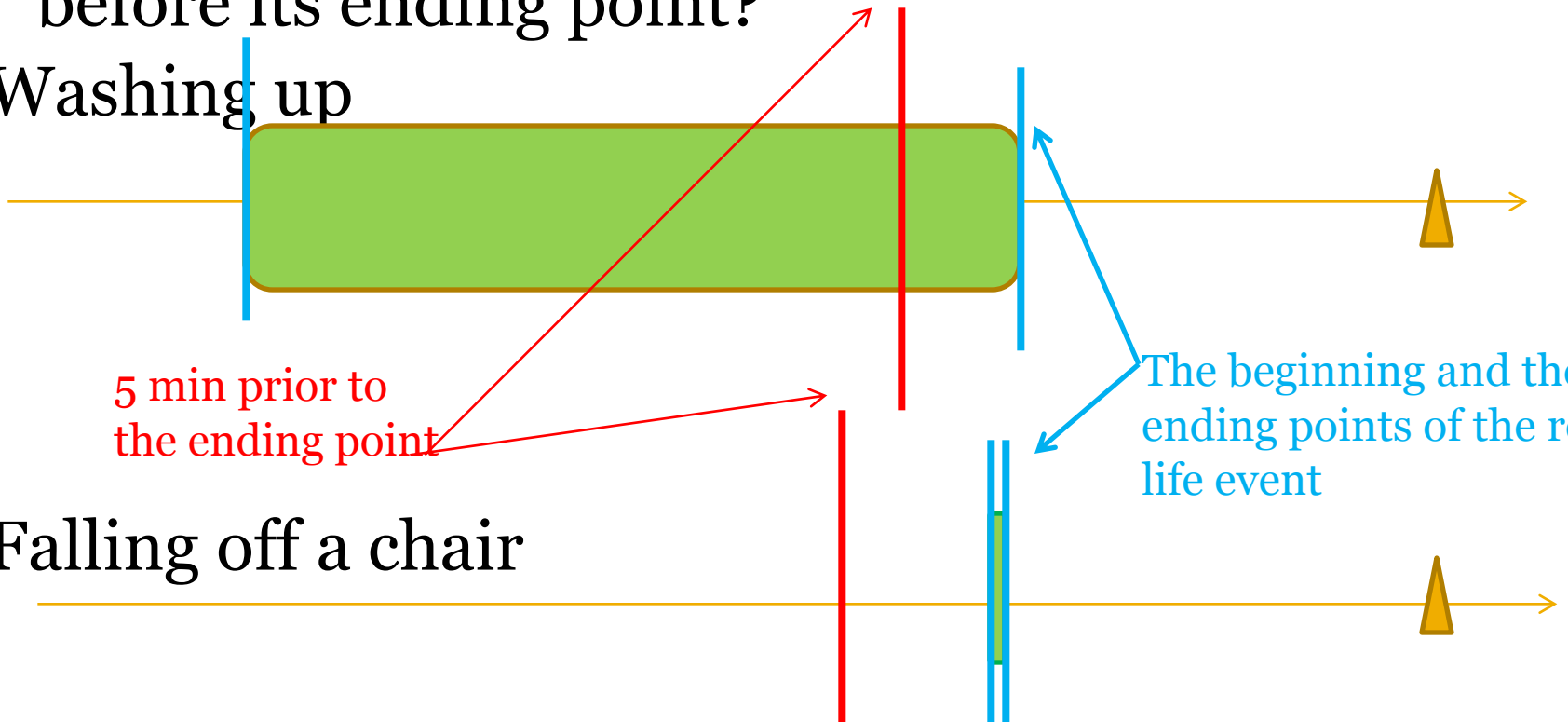
- Does the denoted event still hold true 5 minutes before its ending point?

Washing up

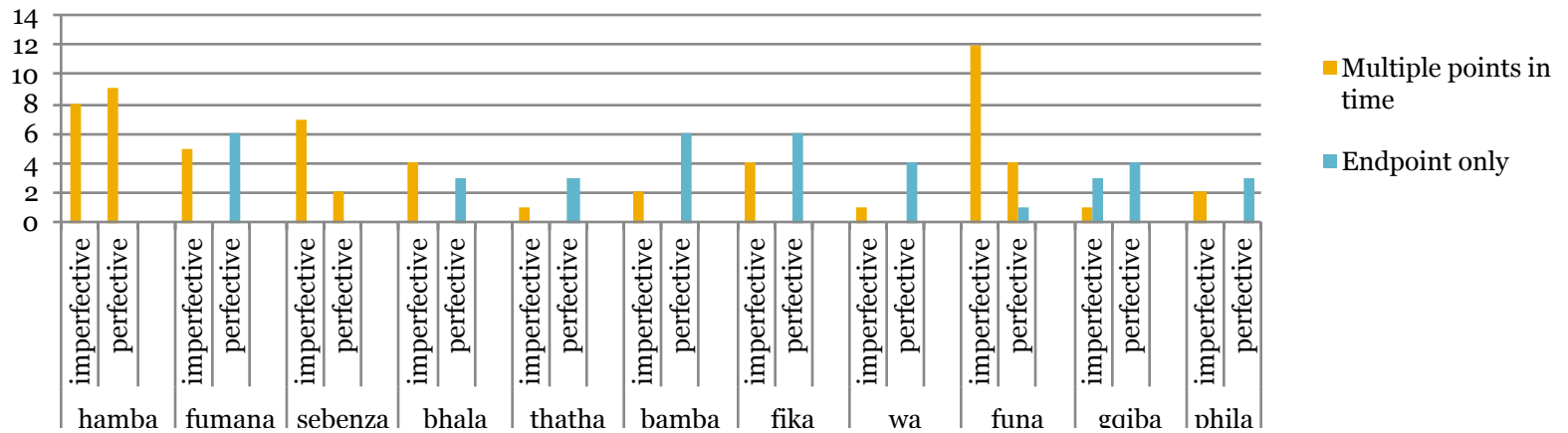
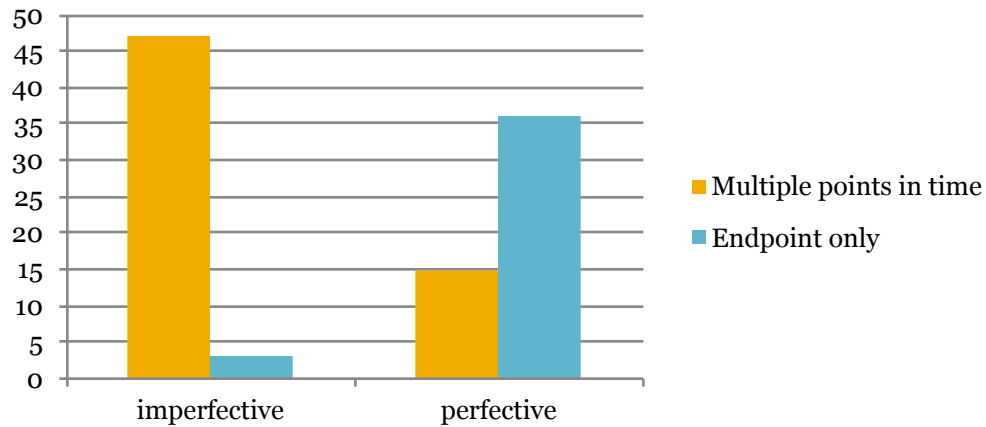
5 min prior to
the ending point

Falling off a chair

The beginning and the ending points of the real life event



5. Aspect



5. Aspect

- Achievement verbs + IPFV hold true at multiple points in time

1) Iterative or/and reading

*Ewe - KUBALULEKILE ukusa abantwana kumjikelo wokuqala KWANALOWO wesibini weli phulo lokugonyela ipoliyo, nokuba umntwana lowo **ebekufumana** kakuhle ukugonyelwa ipoliyo ngaphambili.*

'Yes, it is important to take your children to the first round as well as to the second round of vaccination campaign against polio, even if the child **has received** the vaccination properly before'

2) activity

*lzipulo lakhe, uMakhosazana, **ubegqiba** iminyaka engama-39 ubudala kuLwesithathu ebesidlan indlebe ngalo naye*
'His first-born, Makhosazana, **was turning** 39 on Wednesday when we interviewed him'

3) adverbial reading of *gqiba* (finish) to function like the time adverb *just*:

*'Mpahleni, ummo lo wam ndikuthatha njengendoda enobuchopho nefundisiweyo. **Ubugqiba** kundixelela ukuba uhamba ufuna ulwazi lwethisisi yakho yeMasters.*

*'Mpahleni, I take you for a man with brains and education. **You just** told (lit: you were finishing telling) me that you travel because you want knowledge for your Master's thesis,*

5. Aspect

- Activity verbs and Accomplishments + PFV
- 1) activities which hold true at multiple points in time

***Ndibhale** le ncwadi kuba ndixhalatjiswa linani elonyuke kakhulu lolutsha olubhubhayo elalini yam*
'I **wrote** this book because I was worried about the number of young people that are dying in my village.'

- 2) achievements + altered semantics
- *funa* (want) > ask, look for someone

***Simfune** iiyure ezintathu saza samfumana ezantsi eliweni enenxeba entloko*
'We **searched for her** for three hours and we found her under the cliff with a scar on her head'

- *hamba* (walk) > depart

*Kwiveki elandelayo **uhambile** uMqede ukuya kugocagoca amaphepha oviwo lweBanga lesiThandathu eDikeni...*
'The following week Mqede **went** to test the exam papers of Standard 6 in Alice...'

5. Aspect: Boundaries

- Perfective – adds a boundary to an event (inchoative, holistic etc.)
- Imperfective – does not have a boundary
- Grammatical aspect alters the lexical aspect of the verb phrase

5. Aspect: Boundaries

- Narratives: succession of events on a timeline

- Focus: Result or Process?

u-phek-e ntoni? vs. ubu-phek-a na-bani?

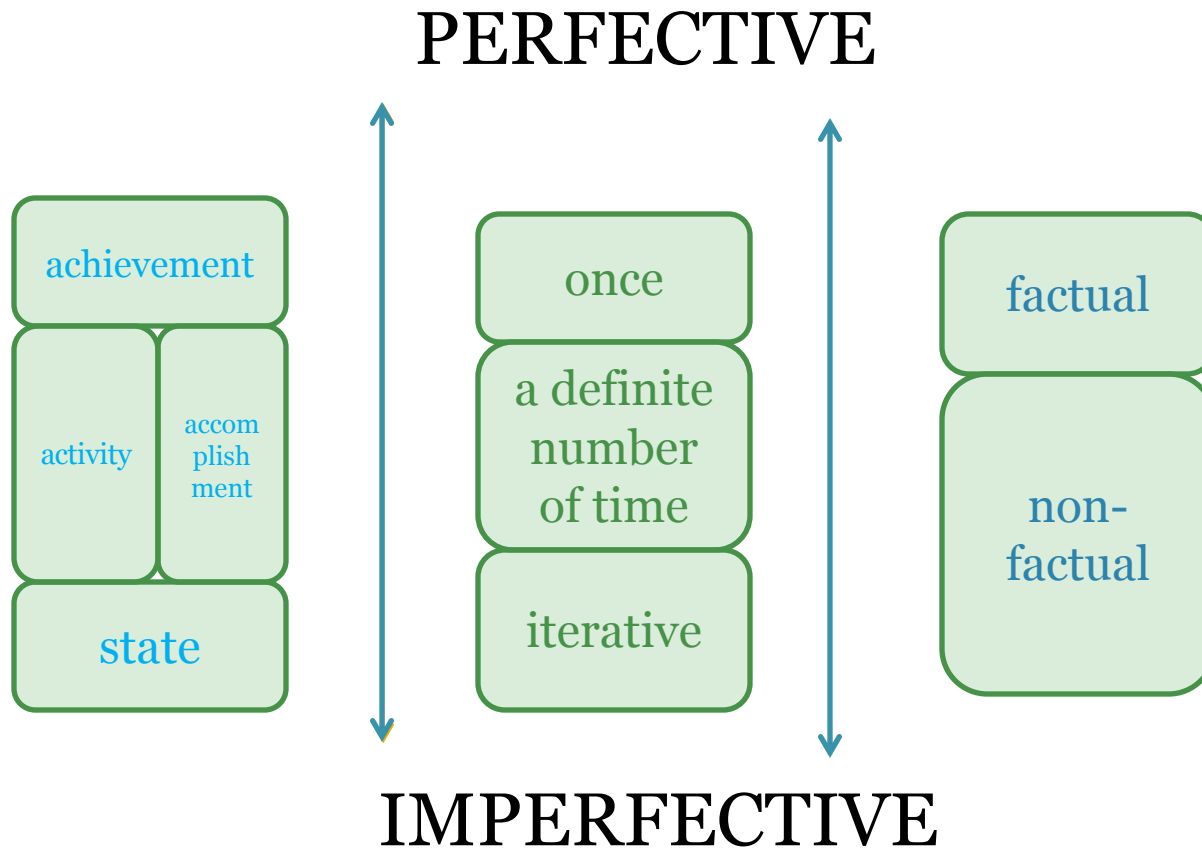
2SG-COOK-ANT what

2SG.AUX-COOK-FV with-whom

'What did you cook?' vs. *'Who did you cook with?'*

- Boundaries help us locate the phases of the event relative to S

5. Aspect



6. Modality

- Modality: status of the proposition (Palmer 1986)
- *-za ku-* ('come to') and *-ya ku-* ('go to') express different degrees of epistemic modality or conditional mood?

6. Modality

- *hamba* (walk), *gqiba* (finish), *fumana* (find)
- Perfective aspect
- Q: Are the noun phrases involved in the proposition specific or non-specific?
- Q: Is the reference time known to both the speaker and the hearer?

6. Modality

	-za ku-	-ya ku-
Specific noun phrases	5	1
Unspecific noun	4	5
Time known	4	1
Time unknown	5	5

6. Modality: Further steps

- Narrowing down the modal semantics of *-za ku-* and *-ya ku-*;
- Expression of deontic modality;
- Comparison with the meaning of the infix *-nga-* (before the OM):
ndingakunceda
- Comparison with the meaning of the infix *-noku-* (before the verb stem):
ufune anokukusebenzisa rhoqo ekhaya

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Thank you

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Thank you!
Enkosi!