Maximality versus telicity in Tlingit

Laurestine Bradford

Canadian Linguistic Association Conference
June 3, 2025
McGill University

Do these mean the same thing?

(1)   I'm done reading that book.

Do these mean the same thing?

(1)   I'm done reading that book.

(2)   I've read that book completely.

(1) I'm done reading that book.

(2) I've read that book completely.

(3) Yan x̱waatóow wé x'úx'.

Do these mean the same thing?

(1) I'm done reading that book.

(2) I've read that book completely.

(3) Yan   xwaatóow   wé x'úx'.
     CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.read that book
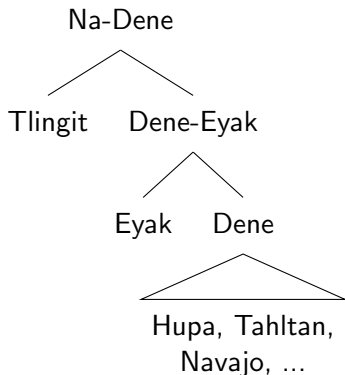
Do these mean the same thing?

(1) I'm done reading that book.

(2) I've read that book completely.

(3) Yan   x̲waatóow   wé   x'úx'.
    CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.read that book

Outline

1. What's that *yan*?

Tlingit (En: [klˈɪŋ.kɪt], Tl: *Lingít* [ɬ�color̀nˈkít])


```
                Na-Dene
               /       \
        Tlingit         Dene-Eyak
                       /         \
                    Eyak          Dene
                                 /    \
                          Hupa, Tahltan,
                           Navajo, ...
```

- ∼100 fluent speakers as of 2018 (Twitchell, 2018).
- Revitalization efforts spread out among communities (Burge, 2024).

(4) Loon awliyéx̲.   Laax̲   tsu awliyéx̲.
bark 3>3.PFV.make red.cedar also 3>3.PFV.make
"He carved bark. He carved red cedar."

(Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1987)

(5) Woosh g̲unayáade át;   daa sá yan   wulihásh
RECIP different   thing; what Q ground= PFV.drift
áwé alyéix̲.
FOC 3>3.IPFV.make
"Different kinds of material; whatever had drifted ashore is
what he carved."   (Dauenhauer & Dauenhauer, 1987)

(6) Yáat'aa x'úx' yeetóow,   ch'a aan   ḵu.a   tlíl
     this.one book PFV.2SG.S.read nonetheless however not
     yan   yitóow.
     CMPL= PFV.2SG.S.read
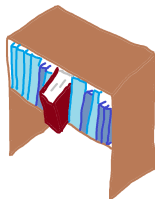   "You were reading this book, but you never finished it."

<div align="right">(SJ)</div>

Yan adds… telicity?

(8) Tleinlí (# yan) x̲waatóow
almost (# CMPL=) PFV.1SG.S.read
wé x'úx'.
that book.
"I almost read that book. [But all the
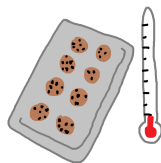same, I just put it back.]"   (SJ)

(7) Tleinlí #(yan) x̲watóowu
almost #(CMPL=) PFV.1SG.S.read.C
wé x'úx'.
that book
"I almost finished reading that whole
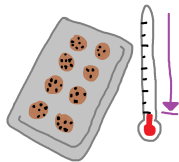book."   (SJ)

Yan adds... endpoint of a scale?

(9) Yan   da<u>x</u>   wudzi.át'
CMPL= DSTR= PFV.MID.cool
<u>x</u>áa sá!
looks.like
"Look like they're cooled off!"   (SJ)

Outline

(10) Yan   dax̱   wudzi.át'.
      CMPL= DSTR= PFV.MID.cool
      "They're cooled off."
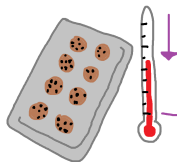

(11) Yan   x̱waatóow   wé   x'úx'.
      CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.read that book
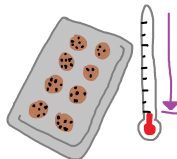   "I read that whole book."

(12) Wé   dzísk'w yan   uwatáa.
      that moose CMPL= PFV.fat
      "That moose is fattened up."

(13) The cookies cooled.

(14) The cookies cooled completely.

Kennedy and Levin (2008) (approximately):
$[\![completely]\!] =$
$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \max(g)$

I didn't read the book.

I ?(?didn't) read the book.

I read the book.

I didn't read the book.

I didn't read the book completely.

I ?(?didn't) read the book.

I didn't read the book completely.

I read the book.

I read the book completely.

I didn't read the book.

I didn't read the book completely.

I ?(?didn't) read the book.

I didn't read the book completely.
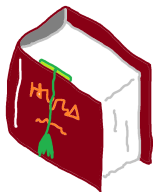
I read the book.

I read the book completely.

Kennedy (2012) and Henderson (2012) extend Kennedy and Levin (2008) to direct object scales, and we can use that here.

I read the book.
X̲waatóow wé x'úx'.

I read the book completely.
Yan x̲waatoow we x'ux'.

$$\llbracket yan \rrbracket = \llbracket completely \rrbracket =$$
$$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \max(g)$$

- Impossible with other measures of change.

- Obligatory narrow scope with respect to "all". (Borne out!)

Depending on implementation:

- Can('t) be used if the event is impossible to continue, even if not at the top of the scale.

Outline

Yan when you don't feel like continuing

(15) Yan x̲waditúw.
CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.APSV.read
"I'm finished reading." (SJ)

(16) Aaa, dé tléinlí yan x̲'ax̲waataaní.
yes now almost CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.speak.C
"Yes, I'm almost finished talking." (SJ)

(17) # Yan uwatáa.
CMPL= PFV.sleep
Intended: "She's done sleeping."

(18)   I'm done reading that book, even though I only got halfway through.

(19)   # I'm done reading that book, but I want to read more of it.

(20)   I'm done reading that book, but my mom is making me read more of it.

(21)   # The sky is done darkening.

Done+gerund satisfies agent desire

(18)   I'm done reading that book, even though I only got halfway through.

(19)   # I'm done reading that book, but I want to read more of it.

(20)   I'm done reading that book, but my mom is making me read more of it.

(21)   # The sky is done darkening.

Tentatively: ⟦done⟧ =
$\lambda F_{\text{predicate}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$the desire of x for $F(x)(e)$ is fully satisfied

Yan satisfies agent desire

(15) Yan x̲waditúw.
       CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.APSV.read
       "I'm finished reading."   (SJ)

Yan satisfies agent desire

(15) Yan   x̱waditúw.
     CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.APSV.read
     "I'm finished reading."   (SJ)

Tentatively: $[\![v']\!] =$
$\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x's desire to read

(15) Yan x̲waditúw.
     CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.APSV.read
     "I'm finished reading."   (SJ)

Tentatively: $\llbracket v' \rrbracket =$
$\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x's desire to read

$\llbracket yan \rrbracket =$
$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \text{max}(g)$

Yan satisfies agent desire

(15) Yan   x̱waditúw.
      CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.APSV.read
      "I'm finished reading."   (SJ)

Tentatively: $[\![v']\!] =$
$\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x's desire to read

$[\![yan]\!] =$
$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \text{max}(g)$

$[\![yan\ v']\!] =$
$\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x's desire to read is the biggest amount of satisfaction

Agent desire scale only as a last resort

(22) # Wé x'úx' yan x̱waatúw.
      that book CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.read
      Intended: "I'm done reading that
      book [don't want to continue]."
      → *You don't like it but you still
      finished reading it, that's what
      you're saying. - SJ*

(23) # Yan x̱waax̱áa wé gáx̱
      CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.eat that rabbit
      atx̱aayí.
      food
      Intended: "I'm done eating my
      salad [don't want to continue]."
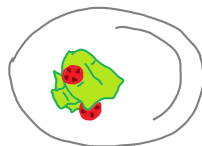
Done is opportunistic too (to a point)

(24)   When the rocks are done tumbling, I'll show them to you.

(25)   When the fence is done rusting, I'll paint the porch to match it.

(26)   # When the fence is done rusting, it'll crumble away.

(24) When the rocks are done tumbling, I'll show them to you.

(24) When the rocks are done tumbling, I'll show them to you.

$\llbracket done \rrbracket = \llbracket completely \rrbracket = \llbracket yan \rrbracket =$
$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \max(g)$

(24) When the rocks are done tumbling, I'll show them to you.

$[\![done]\!] = [\![completely]\!] = [\![yan]\!] =$
$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \max(g)$

$[\![\langle\text{enough}\rangle]\!]_{x_0} =$
$\lambda P_{\text{predicate}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x_0's desire for $F(x)(e)$

(24)   When the rocks are done tumbling, I'll show them to you.

$[\![done]\!] = [\![completely]\!] = [\![yan]\!] =$
$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \max(g)$

$[\![\langle\text{enough}\rangle]\!]_{x_0} =$
$\lambda P_{\text{predicate}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x_0's desire for $F(x)(e)$

$[\![done\ [\ \langle\text{enough}\rangle\ \text{v'}\ ]\ ]\!]_{x_0} =$
$\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x_0's desire for the rocks to tumble is the biggest amount of satisfaction

(15) Yan   x̱waditúw.
      CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.APSV.read
      "I'm finished reading."   (SJ)

$[\![done]\!] = [\![completely]\!] = [\![yan]\!] =$
$\lambda g_{\text{change scale}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.g(x)(e) = \max(g)$

$[\![\langle enough \rangle]\!]_{x_0} =$
$\lambda P_{\text{predicate}}.\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x_0's
desire for $F(x)(e)$

$[\![yan \ [\ \langle enough \rangle \ v' \ ] \ ]\!]_{x_0} =$
$\lambda x_{\text{entity}}.\lambda e_{\text{event}}.$ the degree to which e satisfies x_0's desire for x to
read is the biggest amount of satisfaction

- Can grab implicit causers or evaluators from context if need be.

- When VP doesn't contain a scale, incompatible with explicit denial of agent desire.

Outline

Summary

completely   yan   done

Access to VP-internal scale

No access to VP-internal scale

Maximum of scale reached

Conjure a scale of satisfaction

Acknowledgments

Québec
Fonds de recherche – Nature et technologies
Fonds de recherche – Santé
Fonds de recherche – Société et culture

Outline

Done speaking

(16) Aaa, dé tléinlí yan x'ax̲waataaní.
yes now almost CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.speak.C
"Yes, I'm almost finished talking." (SJ)

(16) Aaa, dé tléinlí yan x'a<u>x</u>waataaní.
yes now almost CMPL= PFV.1SG.S.speak.C
"Yes, I'm almost finished talking." (SJ)

That verb for *speak* often goes with a certain pluractional suffix, so I tried that with *yan*...

(27)   # Aaa, dé   tléinlí   yan   yoo
          yes   now almost CMPL= ALT=
          x̱'ax̱waatángi.
          PFV.1SG.S.speak.PLURAC.C
          Intended: "Yes, I'm almost finished talking."

          → *Almost like he's losing his speech or losing his voice*
          or whatever. - SJ

Measuring events

- Events aren't inherently individuated (see e.g. Kratzer, 2008).

- Pluractionals can impose an axis by which to measure them (Henderson, 2012; Lasersohn, 1994; Ojeda, 1998).
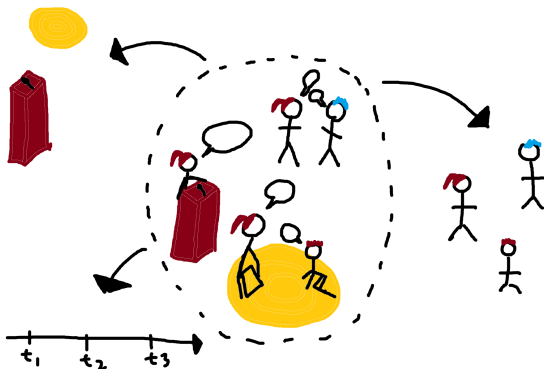
(27) # Aaa, dé   tléinlí yan   yoo
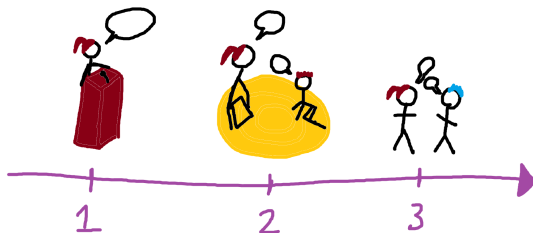   yes   now almost CMPL= ALT=
      x̱'ax̱waatángi.
      PFV.1SG.S.speak.PLURAC.C
      Intended: "Yes, I'm almost finished talking."
      → *Almost like he's losing his speech or losing his voice
      or whatever. - SJ*

(27)   # Aaa, dé   tléinlí   yan   yoo
           yes   now almost CMPL= ALT=
           x̱'a̱x̱waatángi.
           PFV.1SG.S.speak.PLURAC.C
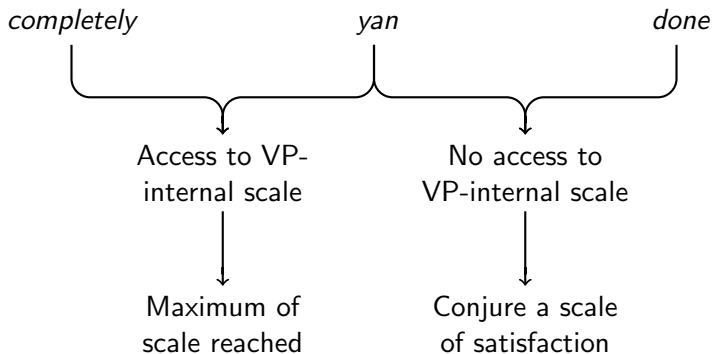   Intended: "Yes, I'm almost finished talking."
           → *Almost like he's losing his speech or losing his voice*
           or whatever. - SJ

Paraphrase: *I have almost spoken the maximum number of speaking events for me.*

Summary

completely	*yan*	*done*

Access to VP-internal scale

No access to VP-internal scale

Maximum of scale reached

Conjure a scale of satisfaction

Burge, H. D. (2024). *Woosh jín toolshát yeisú, we're still holding each other's hands: relationships and revitalization in Lingít country* (Doctoral dissertation, University of British Columbia). doi: 10.14288/1.0439964

Dauenhauer, N. M., & Dauenhauer, R. (1987). *Haa Shuká Our Ancestors*. University of Washington Press.

Henderson, R. (2012). *Ways of pluralizing events* (Doctoral dissertation, University of California). Retrieved from `https://escholarship.org/uc/item/7zj310p2`

Kennedy, C. (2012, 06). 1034 the composition of incremental change. In V. Demonte & L. McNally (Eds.), *Telicity, change, and state: A cross-categorial view of event structure.* Oxford University Press. Retrieved from `https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199693498.003.0004` doi: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199693498.003.0004

Kennedy, C., & Levin, B. (2008, 03). Measure of change: The adjectival core of degree achievements. In L. McNally & C. Kennedy (Eds.), *Adjectives and adverbs: Syntax, semantics, and discourse.* Oxford University Press. Retrieved from `https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199211616.003.0007` doi: 10.1093/oso/9780199211616.003.0007

Kratzer, A. (2008). On the plurality of verbs. In J. Dölling, T. Heyde-Zybatow, & M. Schäfer (Eds.), *Event structures in linguistic form and interpretation* (pp. 269–300). Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter. Retrieved 2024-02-20, from `https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110925449.269` doi: 10.1515/9783110925449.269

References III

Lasersohn, P. (1994). *Plurality, conjunction and events*. Springer Dordrecht. Retrieved from
`https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-015-8581-1` doi: 10.1007/978-94-015-8581-1

Ojeda, A. (1998). The semantics of collectives and distributives in Papago. *Natural Language Semantics*, *6*(3).

Twitchell, L. A. (2018). *Haa Dachxhánx'i Sáani Kagéiyi Yís: Haa Yoo Xh'atángi kei Naltseen, for our little grandchildren: Language revitalization among the Tlingit.* (Unpublished doctoral dissertation). University of Hawai'i at Hilo.