

A formal account of the diachrony of the Icelandic "finish" perfect

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Proposal Pt. 1: Semantics of source construction

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Introduction

- ▶ Perfect markers that begin their grammaticalization path as lexical items meaning 'finish' are prevalent cross-linguistically (Bybee et al. 1994).
- ▶ What is it about the semantics at either end of this trajectory that allowed this path to occur?
- ▶ The path of *búinn* presents an additional puzzle: the source construction more saliently means 'be ready, prepared' than 'be finished' prior to the 17th century.
- ▶ How can we account for this?

The data

- ▶ Modern Icelandic has two constructions that have a number of properties typically ascribed to perfects (Jónsson 1992; Thráinsson 2017): *búinn* 'finish' and *hafa* 'have'.
- ▶ The former has a more limited distribution: only resultative and universal readings are licit (cf. McCawley 1971 for a classification of perfect readings).
- ▶ *Hafa* can be experiential too, while *búinn* cannot be.
Experiential: María has baked a cake before in her life.

The data

- (1) a. María er búin að baka köku. / María hefur bakað
María is búinn to bake a.cake. / María has baked
köku.
a.cake.

María has baked a cake. (Resultative: There's a cake at
speech time)

- b. María er búin að vera veik. / María hefur verið
María is BÚINN to be sick. / María has been
veik.
sick.

María has been sick. (Universal: She's still sick)
(Jónsson 1992)

The data

- ▶ The expression of all three primary perfect readings with *hafa* (experiential, resultative, universal, cf. McCawley 1971) is found in the earliest Icelandic sources (Nygaard 1905; Pollak 1930).
- ▶ The lexical item *búinn* exists with the meaning 'ready', 'prepared' in older stages of Icelandic (*tilbúinn*, *reiðubúinn* respectively in modern Icelandic) but does not acquire an anterior meaning until the 17th century.

The data

Prior to the 17th century, *búinn* predominantly has a 'prepared' reading. The below cannot have anterior reference.

- (2) En er Egill var búinn og byr gaf þá siglar
And when Egill was búinn and wind gave then sails
hann í haf.
he to sea
And when Egill was prepared and there was wind, he sailed
to sea. (1250.THETUBROT.NAR-SAG,.74)

The data

An early, prototypical anterior reading of *búinn* is shown in (3), from the 17th century. Here, the ‘prepared’ reading is unambiguously contextually unavailable.

- (3) þá búinn var að brenna, féll í ösku
when búinn was to burn, fell in ashes
When one had burned it (or: had finished burning it), it fell
to ashes (1680.SKALHOLT.NAR-REL,.94)

Preview of Proposal

- ▶ Morphologically speaking, *búinn* is the past participle of the verb *búa* which in modern Icelandic primarily means ‘live, reside, dwell’ in addition to meanings of ‘adorn; equip, prepare, make ready’ (cf. Wide 2002: 57).
- ▶ Based on data from the Icelandic historical corpus (IcePAHC; Wallenberg et al. 2011), I will show that the historical trajectory towards the semantics of an aspectual operator involves the semanticization of an imminence inference.
- ▶ I build upon Eckardt’s (2006) analysis of English prospective *going to* in this regard.

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Emergence of anterior

- ▶ What about the 'finish' reading? How does it relate to what we see in (2)?
- ▶ My claim is that this reading comes about as a result of the underspecification of *búinn*.
- ▶ The way in which *preparedness* is resolved is highly context dependent (it exhibits type coercion; Pustejovsky 1995).
- ▶ Similar underspecification can be found in typologically diverse languages (Mainland Scandinavian *ferdig*, Finnish *valmis*).

Emergence of anterior

- (4) Maten är färdig - Arbetet är färdigt. (Swedish)
food.the is *färdig* - work.the is *färdig*
Dinner is ready - The work is finished. (Thráinsson 2017)

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Evidence for Underspecification

To see how this works, it is helpful to first inspect some of the entries provided for *búinn* in the ONP (Sigurðardóttir et al.), outlined in (6).

- (5) a. *búinn* [compar. *búnari*, superl. *búnastr*] [e-s / til e-s]: *ready, prepared, finished, willing, favourably disposed (towards sth.)*
- b. *búinn*: *completed (completely built/made)*
- c. *búinn* [til e-s / at e-u] [at e-u / með e-u]: *supplied, equipped (for battle, journey, etc.) (with regard to sth.), prepared, ready to depart*
- d. *búinn* [á e-t / at e-u / við e-u]: *endowed/gifted (with sth.), capable (of sth.)*
- e. *búinn* [e-u / með e-u]: *dressed, adorned, decorated, ornamented (mounted/fitted (with metal), covered (with silver/gold), inlaid, damascened, embroidered (with silver/gold?))*

Evidence for Underspecification

Entries provided for *búinn* in the ONP (Sigurðardóttir et al.), outlined in (6).

- (6) a. *búinn*: *in a (certain) condition, in a (poor) state*
- b. *svá búinn* (verb?): *such a state of affairs, such circumstances,*
- c. *svá búinn* (adverbial): *under (these, such) circumstances, with things as they are, as things stand, now*
- d. *at (svá) búnu*: *with things as they are, now*
- e. *við/með (svá) búit*: *with things as they are*

Evidence for Underspecification

- ▶ This is illustrated for historical Icelandic in (7) (14th century) where a net ready for fishing implies a complete net.

(7) Ok er búið var netit, þá fara Æsir til árinnar
And when búinn was the.net, then go Æsir to the.river
ok kasta neti í forsinn
and throw net into the.waterfall
And when the net was finished, the Æsir went to the river
and threw the net into the waterfall. (ONP, Jónsson 1931:
69, English from Faulkes 1987)

Evidence for Underspecification

- ▶ A similar example is reproduced in (8), where what is being referred to is a ship that has been completed and is thus both whole and prepared to serve its purpose.

(8) Var Maríu-suþin búin oc alger
was maría-ship búinn and complete
The María ship was ready/finished and complete
(Sverris Saga ca. 1300, ONP, Indrebø 1920)

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Proposal

- ▶ 'Prepared' and 'finished' both persist as meanings associated with *búinn* long after the anterior meaning emerges ('prepared' is typically *tilbúinn* in the modern language).
- ▶ The most prominent use of *búinn* in present-day Icelandic is aspectual, however.

Proposal

- ▶ My account of the trajectory from 'prepared/ready' to an anterior involves the semanticization of an imminence inference (Eckardt 2006).
- ▶ I argue that this inference is a conventional implicature that is a consequence of the lexical semantics of *búinn*: declaring that one is in a prepared or finished state has consequences for *what can happen now* (cf. Wide 2002 on *búinn* as a "current relevance" perfect).
- ▶ This proposal is similar to Eckardt's (2006) for English *going to*, though the incorporation of the imminence component results in prospectivity in that instance, rather than anteriority here.

Semantics of source construction

- ▶ *búinn* as an adjectival participle:
- ▶ The root *búa* is a predicate of *prepare* events.
- ▶ Participial morphology (*-inn*) suppresses the initiator argument and is exponed by an Asp head, which intervenes between the root and the Adjectival Phrase (Gehrke 2015).
- ▶ A predicative head then merges with AP (the function in 9b) and applies it to the subject (Meltzer-Asscher 2012) (overtified by the BE-copula).

Semantics of source construction

- (9) a. $[[\surd\text{búa}]]^{w,g} = \lambda y \lambda x \lambda s \lambda e \exists e' \text{ prepare}(e')(e) \wedge \text{become}(s)(e) \wedge \text{prepared}(y, s) \wedge \text{initiator}(x, e)$
- b. $[[\text{búinn}]]^{w,g} = \lambda y \lambda s \exists e, e', x \text{ prepare}(e')(e) \wedge \text{become}(s)(e) \wedge \text{prepared}(y, s) \wedge \text{initiator}(x, e)$

- ▶ I take it that we are dealing with event kinds here, as Gehrke (2015) proposes for stative be-passives; the adjectivising head blocks instantiation of the event.
- ▶ More specifically, (b) denotes the consequent state (kind) of an event kind.
- ▶ The event variable e' above in (9a) has to be saturated by means of an inferential mechanism.

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Corpus Investigation

- ▶ I intend to account for three primary observations that emerge from the historical corpus.
- ▶ (i) There is an association between early anterior readings and the presence of infinitival complements, beginning in the 17th century.
- ▶ (ii) Early *búinn* anteriors occur predominantly in (temporal) subordinate contexts.
- ▶ (iii) Early anterior *búinn* predominantly co-occurs with animate, agentive subjects and telic, transitive predicates. (cf. Thráinsson 2017)

Corpus Investigation

- ▶ (i) There is an association between early anterior readings and the presence of infinitival complements, beginning in the 17th century.
- ▶ In fact, only 2/25 tokens prior to the earliest attestation of anterior *búinn* contain an infinitival complement. One of them shown below in (10).

- (10) Svartur stóð með reidda rekuna og var búinn að
Svartur stood with brandished shovel and was búinn to
slá hann með...
hit him with
Svartur stood with a shovel brandished and was ready to hit
him with it. (1350.FINNBOGI.NAR-SAG,656.1725)

Corpus Investigation

- ▶ How did *búinn* come to take an infinitival complement in the first place? One potential trajectory involves analogical extension (cf. Kiparsky 2012) based on the fixed expressions *ađ svo búnu, við svo búiđ* 'now, with things as they are'.
- ▶ Fixed expressions focusing on the present state may have contributed to the acquisition of an anterior reading.
- ▶ Perfects, too, focus on what is happening *now*, often providing the prerequisite for subsequent action (as backgrounding devices) (cf. Detges 2000)

Corpus Investigation

- ▶ The presence of this expression suggests that *búinn* can be combined with *að*, at least where *að* functions as a preposition. Indeed, one can find attestations of *vera búinn að því* 'to.be búinn að it.dat'. This is illustrated by the example in (11).

(11) Gekk Haukr síðan út ok allir hans menn, ok fara
went Haukr then out and all his men, and go
leið sína til skips og halda í haf, er þeir eru at
way their to ship and proceed to sea, when they are að
því búnir....
it.dat búinn

Haukur then went out with all of his men and they go their way to the ship and proceed to sea when they are prepared for it/to do so (ca. 13th century, Heimskringla, ONP, Jónsson 1900)

Corpus Investigation

- ▶ In the modern language, *því* 'that.dat' can be used as a pronoun in place of the infinitive, as shown in (12) (Friðjónsson 1989:106 cited in Wide 2002:60).

- (12) a. A: Ertu búinn að láta skoða bílinn?
A: are.you búinn að let examine the.car
A: Have you had the car looked at yet?
- b. B: Já, ég er búinn að því.
B: Yes, I am búinn að it.dat
B: Yes, I have done so.

On the whole, this suggests that no syntactic reanalysis had to take place to accommodate an infinitival complement.

Corpus Investigation

- ▶ Put together, these facts suggest the initial diachronic succession of stages as outlined in (i) -> (ii) in (29). The latter stages will be discussed in following:
- (13) (i) Stative ('ready, prepared, completed') → (ii) Temporally anterior meaning emerges as a backgrounding device in subordinate clauses (When (in the state of being) finished...); co-occurrence with infinitives → (iii) Progression towards prototypical perfect properties (incl. universal readings)

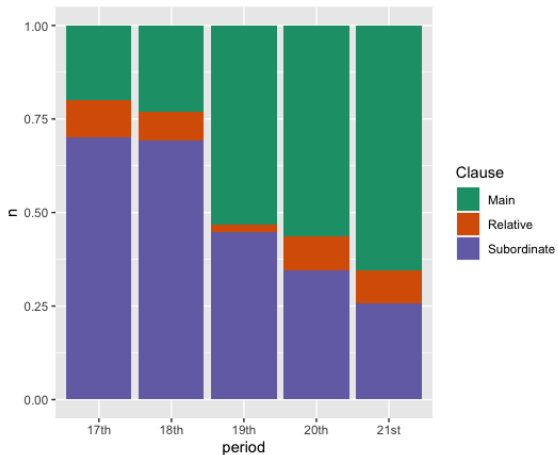
Corpus Investigation

- ▶ (ii) Early *búinn* anteriors occur predominantly in (temporal) subordinate contexts.
- ▶ The pragmatic significance of these contexts is that they assert the endpoint of an event which is a precondition for the event described in the main clause (Rosemeyer and Grossman 2017).
- ▶ These complements are nearly exclusively telic early on in the historical record.

(14) Þegar ég var nú búinn að tala við Jón yngra
when I was now búinn to speak with Jón younger
úti kom ég inn aftur í kirkjuna
outside came I in again into the.church
When I was finished speaking/had spoken with John junior
outside I came into the church again
(1659.PISLARSAGA.BIO-AUT,.56)

Corpus Investigation

Figure 1: Tokens by period by clause type



Corpus Investigation

Figure 2: Clause type frequency (percentage per century) with temporal adverbials, part 1

	period	Clause	Temporal Adverbials	n	all	rel.freq
1	17th	Subordinate		3	10	30%
2	17th	Subordinate	þá 'when'	2	10	20%
3	17th	Subordinate	nær 'when'	1	10	10%
4	17th	Relative	svo 'then'	1	10	10%
5	17th	Main	þegar, nú 'when, now'	1	10	10%
6	17th	Subordinate	eftir það	1	10	10%
7	17th	Main	allareiðu 'already'	1	10	10%
8	18th	Main		2	26	8%
9	18th	Subordinate	inn til þess 'until'	1	26	4%
10	18th	Main	á 4 árum þar eftir	1	26	4%
11	18th	Subordinate	þar, hálf tannað ár	1	26	4%

Corpus Investigation

Figure 3: Clause type frequency (percentage per century) with temporal adverbials, part 2

	period	Clause	Temporal Adverbials	n	all	rel.freq
12	18th	Subordinate	nær 'when'	2	26	8%
13	18th	Subordinate	fyrst 'since'	1	26	4%
14	18th	Subordinate	þá nú 'now when'	1	26	4%
15	18th	Main	svo	1	26	4%
16	18th	Main	þá	2	26	8%
17	18th	Subordinate	eftir það 'after (that)'	3	26	12%
18	18th	Relative	eftir það 'after (that)'	1	26	4%
19	18th	Subordinate	þá 'when'	9	26	35%
20	18th	Relative	einu sinni 'once'	1	26	4%
21	19th	Main	fyrir löngu 'long ago'	1	47	2%
22	19th	Main	og...svo 'and...then'	1	47	2%
23	19th	Main		10	47	21%
24	19th	Main	nú, lengi 'now, for long'	1	47	2%

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Locus of reanalysis

- ▶ What enabled this innovation to take place, to begin with?
- ▶ In temporal subordinate contexts (Reichenbachian E-R-S), it would typically be uninformative to overtly express the event description for which one is preparing (# When Egill was prepared to sail, he set sail)
- ▶ In other words, overtly expressing that an event that was an imminent occurrence at some past interval did indeed become instantiated is underinformative (on Gricean assumptions, cf. Holvoet 2014).

Locus of reanalysis

- ▶ Innovative speakers took advantage of the underspecification of *búinn* as well as analogy with related expressions (relating to the present) and began to combine *búinn* with infinitival complements.
- ▶ Hearers, in turn, were left to make sense of the utterance, interpreting pluperfect *búinn* constructions as expressing that the event description associated with this infinitival complement is informative relative to the discourse context (cf. Rosemeyer and Grossman 2017).

Locus of reanalysis

- ▶ One way of resolving informativity vis-a-vis the discourse context here is to interpret the event description of the infinitival complement not as expressing a prospective event but rather the target state (Kratzer 2000) of a previously instantiated event, resulting in anterior orientation.
- ▶ This view is compatible with both prospectives and perfects as making reference to *current relevance* (cf. Reed 2012 on Scottish Gaelic)

Locus of reanalysis

- ▶ More concretely, the increased salience of the ‘finished’ reading may be viewed as one in the same as the entrenchment of the anterior meaning.
- ▶ Underspecification is what allows this trajectory to play out. Nonetheless, the ‘prepared’ reading is much more salient prior to the regular appearance of infinitival complements in the corpus.

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ The mechanism of reanalysis can be understood through the lens of Eckardt's (2009) Avoid Pragmatic Overload Principle.
- ▶ I propose that what we see in historical Icelandic mirrors the mechanisms in historical Spanish for the *acabar* ('finish') perfect construction as described in Rosemeyer and Grossman (2017), for which the locus of reanalysis was also pluperfect contexts.

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ The prevalence of *búinn* with an infinitive in such contexts provided a framework for the sort of reanalysis made possible.
- ▶ Instead of merely being interpreted as a lexical stative, the hearer can reason that what is relevant is the **temporal interval** associated with the target state of the event described by the infinitive, which brings about a new state of affairs.
- ▶ In other words, *búinn* gets reinterpreted as aspectual, marking anterior reference.
- ▶ This cannot be the whole story, however.

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ *Búinn* and *Hafa* are in paradigmatic competition in the pluperfect, leading to the same outcome—the hearer is forced to accommodate hearing a more marked expression where it does not seem to be otherwise informationally necessary. An example is shown in (15).

(15) Þá ég var búinn að lesa hann í gegnum, gat ég
When I was búinn to read it through, could I
alls engu orkað fyrir reiði og efasemd
at.all nothing have.energy for anger and doubt
When I had read (was finished reading) it through, I was
overcome with anger and doubt
(1745.KLIM.NAR-FIC,41.295)

Mechanism of reanalysis

Based on the account in Eckardt (2006):

- ▶ We are dealing with aspect, as this pertains to the relation between R(eference time) and E(vent time).
- ▶ That an event is imminent at R follows from world knowledge about predicates of preparation events.
- ▶ Combined with present tense, where $R=S$, the imminence inference amounts to the following proposition:

$$(16) \quad (R = S \wedge \exists e'(\text{Imminent}(R,e') \wedge R \prec \tau(e') \wedge P(x,e')))$$

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ The hearer has to make sense of the pragmatic overload of *búinn* in a temporal subordinate context.
- ▶ They resolve the imminence relation in a way that is sensible and informative.
- ▶ With the addition of past tense marking, R is situated prior to S, whereas the runtime of the event must entirely precede R (rather than merely being contained in it) due to informativity constraints of the paradigm

Mechanism of reanalysis

More formally, where the infinitive contributes the argument P

$$(17) \quad \lambda P \lambda x \exists e (R \prec S \wedge \tau(e) \prec R \wedge \text{Imminent}(R,e) \wedge P(x,e))$$

We derive the entailment that the event has consequences which are imminent at R ; in other words, the target state (associated with an accomplishment or achievement) is what has such consequences.

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ Under the imminence account espoused here, we expect that the conventionalization of the implicature would result in an expression that is more informative than the pluperfect alone.
- ▶ Namely, imminence with regard to reference time is now part of the logical meaning of the expression. No such entailment is there under past-marked *hafa* (prototypical pluperfect marking).
- ▶ Concretely, how does this more informative expression contrast with the pluperfect?
- ▶ Proposal: where *hafa* in combination with past tense marking instantiates $\tau(e) \subset R$, *búinn*, in combination with such marking, instantiates $\tau(e) \prec R$

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ There are multiple sources of evidence, diachronic and synchronic, that corroborate that the informativity contrast we are interested in.
- ▶ I begin with the latter.

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ Jón Magnússon's grammatical description of Icelandic (published in Jónsson 1933), written in the 1730's, provides valuable evidence from a time period for which it is attested that *búinn* is already established as an anterior.
- ▶ First, the inclusion of *búinn* in a listing of the Icelandic aspectual paradigms indicates that it is already established in the language at this time.
- ▶ The author does not provide any supplementary comments about its use, aside from a Latin translation.

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ Magnússon contrasts *hafa* and *búinn*. Combined with the verb *gera* 'to do', the version with *búinn* is translated by "iam perfeci" whereas the version with *hafa* is translated by "feci".
- ▶ The first, with (*búinn*), can be translated into English as "I have already finished", whereas the second can be translated simply as "I have done", being the present indicative perfect form of 'do'.
- ▶ The pluperfect with *hafa* and the verb *gera* 'to do' is translated as *feceram*, the Latin pluperfect, whereas *búinn* combined with the past tense auxiliary is translated as *perfeceram* 'had done/finished'.

Mechanism of reanalysis

- ▶ The inclusion of an "already" inference as well as a translation involving completeness in the pluperfect case suggest that therein lies the difference of informativity.
- ▶ In the pluperfect, the entailment of a complete event prior to reference time is otherwise known as a "perfect-in-the-past" (or exclusive) reading. (Comrie 1976)
- ▶ It turns out that for some speakers of present day Icelandic, this distinction between *hafa* and *búinn* is actually maintained...

Mechanism of reanalysis

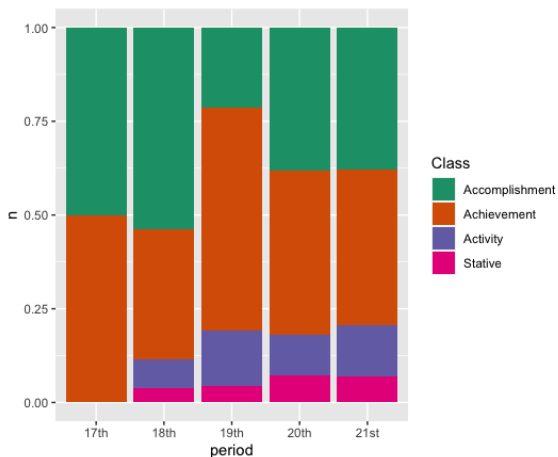
- ▶ The example below is via Jakub (1970). It must be noted that not all speakers of Icelandic get this contrast.

- (18) a. Ég var um þessar mundir búinn að læra að lesa
I was at this time búinn to learn to read
hjá henni ömmu minni.
at her grandma my
I had learned to read at my grandma's around this time.
- b. Ég hafði um þessar mundir lært að lesa hjá
I hafa at this time learned to read at
henni ömmu minni.
her grandma my
I had learned to read at my grandma's around this time.
(Halldór Kiljan Laxness: Brekkukotsannáll cited in
Jakub 1970: 172)

Corpus investigation

(iii) Early anterior *búinn* predominantly co-occurs with animate, agentive subjects and telic, transitive predicates. (cf. Thráinsson 2017)

Figure 4: Tokens by period by Aktionsart



Corpus investigation

- ▶ There are no 17th century examples which are not telic.
- ▶ However, the results do show that states and activities are present under *búinn* from the 18th century onwards and it appears that there is a relatively stable amount of states and activities from the 19th-21st century.

Corpus investigation

- ▶ (iii) Early anterior *búinn* predominantly co-occurs with animate, agentive subjects and telic, transitive predicates. (cf. Thráinsson 2017)
- ▶ The agentivity restriction mentioned above falls out from the lexical semantics of *búinn*, as the act of preparation requires agentive intention.
- ▶ Moreover, the restriction to telic transitives can be accounted for as a consequence of the requirement that target state participles involve a change of state (Wegner 2019).
- ▶ Next, we will see that the existence of this target state as part of the semantics of *búinn* enabled its further generalization as a resultant state marker.

Proposal

Condoravdi and Deo (2014): Resultative perfects involve *paired property instantiations* ($INST^2$) (saturated predications involving an eventive and stative component)

- ▶ $INST^2$ thus holds between an eventive-stative pair $\langle P, Q \rangle$ and an interval i iff there is an event P and a state s of type Q s.t. s stands in a *result* relation with e and i is in the span of s (ibid: 17).
- ▶ Resultative perfects combine with such pairs and yield the *temporal correlate* of Q .

$$(19) \text{ ResPerf} = \lambda R \lambda i INST^2(R, i) \text{ defined iff } R = \langle P, Q \rangle \text{ where } P \subset \mathcal{E}^E \wedge Q \subset \mathcal{E}^S$$

Proposal

- ▶ The stativizing component of the adjectival denotation is an "aktionsart chooser" (cf. Gerö and von Stechow 2003): it doesn't convert telic predicates into states but rather picks out a state caused by a previous event.
- ▶ I propose that resultative readings under *búinn* became licit once a reanalysis had taken place from an adjectival meaning, corresponding to the stative component of this paired denotation, to an aspectual marker which combines with such a pair and yields the *temporal correlate* of *Q*.
- ▶ Combination with atelic eventualities became available once the resultative entailment became conventionalized (cf. *ibid.*), from the 18th century onwards.

Corpus investigation

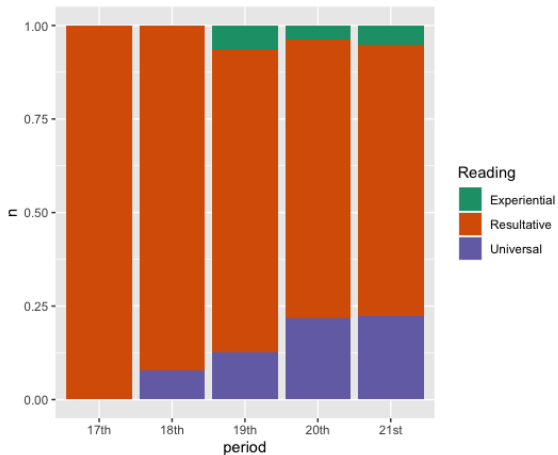
Classification by reading type (manual)

- ▶ Does the event described hold at reference time? If yes, Universal.
- ▶ Does the state described hold at reference time and follow from an event that brought this state into being? If yes, Resultative.
- ▶ Can the event described be repeated? If yes, Experiential.

(cf. class. in Davydova 2012)

Corpus investigation

Figure 5: Tokens by period by reading type



Proposal

- ▶ Development further along (universal readings that hold at ref. time r) can result once the resultative entailment gets conventionalized. This can happen since the temporal correlate of Q is a subset of intervals preceding r . (Condoravdi and Deo 2014; Gerö and von Stechow 2003)
- ▶ This yields a resultant state reading (Parsons 1990, Kratzer 2000): the state holds at any interval preceded by a given eventuality. This seems to be the right line of analysis for modern *búinn* on independent grounds (Larsson 2008).

Present day *búinn* as a resultant state marker

- ▶ What is meant here by a resultant state and what are the grounds Larsson (2008) has for proposing such an analysis? She points to the prominence of “existential, clause-anticipating constructions” as shown below.

(20) Það er *búið* að lögfesta lækkun.
It is *búinn* inf legalize reduction
A reduction has been legalized.

- ▶ Stative passives have the property of being odd discourse initially and require a “job is done” or “that’s over” reading (Kratzer 2000: 4).

Present day *búinn* as a resultant state marker

- ▶ *Búinn* and stative passives do not have telicity restrictions. This means that they cannot be prototypical resultatives (cf. Pancheva 2003) or target states (Parsons 2000).
- ▶ On Larsson's (2008) analysis *búinn* merely asserts that some part of the event precedes reference or speech time; nothing is asserted about the endpoint of the event.
- ▶ On the face of it, this cannot account for universal readings, which are common in modern Ice.
- ▶ Larsson (2008) accounts for this difficulty by proposing that durative adverbials are required to get such a reading, but these can presumably also be provided by context.

Through the lens of imminence...

- ▶ I would like to suggest that this historical perspective in terms of imminence sheds light on properties of *búinn* that otherwise go unnoticed if it is simply regarded as a perfect construction.
- ▶ Olsson (2013) describes a new typological category he terms iamitives, which at first glance has considerable overlap with the properties of the *búinn* construction.
- ▶ This category is made up of features associated with both resultative perfects and lexical items meaning “already” cross-linguistically. A core feature of this category’s meaning is change-of-state component. The semantics of already involve a transition from negative phase -P to P post-phase (Michaelis 1996: 485).

Through the lens of imminence...

- ▶ *Búinn* behaves like a perfect in that it may have resultative, experiential and universal readings
- ▶ It also displays typical perfect restrictions with definite time adverbials.
- ▶ Nonetheless, it exhibits *earliness/expectedness* effects as well as *duality* effects comparable to both “already” and iamitives.

Through the lens of imminence...

- ▶ One way in which *búinn* resembles *already* is that it has the same sort of lexical dual opposition to *still*. As noted in Löbner (1989) and van der Klok and Matthewsson (2015). The outer negation of *already* is equivalent to the inner negation of *still*, which is truth conditionally equivalent to *not yet*. These markers form a logical square of opposition.

Through the lens of imminence...

(Based on judgements from three native consultants)

- (21) a. Hún er búin að tala við mig.
She is búinn inf talk with me
She has (already) talked to me.
- b. Hún er ekki búin að tala við mig.
She is neg búinn inf talk with me
She has not talked to me yet.

Outline

Introduction/Background

Emergence of anterior

Evidence for underspecification

Proposal Pt. 1: Semantics of source construction

Corpus Investigation

Proposal Pt. 2: Locus/Mechanism of Reanalysis

Outlook / Cross-linguistic Considerations

Outlook

- ▶ My analysis demonstrates that the semanticization of an imminence inference can have different result in different trajectories.
- ▶ Cross-linguistic support for the proposal here comes from other trajectories which appear to involve imminence yet result in anteriority as opposed to prospectivity.
- ▶ i) Danish proximative *færdig*, which originates from a similar lexical source ('prepared') (Gregersen 2021).
- ▶ ii) Lithuanian *baigti* as described in Holvoet (2014), which can have both anterior 'finish' readings as well as proximate/prospective uses, depending on the Aktionsart of the embedded predicate.

Outlook

Gregersen (2021) investigates proximative/prospective ('about to') readings of *færdig* in Danish dialects (ømål, østdansk). Interestingly, this has a very similar lexical source to *búinn* ('be prepared'), and is typically a completive marker in modern Danish/Swedish/Norwegian (as in b, from *Den Danske Ordbog*, cf. Spalek and Sæbø 2019).

- (22) a. de æ færð å ræjn
it is færðig to rain
It is about to rain. (Proximative, Sejerømål)
- b. Er du ikke snart færðig med de bukser?
are you not soon færðig with those pants
Are you not (going to be) finished with those pants soon?

Outlook

Holvoet (2014): Lithuanian *baigti* originates as an aspectual verb meaning 'cease, stop' but has proximative and completive uses in the modern language depending on the Aktionsart of the embedded predicate.

(23) a. gal baigiam pyktis ir
maybe finish.PRS.1PL be.offended.INF and
einam koki-o al-aus?
go.PRS.1PL some-GEN.SG.M beer-GEN.SG
maybe we could **stop** quarreling and go for a beer

b. Šved-as Yngwie Malmsteen [...] jau
Swede-nom.sg Yngwie Malmsteen [...] already
baigia parašyti savo
finish.pres.3 write[pfv].inf refl.poss
autobiografij-ą...
autobiography-acc...
The Swede Yngwie Malmsteen is about to finish his
autobiography...

Outlook

- ▶ Take home message: the development 'be prepared/ready' → resultant state marker can be made sense of in terms of *imminence*.
- ▶ This development parallels the trajectory of proximatives more closely than is typically acknowledged (see however Gregersen 2021; Holvoet 2014).

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