Dutch past tense infinitives and the nature of finiteness

Jan-Wouter Zwart
University of Groningen

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1. Introduction

> the feature [PAST] in infinitives is expressed by perfective morphology

(cf. Hoffmann 1966:8, Palmer 1974:54-55, Landau 2004:838, Stowell 2006)

(1)   John claims to have been asleep when I came in

- analysis of the Dutch tense system
  -definition of the Dutch perfect
  -the relevance of 'aspect'
  -contexts distinguishing past and perfect (finite and nonfinite)
- alternative: infinitival perfect = 'aspect' (no tense in infinitives)
- further aspects:
  -sequence of tense effects
 -the present perfect puzzle
- the nature of finiteness

infinitival perfect can of course also express the perfect (anteriority)

(2)   John expects to have finished the book by noon tomorrow

> STARTING POINTS
>
> - morphosyntactic categories are clause-level operators (functional heads)
> - dependency marking via sisterhood
> - morphological realization as part of Spell-Out

(3)

TENSE ⟶ XP [tense]   *feature sharing*

V_TENSE   *feature realization*
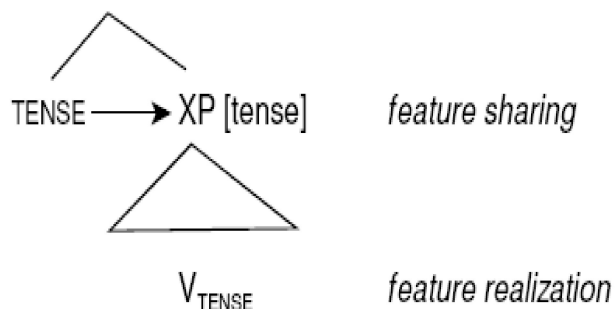
(4)   Ngada   bule-thur   yak-ur   (Lardil)
        I   catch-FUT   fish-FOBJ
   'I will catch the fish.' (Hale 1997:36)

> **a clause is tensed if it realizes a [TENSE] feature opposition
> in the morphology of any of its terms**

2. The Dutch perfect tense

(5)

wandelen 'walk'	SIMPLE TENSE	PERFECT TENSE	
PRESENT	wandel-t walk-PRES.3SG	heef-t have-PRES.3SG	ge-wandel-d GE-walk-D
PAST	wandel-de walk-PAST.SG	had have:PAST.SG	ge-wandel-d GE-walk-D

(6) a. E   (event time, the time during which the event unfolds)
    b. R   (reference time, the time to which adverbs refer)
    c. P   (perspective time, the "now" of temporal deixis, the "here and now")
    (Kiparsky 2002)

(7) PRESENT $E \subseteq R$ (8)
                   $P \subseteq R$

(9) PAST $R—P$ (10)
                   $E \subseteq R$
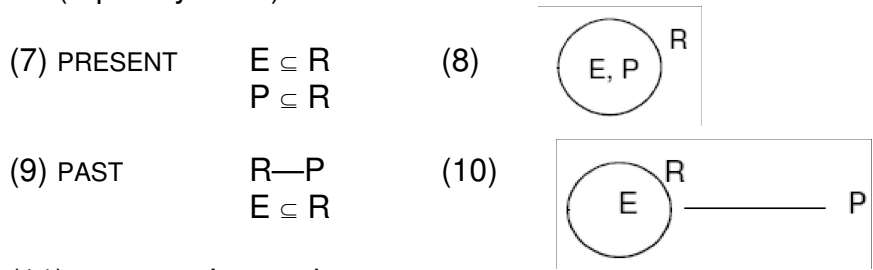
(11)   a.   Jan   slaap-t
               John   sleep-PRES.3SG
               'John is asleep.'

       b.   Jan   sliep / *slaap-t   *toen   ik   binnen   kwam*
               John   sleep:PAST.SG/PRES.3SG   when   I   in   come:PAST.SG
               'John was asleep when I came in.'

(12)   PRESENT PERFECT $E—R$ (13)
                          $R \subseteq P$
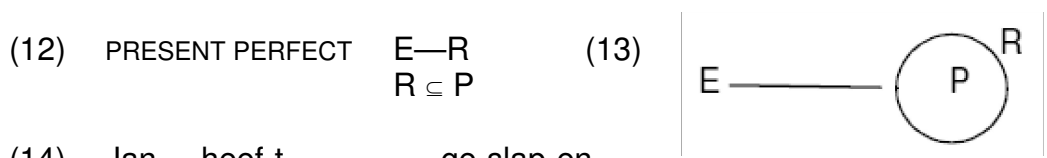
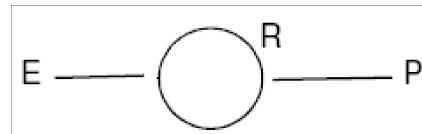(14)   Jan   heef-t   ge-slap-en
       John   have-PRES.3SG   GE-sleep-N
       'John slept.'

(15) * Jan   heef-t   ge-slap-en   *toen ik binnen   kwam*
       John have-PRES.3SG   GE-sleep-N   when   I   in   come:PAST.SG
       'John slept when I came in.'

(16) PAST PERFECT   E—R   (17)
                    R—P

(18) Jan   had   ge-slap-en   *toen ik binnen   kwam*
     John have:PAST.SG   GE-sleep-N   when   I   in   come:PAST.SG
     'John had slept when I came in.'

> DIFFERENCE BETWEEN DUTCH AND ENGLISH PERFECTS
>
> - perfect time span (PTS) runs up to the here and now in English
> - PTS is anterior to the here and now in Dutch (and German)

(19) a. I have lived here for years (*but not anymore)
     b. Ik heb   hier   jaren ge-woon-d   (maar nu niet meer)
        I have:PRES.1SG   here   years GE-live-D   but now not anymore
        'I have lived here for years (, but not anymore).'

(20) Ik woon   hier   al   jaren (*maar nu niet meer)
     I live:PRES.1SG   here   already   years but now not anymore
     'I have lived here for years (, but not anymore).'

Tests bringing out the Universal Perfect (event applies to entire PTS)
(21) I have always lived in Boston   (U-perfect)
(22) For two weeks, John has been in Boston   (U-perfect)
(23) John has always claimed that Mary was brilliant   (U-perfect, no SOT-effect)
(24) John has occasionally claimed that Mary was brilliant (E-perfect, SOT)

(25) Ik heb   altijd   in Boston ge-woon-d
     I   have:PRES.1SG   always   in Boston GE-live-D

     maar nu   woon   ik in Cambridge   (no U-perfect)
     but   now   live:PRES.1SG   I   in Cambridge

     'I have always lived in Boston, but now I live in Cambridge.'

(26) Twee weken   is   Jan   in Boston ge-wees-t
     two   weeks   be:PRES.3SG   John   in Boston GE-be-D

     maar nu   is   hij terug   (no U-perfect)
     but   now   be:PRES.3SG   he back

     'For two weeks, John has been in Boston, but now he is back.'

(27) Jan   heeft   altijd   ge-zeg-d dat   Marie briljant
     John   have:PRES.3SG   always   GE-say-D that Mary brilliant

     was   (SOT-effect)
     be:PAST.SG

'John has always claimed that Mary was brilliant.'

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Dutch perfect = anterior tense

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3. Aspect

- present perfect = tense + aspect ?

- 'aspect' = *not* :
  -SITUATION ASPECT (state, activity, achievement and accomplishment), or
  -VIEWPOINT ASPECT (completed—'perfective'— vs. ongoing—'imperfective')

        but :
  -relation of the eventuality to the Perfect Time Span

- Dutch: PTS precedes the here and now, so 'aspect' reduces to ANTERIORITY

No 'present perfect puzzle' (cf. Pancheva & Von Stechow 2004)
(28) Ik heb   hem   gisteren   ge-zie-n
     I have:PRES.1SG him   yesterday   GE-see-N
     'I saw him yesterday.'

(29) Gisteren   was   het   mooi   weer
     yesterday   be:PAST.SG   it   nice   weather
     'The weather was nice yesterday.'

- perfect entails resulting state (POST-STATE, cf. Musan 2002, Vlach 1993)
  = a function of the PTS preceding the reference time

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the defining property of the Dutch perfect is ANTERIOR TENSE

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4. Past vs. perfect

4.1   Cotemporaneity with a reference point in the past
(30) Jan   beweert   [dat   hij **sliep / *ge-slap-en heeft**
     John   claims   that   he   sleep:PAST / GE-sleep-N have:PRES.3SG

        toen   de telefoon   ging   ]
        when   the phone   go:PAST.SG

'John claims that he was asleep when the phone rang.'

4.2   Ongoing event in the past

(31)   a. Jan   beweer-t   [dat   hij het   boek las   ]
          John   claim-PRES.3SG that   he the   book read:PAST.SG
          'John claims that he was reading the book.' (reading = ongoing)

       b. Jan   beweer-t   [dat   hij het   boek ge-lez-en   heeft   ]
          John   claim-PRES.SG   that   he the   book GE-read-N   have:3SG
          'John claims that he has read the book.' (reading = finished)

4.3 The 'accessibility' reading

(32)   a.   Jan   speel-de   viool *toen de bom   ontplof-te*
             John   play-PAST.SG violin when the bomb explode-PAST.SG
             'John was playing the violin when the bomb exploded.'
             (events include each other)

       b. # Jan   heeft   viool ge-speel-d   *toen de bom*
             John   has:PRES.3SG   violin GE-play-D   when the bomb

             ontplof-te
             explode-PAST.SG

             not: 'John was playing the violin when the bomb exploded.'
             (playing event follows exploding event)

(33)   Jan   heeft   zijn aandelen   ver-kocht
       John   have:PRES.3SG   his stocks   GE-sell:D
       'John sold his stocks...'

a.   ... zodra   ze   op 30 stond-en
            as soon as   they   at 30 stand:PAST-PL
       '...as soon as they did 30.'

b. *   ... zo lang   ze   op 30 stond-en
            as long as   they   at 30 stand:PAST-PL
       '... while they did 30.'

4.4   The lifetime effect

(34)   a.   Scriabin   was   een   genie
             Scriabin   be:PAST.SG   a   genius
             'Scriabin was a genius.' (Scriabin is no longer alive)

       b. ?? Scriabin   is   een   genie   ge-wees-t
             Scriabin   be:PRES.3SG   a   genius   GE-be-D
             'Scriabin has been a genius.'

(35)   Scriabin   is   altijd   een   genie   ge-wees-t
       Scriabin   be:PRES.3SG   always   a   genius   GE-be-D
       'Scriabin has always been a genius.' (Scriabin is still alive)

4.5   The past-shifted reading

(36)   Jan   zei   [dat   hij Chomsky *daarvoor*   al
        John   say:PAST.SG   that   he Chomsky before that   already

        {   **ken-de** / ***ge-ken-d heeft** }   ]
             know-PAST.SG / GE-know-D have:PRES.3SG

        'John said that he already knew Chomsky before that.'

5. The infinitival perfect

5.1   Cotemporaneity with a reference point in the past

(37)   Jan   beweer-t   [ge-slap-en   te heb-ben
        John   claim-PRES.3SG   GE-sleep-N   to have-INF

            *toen   de telefoon   ging   ]
            when   the phone   go:PAST.SG
        'John claims to have been asleep when the phone rang.'

5.2   Ongoing event in the past

(38)   Jan   beweer-t   [het boek ge-lez-en   te heb-ben]
        John   claim-PRES.3SG   the book GE-read-N   to have-INF
        'John claims that he was reading the book.'
        'John claims that he has read the book.'

5.3   The accessibility reading

(39)   Jan   beweer-t   [viool ge-speel-d   te hebb-en
        John   claim-PRES.3SG   violin GE-play-D   to have-INF

            *toen   de bom   ontplofte]
            when   the bomb exploded

        'John claims to have been playing the violing when the bomb exploded.'

(40)   Jan   beweer-t   [zijn aandelen   ver-koch-t   te heb-ben
        John   claim-PRES.3SG   his stocks   GE-sell-D   to have-INF

            zodra / zo lang   ze   op 30 stond-en]
            as soon as/ as long as they   at 30 stand:PAST-PL

        'John claims to have started selling his stock as soons as they did 30.'
        'John claims to have kept selling his stock while they did 30.'

5.4   The lifetime effect

(41)   Scriabin   word-t   ge-acht
        Scriabin   become-PRES.3SG   GE-consider:D

            [een genie   ge-wees-t   te zijn   ]
                 a genius   GE-be-D   to be:INF

'Scriabin is considered to have been a genius.'

5.5   The past-shifted reading

(42) Jan   beweer-de [Chomsky *daarvoor*   al   ge-ken-d
      John   claim-PAST.SG   Chomsky before.that   already   GE-know-D

         te hebb-en   ]
         to have-INF

      'John claimed to have known Chomsky already before then.'

5.6   Conclusion

- the infinitival perfect is used as a nonfinite counterpart to the simple past

(43) a. Jan   beweer-t   [rijk   te zijn   ]
         John   claim-PRES.3SG   rich   to be:INF
         'John claims to be rich.'

     b. Jan   beweer-t   [rijk   *(ge-wees-t) te zijn   *voor*
         John   claim-PRES.3SG   rich   GE-be-D   to be:INF before

            de oorlog]
            the war

         'John claims to have been rich before the war.'

(44) a. Jan   **is** / ***was**   rijk
         John   be:PRES.3SG / be:PAST.SG rich
         'John is rich.'

     b. Jan   **was** / ***is**   rijk   *voor*   *de oorlog*
         John   be:PAST.SG / be:PRES.3SG rich   before   the war
         'John was rich before the war.'

(45)
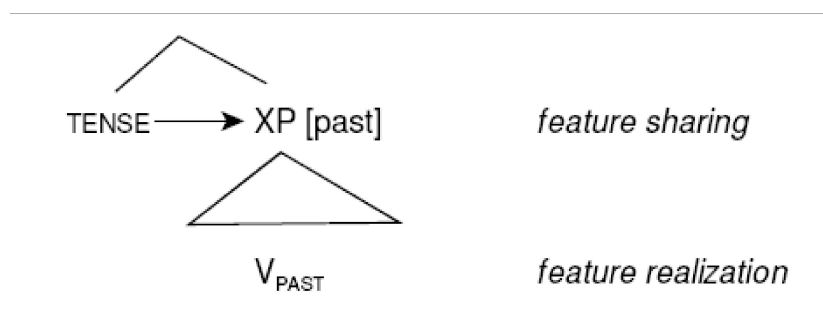
6. An alternative analysis

- infinitives invariably lack tense (Wurmbrand 2007)
- infinitival perfect = aspect – tense, i.e. PURE ANTERIORITY

Argument # 1: relation between Event Time and Reference Time

PAST	E, R
PERFECT	E—R

(37) Jan   beweer-t   [ge-slap-en   te heb-ben
      John   claim-PRES.3SG GE-sleep-N   to have-INF

         toen   de telefoon   ging   ]
         when   the phone   go:PAST.SG

      'John claims to have been asleep when the phone rang.'

(46) * Jan   beweer-t   [te slap-en
         John   claim-PRES.3SG to sleep-INF

            toen   de telefoon   ging   ]
            when the phone   go:PAST.SG
            'John claims to have been asleep when the phone rang.'

Argument # 2: true tenseless infinitives (nominalizations)

(47) [Dat   slap-en   *toen   de telefoon   ging*   ]
          DEM   sleep-INF when   the phone   ring:PAST.SG

            was   een slecht idee
            be:PAST.SG   a bad idea

      'Sleeping when the phone rang was a bad idea.'

(48) [Dat   ge-slap-en   heb-ben *toen   de telefoon   ging*   ]
          DEM   GE-sleep-N   have-INF when   the phone   ring:PAST.SG

            was   een goed idee
            be:PAST.SG   a good idea

      'To have slept when the phone rang was a good idea.'

Argument # 3: absence of resulting state

(49) Jan   liep   naar huis *toen   de bom   ontplof-te*
      John   walk:PAST.SG   to house when the bomb GE:explode-PAST.SG
      'John was walking home when the bomb exploded.'

(50) a. Jan   **is**   naar huis ge-lop-en   (resultative)
         John   be:PRES.3SG to house GE-walk-N
         'John walked home.'

b. Jan **heeft** naar huis ge-lop-en (durative)
John have:PRES.3SG to house GE-walk-N
'John walked home.'

(51) Jan beweer-t naar huis ge-lop-en te { **heb-ben** / *zijn }
John claim-PRES.SG to house GE-walk-N to have-INF / be:INF

toen de bom ontplof-te (durative)
when the bomb explode-PAST.SG

'John claims that he was walking home when the bomb exploded.'

7. Sequence of tense (SOT) effects

(52) John said [that he was sick]

(53) i. the SIMULTANEOUS reading: the event of being sick is cotemporaneous with
the event of John's saying
ii. the PAST-SHIFTED reading: the event of being sick precedes the event of
John's saying

(54) John claims [that he *was* sick]
(55) John says [that he *is* sick]

(56) Jan beweer-de [ziek te zijn ge-wees-t]
John claim-PAST.SG sick to be:INF GE-be-D
'John claims that he was sick.' (✓past shifted / *simultaneous)

(57) Jan beweer-de [ziek te zijn]
John claim-PAST.SG sick to be:INF
'John claims that he was sick.' (✓simultaneous)

● *Does this show that infinitival perfects are not pasts ?*

No, because the embedded clause does not have R—P (= PAST, cf. (9))

The finite past form has a wider use (quasi-past)
(58) *childplay register*
Ik was de vader en jij was de moeder.
I be:PAST.SG the father and you be:PAST.SG the mother

Ja. En ik had een hond en daar
yes and I have:PAST.SG a dog and DEM

was jij bang voor.
be:PAST.SG you afraid for

'[We play that] I am the father and you are the mother. Yes, and [we play that]
I have a dog and you are afraid of it.'

(59) *hypothetical childplay register*
  Ik dacht bang te zijn (*ge-wees-t)
  I   thought afraid to be:INF   GE-be-D
  '[We play that] I figured that I was afraid.'

  irrealis
(60) Ik wou   dat ik rijk   was
  I want:PAST.SG that I rich   be:PAST.SG
  'I wish [lit. wished] I were rich.'

(61) Was   ik maar rijk !
  be:past.sg I but   rich
  'If only I were rich!'

(62) Als   dat eens kon !
  if   DEM once can:PAST.SG
  'If that were possible !'

(63) Ik meen { te wil-len / *ge-wil-d te heb-ben }
  I   think to want-INF GE-want-D   to have-INF

    dat ik rijk   was
    that I rich   be:PAST.SG

  'I think I would like to be rich.'

(64) O,   rijk te zijn   (*ge-wees-t)
  EXCL rich to be:inf   GE-be-D
  'O, to be rich !'

Nonfinite only register
(65) Mij   bang zijn
  I:ACC afraid be:INF
  'I am afraid.'

(66) Hiawatha-s   grootvader dappere krijger ge-wees-t zijn
  Hiawatha-POSS grandfather brave   warrior GE-be-D be:INF
  'Hiawatha's grandfather was a brave warrior.'

(67) Sjimmie erg bang ge-wees-t zijn
  Sjimmie very afraid GE-be-D be:INF
  'Sjimmie was very much afraid.'

8. The present perfect puzzle

given that the present perfect refers to an eventuality in the past (anterior tense), why cannot the exact location in time of the anterior eventuality be made explicit by a time adverbial like *yesterday* ?

(68)   John has left Boston (*yesterday)

(69)   John appears to have left Boston yesterday

(70)   John had (already) left Boston yesterday when I arrived

● General explanation: PTS runs up to the here and now in English (Pancheva & Von Stechow 2004)

● Specific explanation for (69): infinitival clause contains [PAST], not [PERFECT]

(71)   John left Boston yesterday

9. The nature of finiteness

● tense needs to be distinguished from finiteness

(72)   cf. Wiklund 2005: only in [−tense] complement clauses
a. *TMA copying construction*
   han   **försök-te**   o   **skrev**   ett brev   (N. Swedish dialects)
   he   try-PAST   LINK   write:PAST   a   letter
   'He tried to write a letter.'

b. *Participle copying construction*
   han   hade   **kunnat   skrivit**
   he   have:PAST   can:PART   write:PART
   'He had been able to write.'

c. *Pseudocoordinating copying construction*
   han   **satt**   o   **skrev**   dikter
   he   sit:PAST   LINK   write:PAST   poem:PL
   'He was writing poems.'

● tense is not a function/projection of finite morphology

● finiteness requires the presence of a subject

(73)   John buy a house ? (Forget it!)
(74)   John { bought / is buying / will buy } a house
(75)   John tried [PRO to buy a house]

+--+
| finiteness = a particular subject-predicate nexus |
+--+

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Faculty of Arts, PO Box 716, NL-9700 AS Groningen, The Netherlands
www.let.rug.nl/zwart/ ● c.j.w.zwart@rug.nl