

# Alleviating authenticity concerns in Tunica language reclamation

Andrew Abdalian, Tulane University

## Introduction

Tunica is a reawakening linguistic isolate subject to a longstanding revitalization effort. Language learning takes place in academic settings, leading to questions of linguistic purism and authenticity concerns arise.

Can a quantitative analysis of previous native speaker documentation show language change and speaker variation?

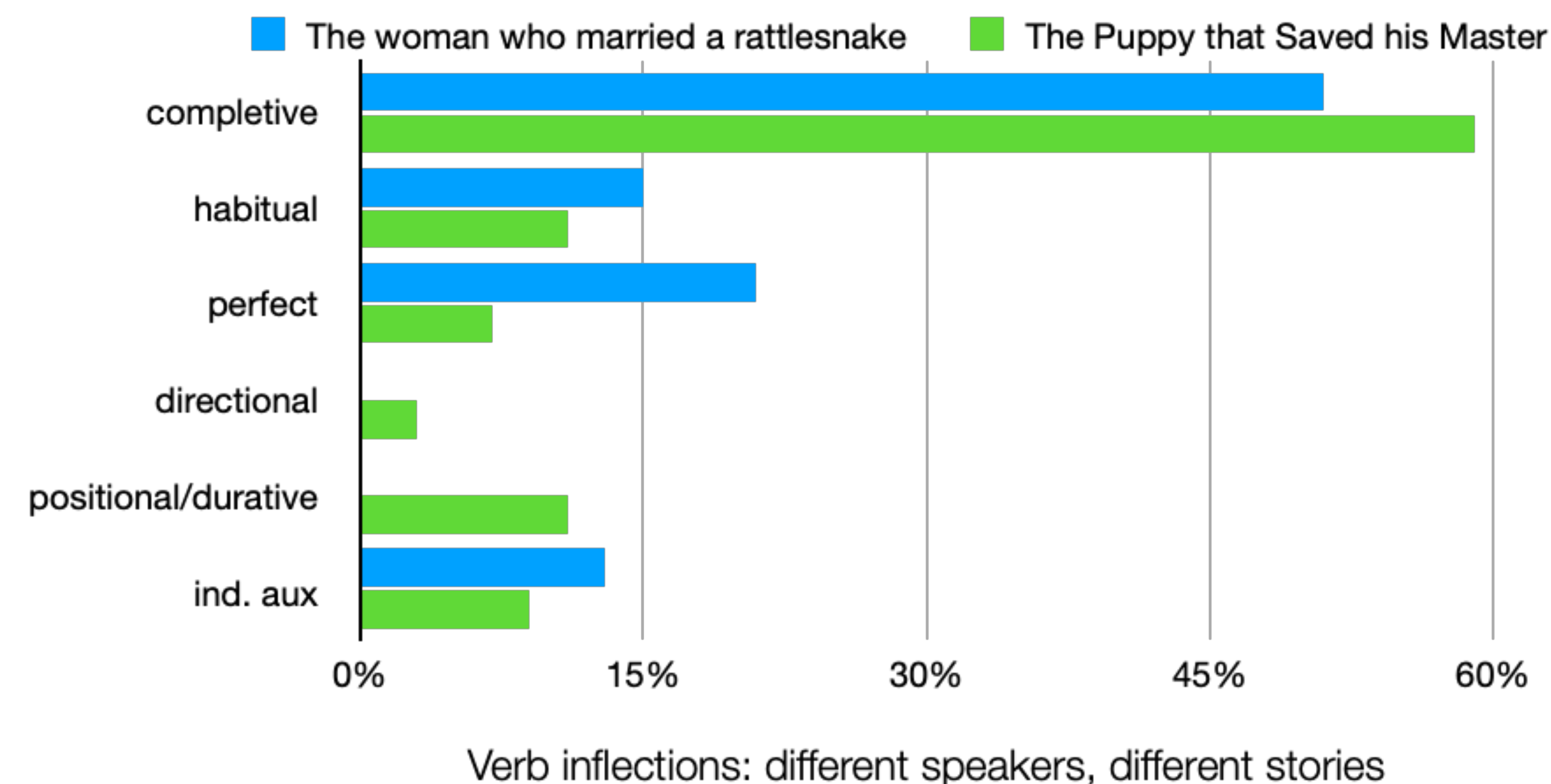
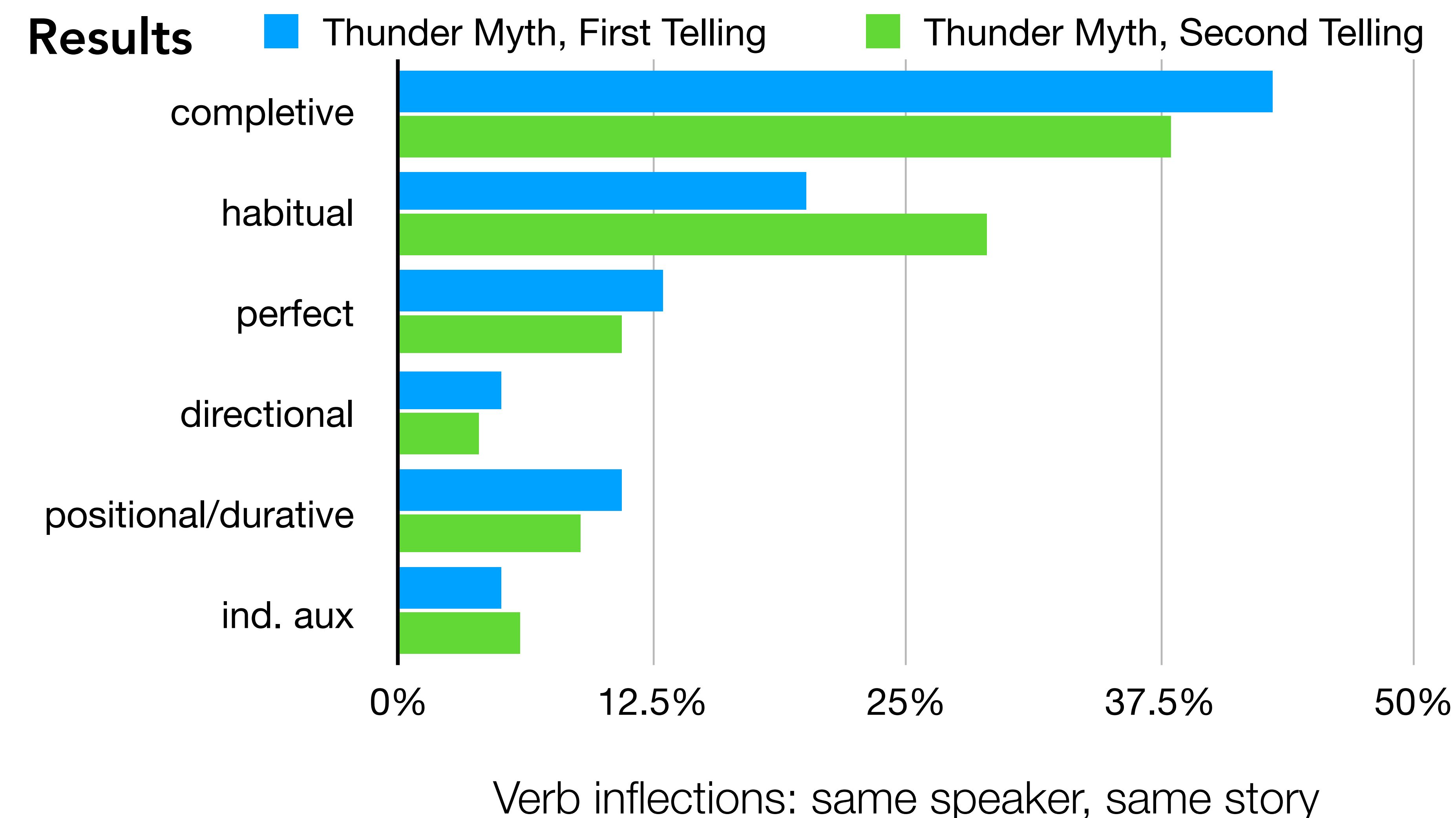
## Materials and methods

- Corpus spanning 50 years and four speakers transcribed and tagged in FLEx
- Python script to parse exported XML
- List of phenomena subject to contention or language change

## Literature cited

Haas, Mary R. 1940. Tunica. Vol. IV. Handbook of American Indian Languages. J.J. Augustin.

## Results



## The Tunica language

- SOV language
- Active/stative
- Aspectual

Examples:

Ashuhkitəpan lətaku  
ashuhki -təpan ləta -ku  
day every run 3ms.HAB  
'He runs every day.'

Təkanuhchisinima kosuhki wohkusina.  
ta- əkanuhchi -sinima nini wohku -sina  
the girl 3fd/p fish to fish 2fd.COMPL  
'The (two) girls fished for fish.'

Toniku uhkher'una.  
Ta- oni -ku uhk- hərə -una  
the boy 3ms 3ms.obj watch 3ms.DUR  
'He was watching the boy.'

## Conclusion

Early results show variation between speakers in different time periods, as well as lesser variation of the same speaker telling the same story. Analyzing more texts against more phenomena will provide stronger data.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks to the Kuhpani Yoyani Luhchi Yoroni (Tunica Language Working Group)

## Further information

Feel free to contact me at [aabdalia@tulane.edu](mailto:aabdalia@tulane.edu)  
To learn more about the Tunica Language Project, visit <https://tunica.wp.tulane.edu/>