A temporal analysis of two evidentials in Rngaba Amdo Tibetan

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- This study analyzes a superficially similar paradigm in **Rngaba [a.ba] Amdo Tibetan**.
  - → **It seems like** two evidentials '-ta'/'-Kə' encode different evidence source, but additionally '-Kə' sometimes expresses a recency of knowing.
  - → **In fact**: they encode the same **evidence strength**, but differ in what temporal information they express.

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'-ta': brown, stale, old knowledge
-Kə: green, fresh, new knowledge

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- In the mirativity literature, very similar paradigms in other languages have been described and formally analyzed (DeLancey 1997, 2001; Rett and Murray 2013 a.o.), why not start with applying those analyses?

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  - → In other words: a mirative evidential would be licensed if the at-issue proposition *p* is **new and totally unexpected** to the speaker's knowledge base at the time of utterance.

However, this common notion is not sufficient to characterize the behavior of '-ta' and '-Kə'

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On a separate note: neither '-ta' nor '-Kə' is strictly tied to "unexpectedness": not encoded in their semantics, so it's also not appropriate to analyzing them as operating with a set of expectations, as in Rett and Murray (2013).

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     - It's non-trivial to define EARLIEST(p) in a formally and philosophically clear manner, and I hold reservations about the attempt by Hirayama and Matthewson (2022). Nevertheless I proceed with an intuitive understanding of this notion, which is accessible in most cases.

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The notion of "recency" is relativized to this strictly defined interval, not a "subjective recency" relative to the speaker's state of mind.

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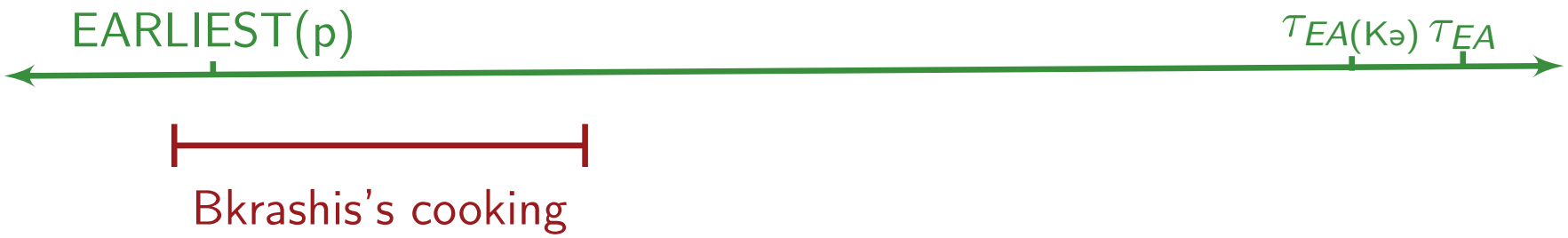

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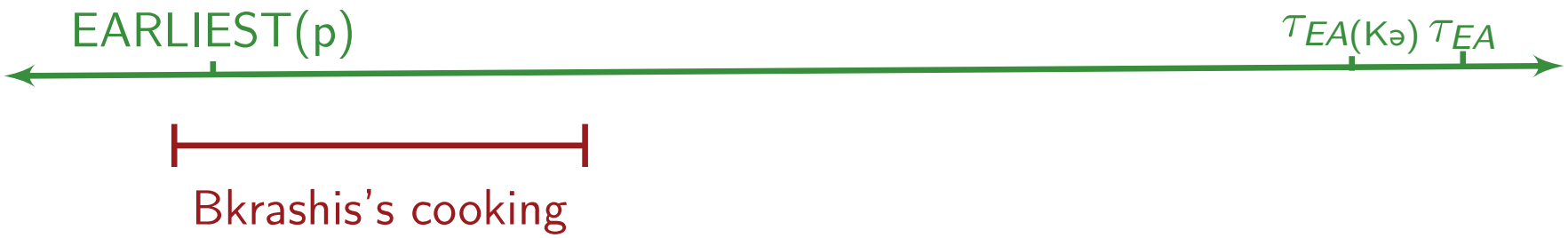

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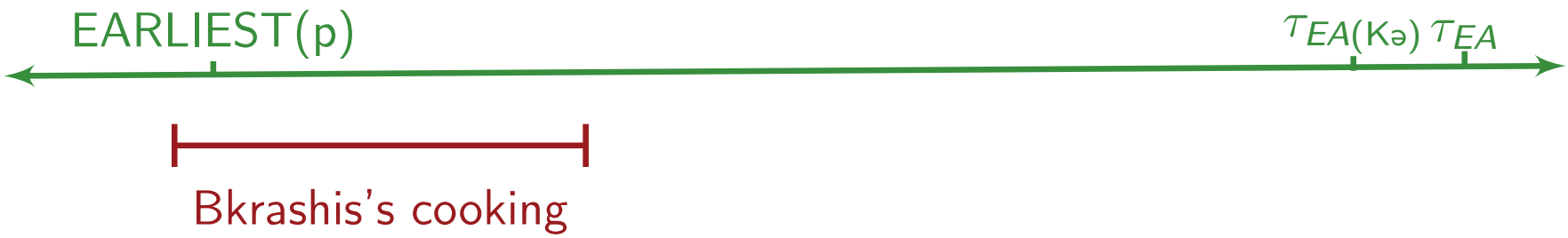

→ A '-Kə' configuration

That '-Kə' expresses indirect evidence is an illusion!

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2.3 Demonstrations: Case 3 – "mirative perfect"

Scenario: The speaker **just** saw Bkrashis **surprisingly** finishing an apple in 10 secs.

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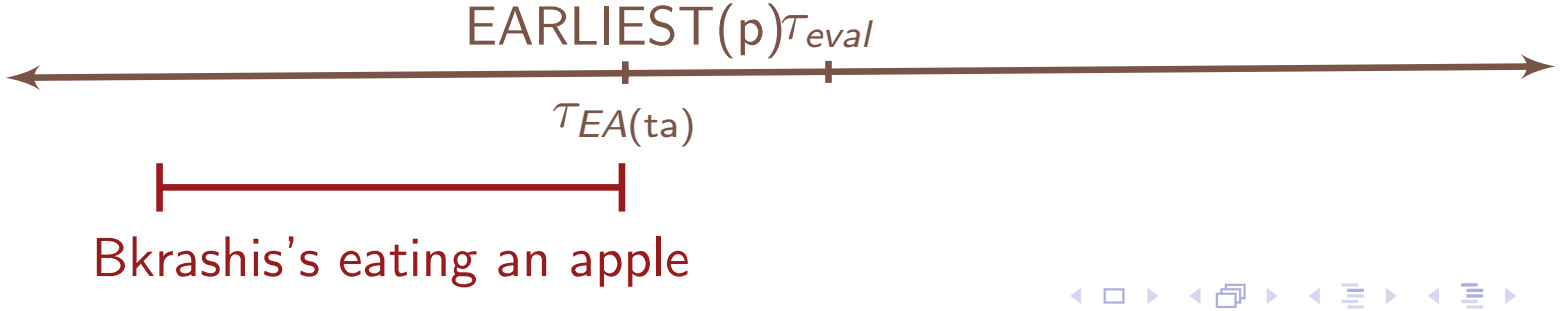

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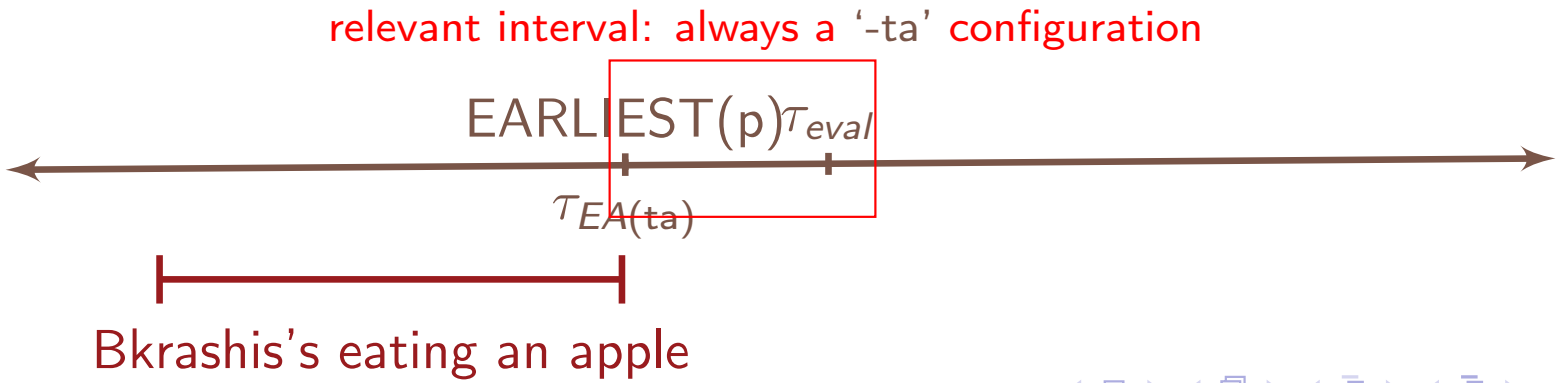

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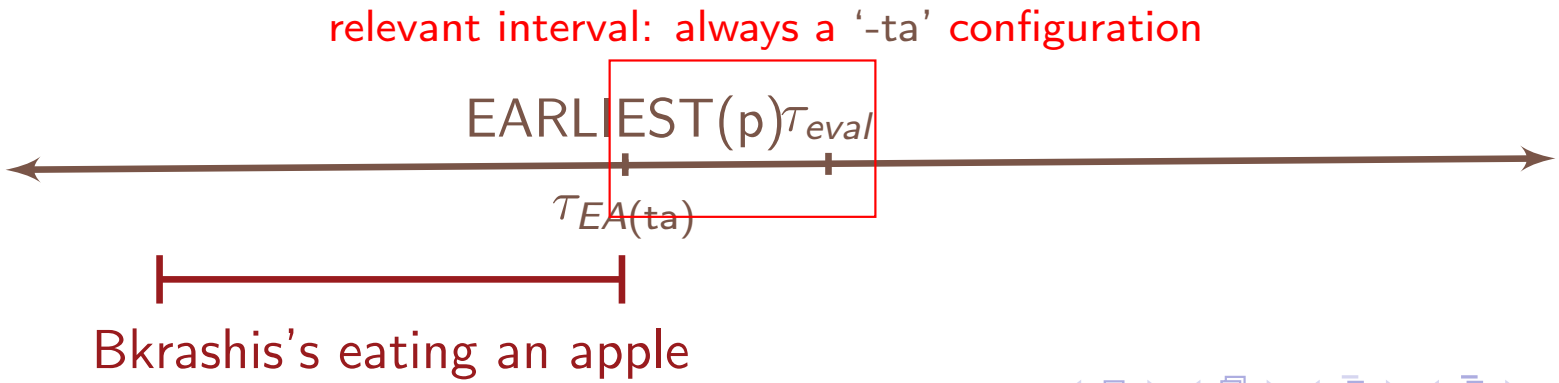

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-Sgrolma replies: Because **Bkrashis was going to cook**!

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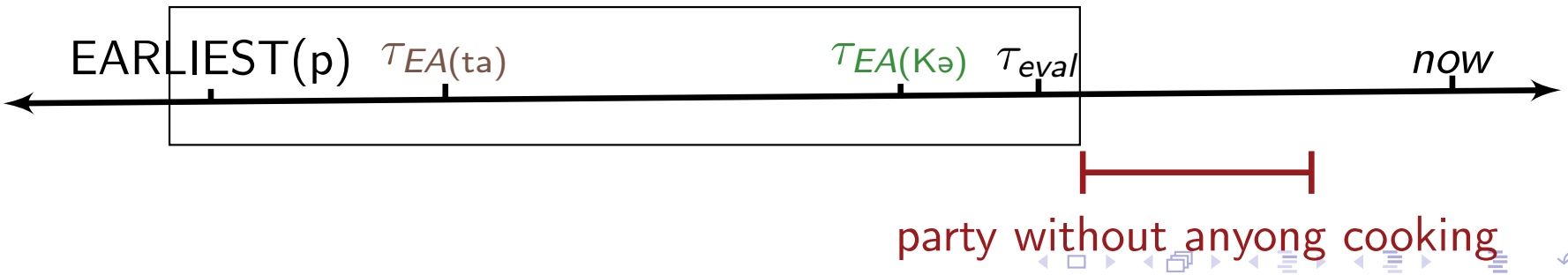

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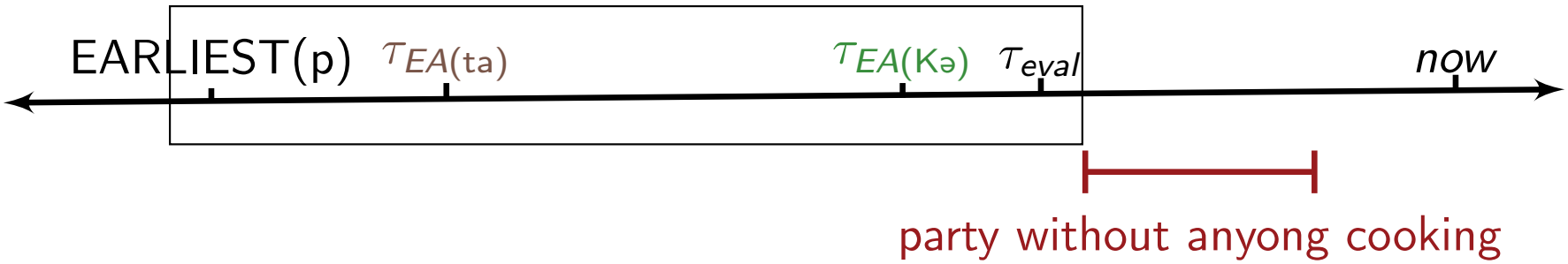

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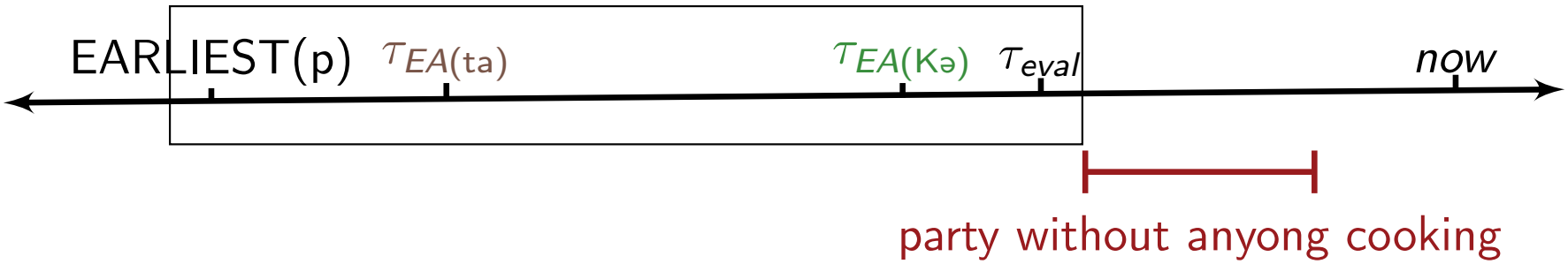

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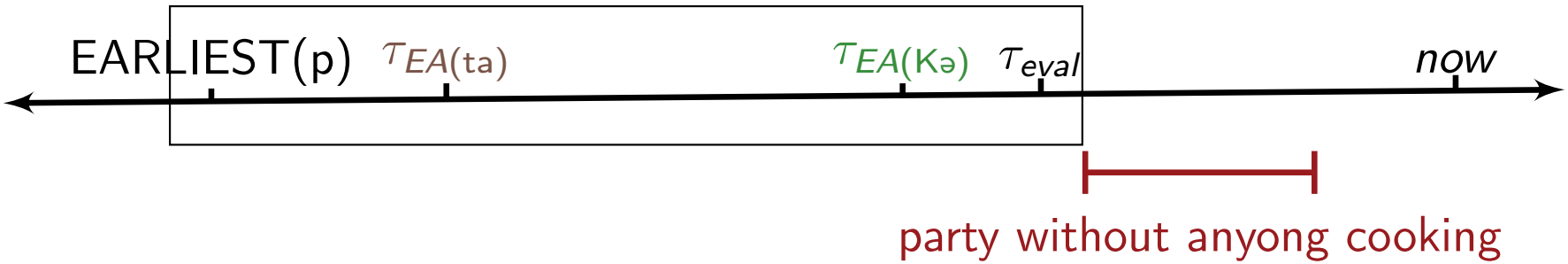

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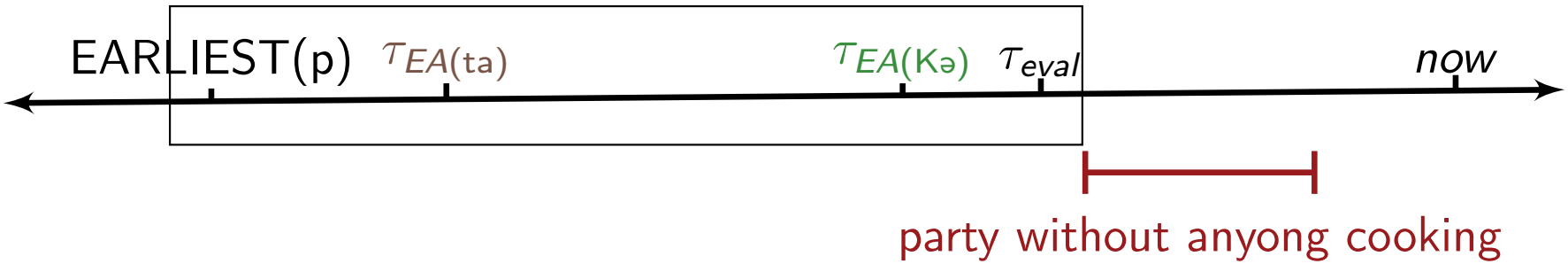

-On the other hand, the use of '-ta' and '-Kə' in this case is correctly predicted by the temporal configurations within this interval defined by EARLIEST(p) and τ_{eval}

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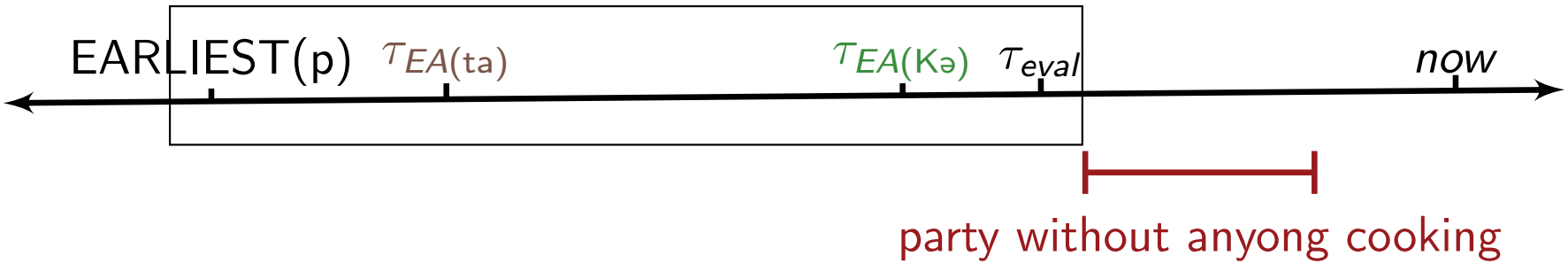

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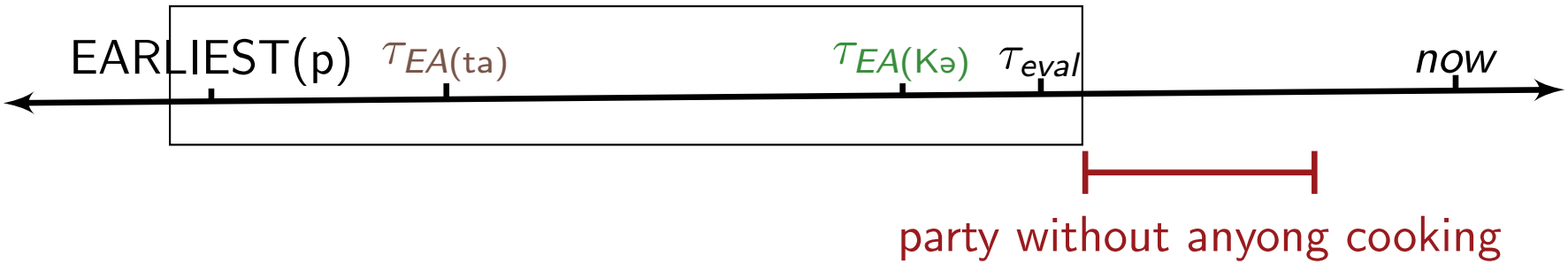

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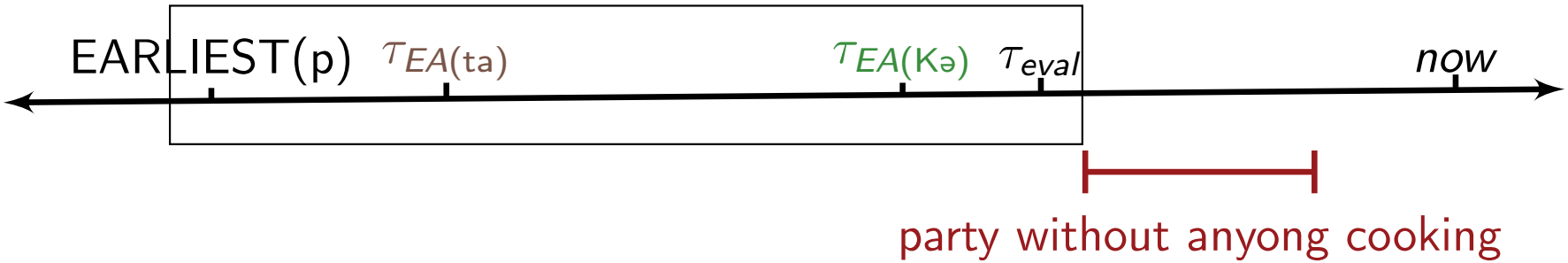

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- (8) can also mean 'Bkrashis is going to cook', given the right context.
- The semantics of '-ta' and '-Kə' indeed makes reference to only τ_{eval}

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- a roster indicating some events isn't usually considered a "direct evidence" in any traditional sense of evidentiality (Anderson 1986; Aikhenvald 2004 a.o.)
- the use of '-ta' and '-Kə' is established as long as the speaker trusts the evidence enough to commit to the truth of p.

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3.4 In this language, the category of evidentiality can be understood as expressing **strong vs weak** evidential, but only strong evidential have two sub-categories encoding different temporal information.

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- Only one **weak evidence** marker '-zə' that doesn't encode any temporal information.

3. Further arguments

3.4 In this language, the category of evidentiality can be understood as expressing **strong vs weak** evidential, but only strong evidential have two sub-categories encoding different temporal information.

- Only one **weak evidence** marker '-zə' that doesn't encode any temporal information.

(9) ptʂa.ɕi-ɣə za.ma li-jot-zə
Bkrashis-ERG food make-EXIST-ZƏ
'Bkrashis made food.'
(spkr's unconfident inference based on smell during the cooking, or some food that could've been made by Bkrashis)

4. Conclusion

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- we presented and analyzed a typologically novel paradigm of evidentiality from Rngaba Amdo Tibetan, regarding two evidentials '-ta' and '-Kə' that encode some temporal information.
- We showed that the temporal information that they encode can't be adequately characterized with the existing notions of "recency" or "mirativity"
- We proposed an explanatory account capturing the nuanced meaning of "information novelty" that they express, which is relativized to two information temporal anchors of the at-issue proposition p.

⟦-ta⟧: "I've known that p shortly after p became true, and it has been a while"

⟦-Kə⟧: "I just learned that p quite some time after p became true, closer to when I'm talking about p"

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Broader picture: typology of the interactions between evidentiality x temporal information

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Broader picture: typology of the interactions between evidentiality x temporal information

- Hirayama and Matthewson (2022) argue that evidentiality isn't always derived from temporal relations – A particular evidential category in a language can idiosyncratically have sub-categories with different temporal meanings.
- This study strengthens this view, and presents a new type of temporal relations involving EARLIEST(p), τ_{EA}, and additionally t_{eval}

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