The future is what the universe wants

Kilu von Prince

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From directives to future assertions in three easy steps

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2SG=POT throw breadfruit DEF-PROX
"Throw this breadfruit down!" (1214)

(2) *nye kyun na=m* ***ka*** *[na=**p** sikya nya wa maga]*
1S just 1S=REAL want 1S=POT touch 3D POT be.fast
"Only I, I wanted to reach them quickly." (0103)

(3) *ki=t me a-tak [**ka** na **w**=ane kimim]*
2P=DIST come LOC.DEM-PROX ASR 1S POT=eat 2P
"...if you come here, I will eat you!" (3135)

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Structure of the talk

Daakaka

- Daakaka is an Oceanic language of Vanuatu, spoken by about one thousand people on the island of Ambrym.
- The basic sentence structure is SVO.
- The core of a finite sentence consists of a subject pronoun, a TAM clitic and the verb:

  (4) *na=m   vyan etes*
       1SG=REAL go   at.sea
       a. "I went to the sea."
       b. "I am going to the sea."
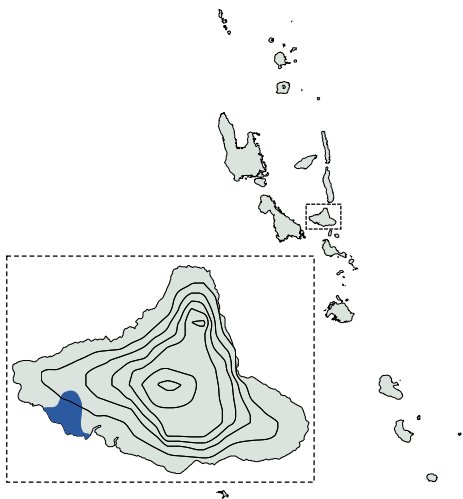
Daakaka: the TAMP system

SBJ.AGR	(=)TAM	(AUX)	(REDUP-)	**Verb**	(-RES)	(=TR)
na, ...	*=m, ...*	*du,pwer*	...	...	...	*=ne*

Table: Structure of the verbal complex in Daakaka

	enclitic	proclitic	monosyllabic
Pos. Realis	*=m*	*mw=*	*mwe/mV*
Neg. Realis			*to*
Pos. Potential	*=p*	*w=*	*wV*
Neg. Potential	*=n*		*nV*
Distal	*=t*	*t=*	*tV*
Open Polarity			*doo*
Change of State			*bwet*

Table: List of TMA markers in Daakaka

Daakaka imperatives

- As in many other languages, bare verb roots can be used in Daakaka to utter an imperative:

  (5) *Me!*
      come
      "Come!"

- The more verbose directives with the potential mood marker also require a subject-agreement marker:

  (6) ***ko=p*** *swave!*
      2SG=POT throw
      "Throw it down!" (1218)

Potential mood prohibitives

(7) ***saka*** *ki=**n*** *tiye nye*
MOD.NEG 2P=NEG.POT kill 1S
"don't kill me" (3183)

(8) *ka na=n* *me kyun, s-ok* *gyesan mwe pwer.*
ASR 1S=NEG.POT come just CL3-1S.POSS work REAL stay
"I should have come, I had work to do."

(9) *ko=n* *peten!*
2S=NEG.POT true
"you have to keep your word" (in a story where the promise will be broken)

Potential mood directives

- The subject of a directive in potential mood does not have to refer to a second person:

  (10) *Te mwe kye ge-kerase ka-ka:*   *'E, ko=p me*
  DISC REAL call REDUP-lie REDUP-say hey 2S=POT come
  da=p   *vyan'*
  1D.IN=POT go
  "So he called him and said to him, lying: 'Hey, come, let's go'"
  (6164)

  (11) ***eye we*** *me*
  knife POT come
  "The knife shall come / give me the knife."

- The directive is then still addressed to a second person.
- The best way to translate these directives into English might involve "let" ("let's go", "let the knife come").

Potential mood directives: are they imperatives?

"By 'imperative' we mean a verb form that is typically used to convey directive force, and is not typically used in subordinate roles (distinct from infinitives and subjunctives)" (von Fintel & Iatridou, submitted)

– there is probably a lesson here about the difficulty of applying labels cross-linguistically in general (cf. Haspelmath, 2012), and specifically when it comes to infinitives and subjunctives (Landau, 2004; Nikolaeva, 2007; Quer, 2009).

Potential mood in future assertions

Assertions are structurally more complex than directives:

(12)   *'Ki=**p** du a-tak,   [na=**p** kueli vyan liye ok   bosi.]'*
        2P=POT stay LOC.DEM-PROX 1S=POT return go   take 1S.POSS chisel
        "You stay here, I will go back (let me go back) and take my chisel"
        (5118)

(13)   *(**ka**) nye **ka** na=**p**   ka*
        ASR 1S ASR 1S=POT fly
        "I will fly away" (4994)

(14)   *yaapu **ka** **we** seling   me*
        god   ASR POT descend come
        "[...] God will come down to us" (0369)

Directive = assertion - *x*

(15)   *yaapu **ka** **we** seling   me*
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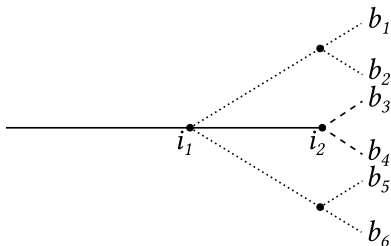
$$\forall h : h \in R_H.\exists i \in h, i \in R_I, i_j < i.\phi(i)$$ ▸ Jump to assumptions

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$$\lambda h : h \in R_H. \exists i \in h, i \in R_I, i_j < i.\phi(i)$$

Theoretical assumptions

$$\forall h : h \in R_H. \exists i \in h, i \in R_I, i_j < i. \phi(i)$$

In contrast to previous work (Thomason & Gupta, 1980; Tedeschi, 1981; Placek & Müller, 2007; Ippolito, 2003, 2013), I assume that quantification over branches/ histories is not restricted to those branches that pass through the actual present i_c.

# Directives: modal assertions or to-do-list material?

- If the assumptions made so far are correct, then which side does the Daakaka data come down on in the debate about the nature of imperatives?
- I will argue that it is compatible with more than one view, but I favor the to-do-list view.

Adding sets of histories to to-do-lists

$\langle s, t \rangle$

$\langle s, \langle e, t \rangle \rangle$

Common Ground
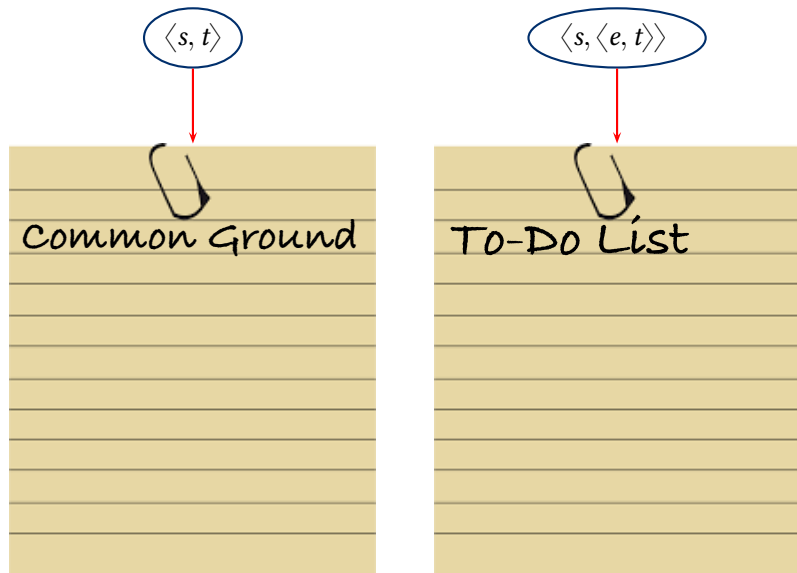
To-Do List

(cf. Portner, 2005, 2007)

Adding sets of histories to to-do-lists

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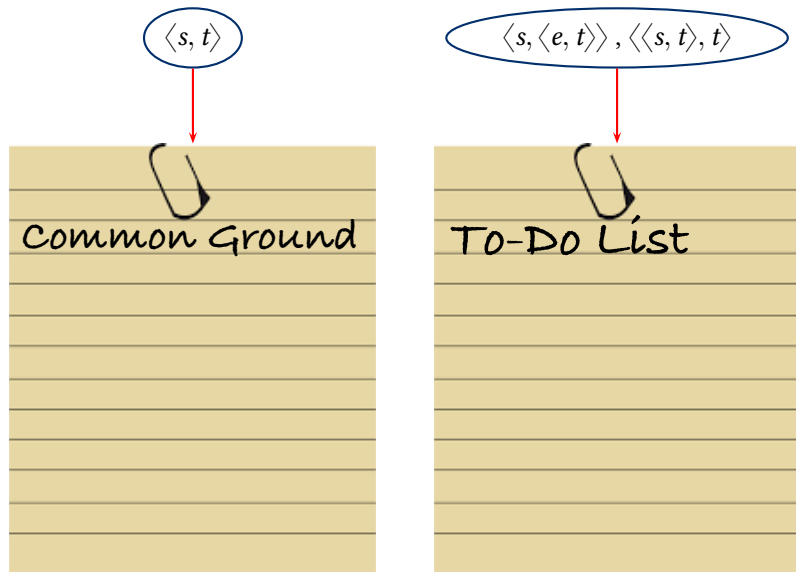
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- …

Directives as modal assertions

XP
├── X
│   └── IMP
└── TP
    └── $\lambda h : h \in R_H. \exists i \in h, i \in R_I, i_j < i.\phi(i)$
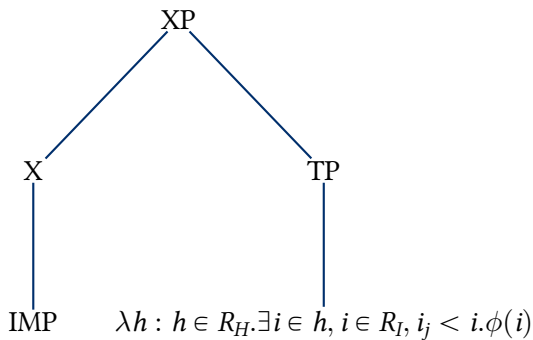
- such that IMP implies that the speaker has a preference for histories in H,
- and where the speaker has to believe that some continuations of the actual history h_c are in H and some are not, IMP involves a preference-related ordering source, ...(Kaufmann, 2012; Condoravdi & Lauer, 2012)

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- What restricts the range of meanings a mood head can have?
- We might expect a much wider range of variation between languages in terms of their speech acts than we actually see.
- The difference in complexity between directives and future assertions, which appears to be consistent cross-linguistically (if there is a difference in complexity, the directive is usually the less complex category), would not be accounted for.

- Judging from their forms, potential mood directives in Daakaka are just like future assertions minus *x*.

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Interim conclusions

- Judging from their forms, potential mood directives in Daakaka are just like future assertions minus *x*.
- I suggested that *x* was a universal quantifier over histories and that potential mood directives were just sets of histories.
- I have argued that this assumption is compatible with different views on imperatives but that a to-do-list approach was preferable for architectural reasons.

Potential mood embedded under *ka* "say, want, think"

(17) *tomo mwe **ka** nge wuk   **ka**   **we** vyan nii*
     rat   REAL say 3s already MOD POT go   hide
     "Rat said he wanted to hide first." (1454)

(18) *mwe **ka**   **we** pwer kuon*
     REAL want POT sleep just
     "He just wanted to sleep" (1614)

(19) *nye kyun na=m   **ka**   na=**p**   sikya nya wa maga*
     1s just 1s=REAL want 1s=POT touch 3D POT be.fast
     "Only I, I wanted to reach them quickly." (0103)

What the universe wants

The assertion marker *ka* can be preceded by a realis marker. However, the realis marker only ever precedes a predicate.

(20) *te   timy-an   t-en   yas-en   **ma ka***
      DISC father.of-3s.POSS and-3s.POSS mother.of-3s.POSS REAL want

      *ye=**p**   tiye tyu   swa*
      3D=POT kill chicken one
      "the father and the mother will kill a chicken." (1643)

(21) *te   pyaavep kevene ngok a   vyanten ke-kevene   **ma ka***
      DISC afternoon every 2s   and man   REDUP-every REAL want

      *ki=**p**   du nyur-nyur-ane   nye bili na   ka   yaa te   vyan*
      2P=POT stay REDUP-think-TRANS 1s   time COMP MOD sun DIST go
      every afternoon you and every man you will think of me when the
      sun goes down (2548)

(22)   *te pyaavep kevene ngok a   vyanten ke-kevene*   **ma ka**
       DISC afternoon every 2s   and man   REDUP-every REAL want
       *ki=**p** du nyur-nyur-ane   nye bili na   ka   yaa te   vyan*
       2P=POT stay REDUP-think-TRANS 1s   time COMP MOD sun DIST go
       every afternoon you and every man you will think of me when the
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(23) *[or   mwe myaek], mwe pwer te   ma ka na w=esi   apyang*
      place REAL be.night REAL stay DISC REAL say 1S POT=see fire
      en-te   bwe mwe me   ma ge=vi
      DEF-MEDIAL CONT REAL come REAL like=what
      "It was night, he stayed and said: 'I want to see how this fire is coming [about].'" (3594)

(24) ***ko=m*** *ongane ma ge   myane uli-sye   te pwer, ko=m*
      2S=REAL hear   REAL be.like with skin-3S.POSS DIST stay 2S=REAL
      doko-ne   mwe yas   na   mwe yas
      pull-TRANS REAL strong COMP REAL strong
      "it feels as if it had a skin, you pull it, it's very strong" (6011)

- Potential mood directive:
  $\lambda h : h \in R_H. \exists i \in h, i \in R_I, i_j < i.\phi(i)$
- *ka* "want" with complement clause:
  $\forall h' : h' \in \mathrm{WANT}_{\mathbf{a}, i_1}, i_1 < i_c. h' \in \{h | \exists i \in h : i \in R_I, i_1 < i.\phi(i)\}$
- future assertion: $\forall h : h \in R_H. \exists i \in h, i \in R_I, i_j < i.\phi(i)$

Complementizer *ka*: Talking about possibilities

...there is also a complementizer/ serial verb *ka*, which is probably not a universal quantifier over histories, because it is essential in statements about possibilities:

(25) *ko=m*   **kuowilye ka**   *ko=p*   *kuo a-te*
      2s=REAL know   COMP 2s=POT run LOC.DEM-MEDIAL
      "You can go there" (0111)

(26) *ka ...kuli*   *vis*   *en-te*   *wa* **wese**   **ka**   **w=i**
      ASR edible.part.of weapon DEF-MEDIAL POT be.enough COMP POT-
      lim
      COP five
      "there might be five bullets" (6361)

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