

Introduction

- ▶ The Daakaka distal marker can express a variety of meanings, depending on the context. In this poster, I outline my proposal for its lexical definition.
- ▶ In particular, I argue that the discontinuous interpretation for the actual past is an implicature derived by the paradigmatic contrast to the realis marker.
- ▶ Two of its prominent interpretations are illustrated below:
- ▶ Actual, discontinuous past, matrix clause:

(1) *meu=an na nenyu te melulum, melulum, a*
live=NM ATT yesterday DIST quiet quiet but
meu=an na doma mwe yas
live=NM ATT today REAL hard
'the life of the past was easy, it was easy, but the life of today is hard'

- ▶ Counterfactual future:

(2) *Nye na bwe dimyane ka ebya-ok we pwer kyun,*
1S 1S CONT want MOD wing-3S.POSS POT stay just
na-t ka pini or.
1S-DIST fly fill place
'I wish I had wings, I would fly around everywhere.'

About Daakaka

- ▶ Daakaka is an Oceanic language with around 1000 speakers on the island of Ambrym, Vanuatu.
- ▶ The basic sentence structure is SVO.
- ▶ The core of a finite sentence consists of a subject pronoun, a TAM clitic and the verb:

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

- ▶ The TMA system is mood prominent.
- ▶ The data come from my own fieldwork in the context of a DoBeS documentation project from 2009-2012.
- ▶ The basic system of TMA markers is shown below:

	enclitic	proclitic	monosyllabic
Positive Realis	=m	mw=	mwe/mV
Negative Realis			to
Positive Potential	=p	w=	wV
Negative Potential	=n		nV
Distal	=t	t=	tV

Table: The main TAMP markers of Daakaka (cf. von Prince, 2015)

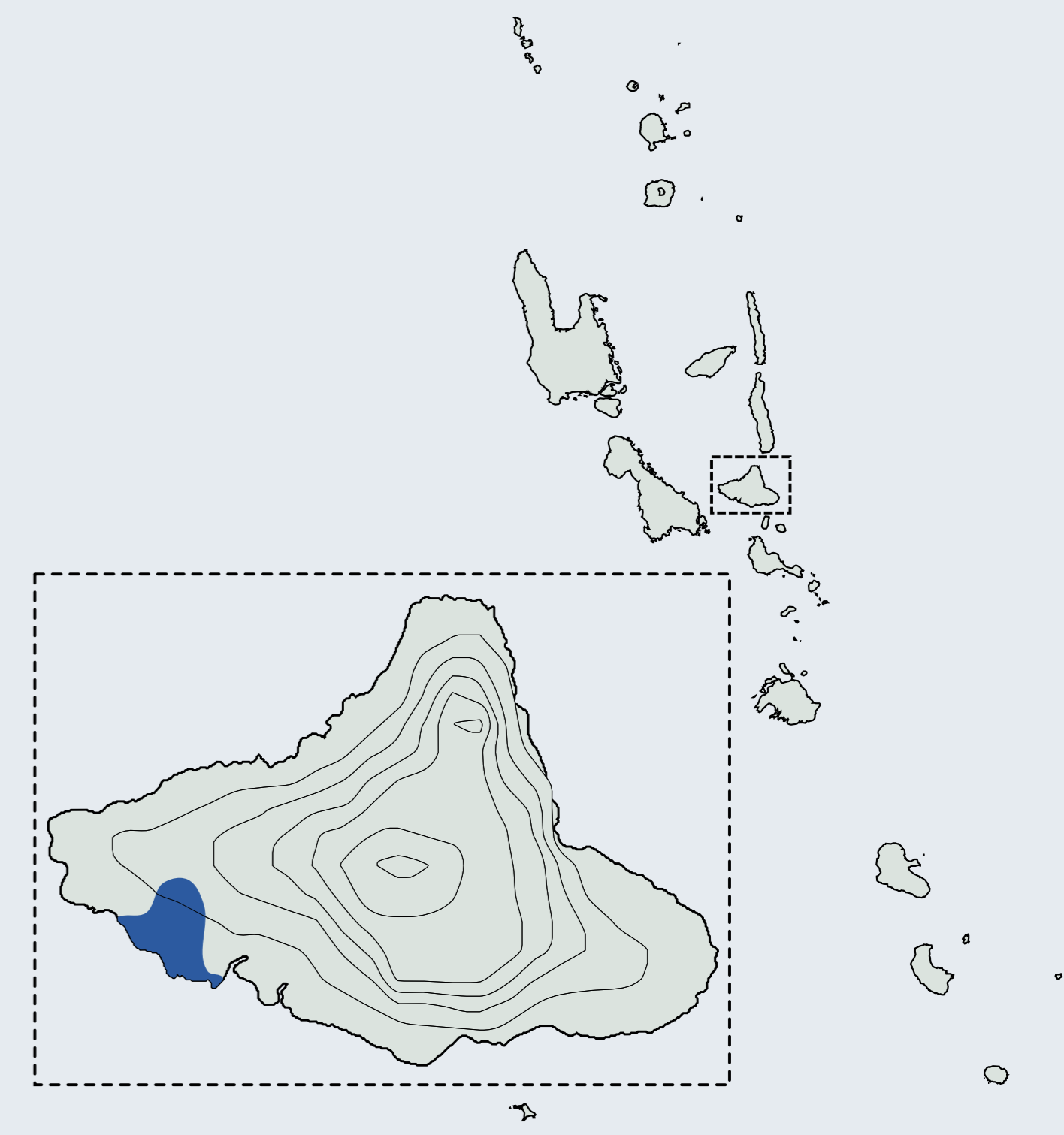
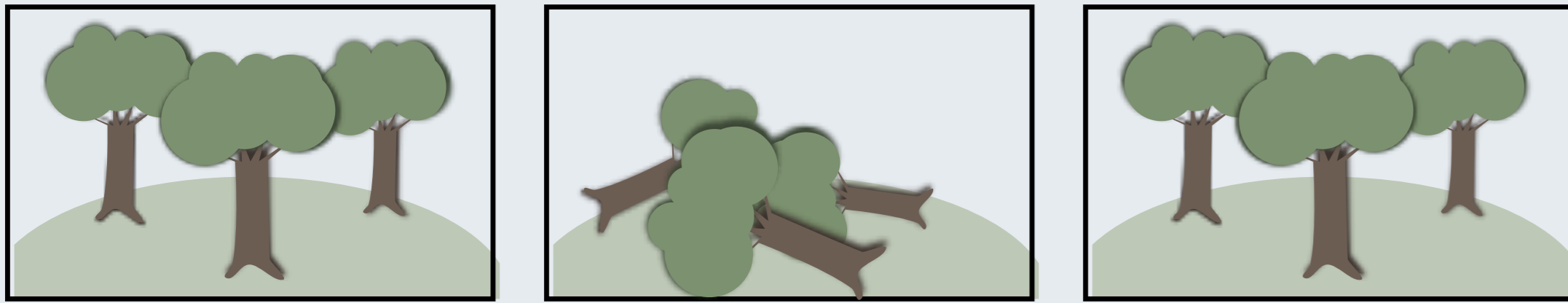


Figure: The area where Daakaka is spoken.

The Discontinuity Effect

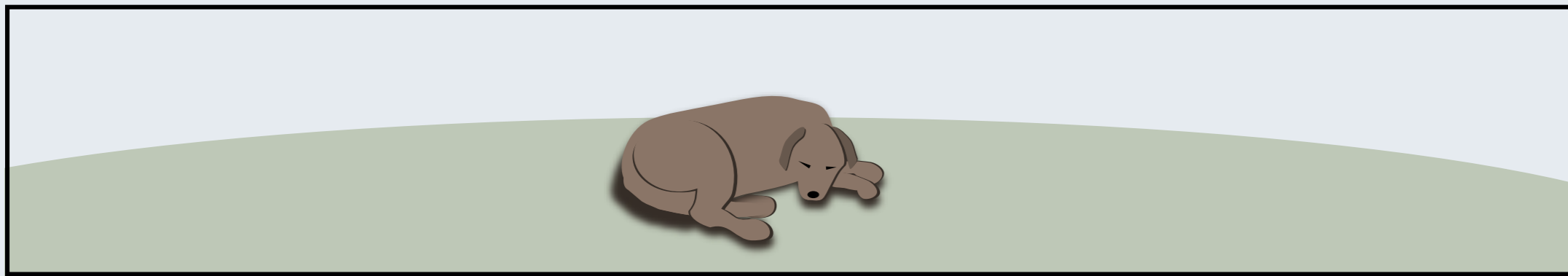
- ▶ The distal does not necessarily imply that something is not the case in the present.

(4) *Lee nyoo na ma tesi=te ma ge myane [na tu du].*
tree 3P COMP REAL fall=MED REAL like with COMP DIST
'The trees which had fallen were like they had been before (standing up again).'



- ▶ The distal marker is also used in the protasis of conditional and temporal clauses. In these contexts, the discontinuity effect appears to be cancelled.

(5) *ko=t luwuo kuli swa [ka t=i kuli melipro], ko=m esi melipro*
2SG=DIST feed dog one MOD DIST=COP dog lax 2SG=REAL see lax
sa pwe pwer...
TOP CONT stay
'If you raise a dog, if it's an easy-going dog, you see it lying around idly...' (generic)



General Assumptions

- ▶ I assume a branching-times framework, as defined by Thomason (1984).

Definition Branching Times

A branching-times frame \mathfrak{U} is a pair $\langle I, < \rangle$, where

1. I is a non-empty set of indices i ;
2. $<$ is an ordering on I such that if $i_1 < i$ and $i_2 < i$, then either $i_1 = i_2$, or $i_1 < i_2$, or $i_2 < i_1$.

An index i_1 is called a **predecessor** of i_2 iff $i_1 < i_2$; it is a **successor** of i_2 iff $i_2 < i_1$

- ▶ In contrast to most previous work in the branching-times framework (an exception is Krifka 2013), I do not assume that quantification over histories is restricted to those histories that are actual up to the actual present i_c .
- ▶ The result is a branching structure with a three-way distinction into the actual, the counterfactual and possible futures.
- ▶ The distal can then be defined in terms of its relation to the actual present.

Definition: the distal

$\llbracket \text{DIST} \rrbracket = \lambda i. i \neq i_0$

- ▶ What keeps this very broad definition from over-generating are a set of pragmatic principles that govern interpretation.

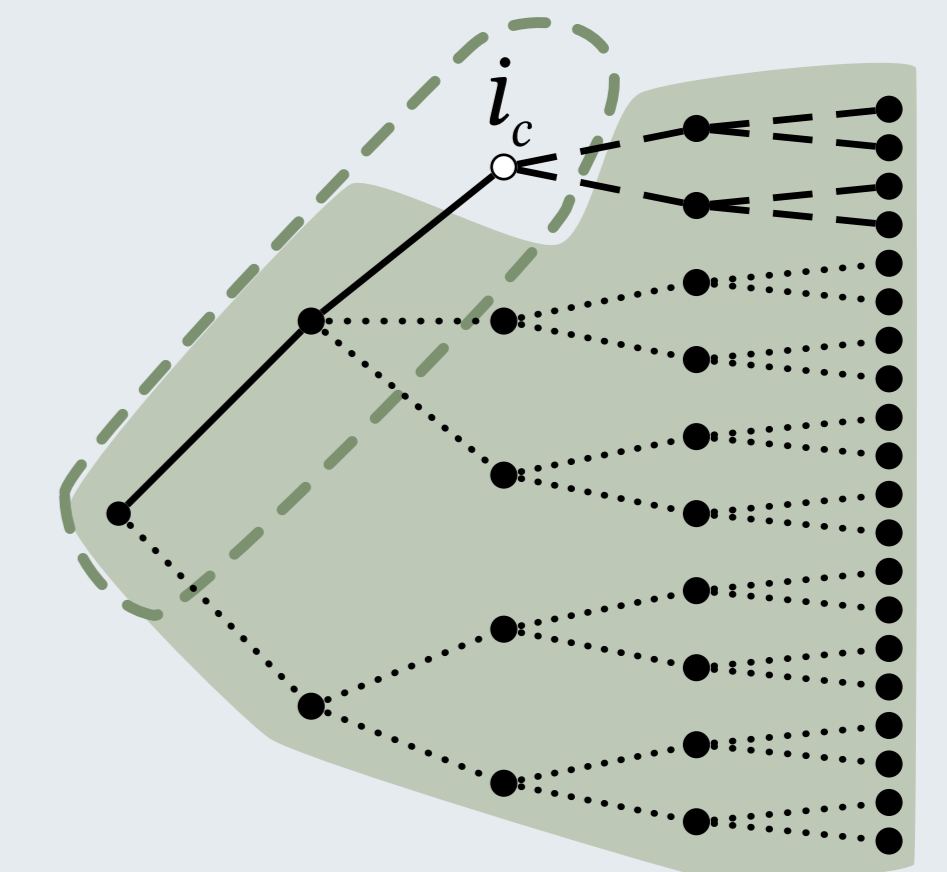


Figure: solid: the actual past and present; dashed: the possible futures; dotted: the counterfactual domain; shaded green: distal; dashed green: realis

Pragmatic principles restricting TAM expressions

- ▶ **Simplicity Principle of Interpretation (SPI)** (Smith *et al.*, 2007, 60): Choose the interpretation that requires the least information added or inferred.
- ▶ **Simplicity Hierarchy of temporal references** (cf Mucha, 2015, 69):
present > past > future
- ▶ **Simplicity Hierarchy of Modal-Temporal Domains**:
actual present > actual past > possible futures > counterfactual past/present/futures

Analysis

- ▶ Plungian & van der Auwera (2006) establish *discontinuous past* as a cross-linguistically widespread category.
- ▶ Cable (n.d.) argues for Tlingit that the discontinuity reading is pragmatically determined rather than semantically.
- ▶ I argue that the discontinuity reading of the distal in Daakaka derives from its contrast to the realis marker.
- ▶ For this to work, I need to make two **additional assumptions**:

Definition: the realis

$\llbracket \text{REAL} \rrbracket = \lambda p. \forall h \in \{h | i_0 \in h\}. \exists i. p(i), i \leq i_0$

Simplicity Principle of Production (SPP)

Always choose the TAM marker quantifying over the narrowest possible modal-temporal domain.

▶ Deriving the discontinuity implicature

1. By SPP, if the speaker simply wants to talk about the actual past, she should use the realis marker: $|\{i | i \leq i_0\}| < |\{i' | i' \neq i_0\}|$
2. By SPI, the default interpretation for the distal marker is a reference to the actual past.
3. Then, the violation of SPP triggers the discontinuity implicature.

▶ Cancelling the discontinuity implicature in conditionals

1. The lexeme *ka* "if" takes its protasis in element of type $\langle s, t \rangle$.
2. The realis marker, however, is of type $\langle \langle s, t \rangle, t \rangle$.
3. A realis clause can therefore not serve as the protasis of a conditional clause. There is therefore **no competition** between the realis and the distal marker in these environments.

Further implications



The tripartite distinction created by the branching-times model (without Thomason's restriction on quantification) allows for a new understanding of counterfactuality.

- ▶ The Daakaka distal and Iatridou's *exclusion feature EF*
- ▶ The definition of the distal is reminiscent of Iatridou's exclusion feature for English simple past (ESP).

Iatridou (2000)

ESP: $T(x)$ excludes $C(x)$; where T is either the topic time or topic world and C is either the world or the time of utterance.

- ▶ ESP differs from the Daakaka distal however in several ways. For example, English simple past cannot refer to possible futures. The Daakaka distal can do this (only in the protasis of future conditionals):

(6) #If I took the train tomorrow, I will arrive before noon.

(7) [*ka lisesep te me*], *te nye ka na=p*
SUBCONJ lisesep DIST come CONJ 1S MOD.REL 1S=PO
ka
fly
'if the lisesep comes, then I will fly away' (sto31:38)

- ▶ This particular difference could be accounted for in terms of a difference in definitions:

English simple past: first approximation

$\llbracket \text{ESP} \rrbracket = \lambda i. i \not\leq i_0$

- ▶ How do you do counterfactual conditionals?
- ▶ Differently (from the Lewis-Kratzer tradition):

Definition: *ka* "if"

$\llbracket \text{if} \rrbracket = \lambda p_{\langle s, t \rangle} \lambda q_{\langle s, t \rangle}. H_p \subseteq H_q$, where
 $H_\phi = \{h | h \in R_H, \exists i \in h. \phi(i)\}$

- ▶ A counterfactual conditional is a conditional about counterfactual indices.
- ▶ Similarity to the actual world is a pragmatic requirement, not part of the semantics.
- ▶ As a consequence, it is not possible to determine the truth of a counterfactual conditional from facts about the actual world.

References

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