

A modal analysis of Kimaragang frustratives

Like the Tagalog particle *sana*, the particle *dara* in Kimaragang has both frustrative and optative uses. Frustrative uses include: failed attempts, unfulfilled desires or intentions (1a-b), frustrated expectations (1c), former states that no longer obtain (1d), things done in vain, etc. The particle also appears in the apodosis of counterfactual conditionals (1e). A strikingly similar range of uses is reported for frustratives in other languages, including Tolkapaya (Hardy & Gordon 1980), Tohono O’odham (Hale 1969, Copley 2005), and St’át’imcets (Davis & Matthewson 2016). This paper offers a preliminary analysis of the meaning of *dara*, focusing primarily on the frustrative uses. (The optative use of *dara* is much less frequent.)

Frustrative *dara* normally marks frustrated expectation or intention, and expectation and intention are modal concepts, related to epistemic and bouletic modality respectively. I assume that expectations and intentions are derived from a CONVERSATIONAL BACKGROUND in the sense of Kratzer (1981, 1991). This conversational background is determined by the context of the utterance and consists of two parts: a modal base which identifies “accessible worlds”, and an ordering source which ranks those worlds according to contextually relevant criteria. When *dara* is used to express frustrated expectation, the ranking will be determined by what is known about the real world, as with epistemic modality. For frustrated intention, the ranking will be determined by the desires or purposes of the agent, as with bouletic modality.

I propose that *dara* is a marker of modal necessity (universal quantification over possible worlds), which indicates that some salient proposition is true in all “optimal” (i.e., highest-ranked) accessible worlds, and at the same time triggers the presupposition that the real world is not optimal in this sense, i.e., that this salient proposition is not actualized in the real world at the time of speaking. This proposal is intended to cover both optative and frustrative uses, but only the frustrative is discussed in any detail. The optative reading arises when the Topic Time of the *dara* clause is in the future. The frustrative reading is only possible for TT in the present or past, because it cannot be known at the time of speaking that a future situation will not be actualized.

The vast majority of frustrative constructions in naturally occurring speech appear within multi-clausal sentences. (Similar facts are reported for frustratives in other languages as well.) One such pattern is the counterfactual conditional illustrated in (1e), which has the form: *if p, then q dara*. Following Kratzer’s (1986) analysis of conditionals, the antecedent clause *p* gets interpreted as part of the restriction on the universal quantification, and thus helps to determine the epistemic modal base. So in this example, accessible worlds *w* are those which are consistent with what is known about the real world except for the fact that ‘the field was plowed yesterday’ is true in *w*.

The interpretation of other types of sentences which contain frustrative clauses is generally derived pragmatically. By hypothesis, the *dara* clause expresses an assertion of modal necessity (universal quantification over possible worlds). The conversational background which restricts this quantification is determined by context. The other clauses in the sentence are part of the linguistic context of the *dara* clause, and thus frequently contribute to the determination of the conversational background.

The most common frustrative sentence pattern, *p dara but q*, is illustrated in (1a). The *dara* clause (‘speaker kills that cobra *dara*’) expresses a proposition which is asserted to be true in all optimal worlds, i.e., worlds in which relevant circumstances of the reference world hold true and in which the desires or intentions of the agent are fulfilled as completely as possible. The ‘but’ clause (‘Father forbade me’) describes a frustrating circumstance which explains why the expected proposition remains unrealized in the real world, i.e., why the real world is not optimal.

The circumstantial modal base which is chosen must block worlds in which this frustrating circumstance is true; such worlds must be classified as inaccessible. So what gets added to the modal base is the negation of the ‘but’ clause. The resulting interpretation of (1a) might be informally stated as follows:

asserted: Father forbade me to kill that cobra, and for all worlds w in which the relevant circumstances of the actual world hold true, except that *not q* (so Father did not forbid me to kill that cobra in w), and in which the desires and intentions of the relevant agent (speaker) are fulfilled as closely as possible, p (‘speaker kills the cobra’) is true in w .

presupposed: speaker does not kill the cobra

=====

(1) a. Patayon ku *dara* ilo’ masalong nga’, tiniag oku di=ama.
kill.NPST 1sg FRUST that cobra but forbid.PST 1sg GEN=father
‘I was going to kill that cobra, but Father forbade me.’

b. Tila’ay di=tusing i=pinggan pinangakan ku
lick.DV.ATEMP GEN=cat NOM=plate IV.PST.eat 1sg.GEN
dot mangakan oku po *dara*.
COMP AV.eat 1sg.NOM yet FRUST
‘The cat licked the plate that I ate from, when I still intended to eat some more.’

c. Mikeengin okoy *dara* nga’, i=tama dat=tongondu
AV.RECIP.love 1pl.EX.NOM FRUST but NOM=father GEN=woman
ot amu eengin dogon.
NOM NEG like 1sg.ACC
‘We love each other but her father doesn’t like me.’

d. Waro *dara* siin ku nga’ nibaray ku dot=tutang.
exist FRUST money 1sg but pay.PST 1sg ACC=debt
‘I did have money but I used it to pay off my debt.’

e. Ong noguring no koniab ino, atanaman no
if plow.PST.NVOL already yesterday that plant.NPST.NVOL already
do=paray benoy *dara*.
ACC=rice today FRUST
‘If that (field) had been plowed yesterday, it could have been planted with rice today.’

Copley, Bridget. 2005. When the actual world isn’t inertial: Tohono O’odham *cem*. In Becker, M. & A. McKenzie (eds.), *Proceedings of SULA 3*, pp. 1–18.

Copley, Bridget. and Heidi Harley. (in press). An ontology for a force-dynamic treatment of events. In Bridget Copley and Fabienne Martin (eds.), *Forces in grammatical structures*. Oxford: OUP.

Davis, Henry & Lisa Matthewson. 2016. Against all expectations: The meaning of St’át’imcets *séna7*. In Marianne Huijsmans, Thomas J. Heins, Oksana Tkachman, & Natalie Weber (eds.), *Papers for the International Conference on Salish and Neighbouring Languages 51*, University of British Columbia Working Papers in Linguistics 42, pp. 37–67.

Hale, Ken. 1969. Papago /čim/. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 35:203–212.

Hardy, Heather K. & Lynn Gordon. 1980. Types of adverbial and modal constructions in Tolkapaya. *International Journal of American Linguistics* 46.3:183–196.