DISCOURSE AND EPISTEMIC MODALITY IN MEKENS: THE FRUSTRATIVE CONSTRUCTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the frustrative construction in the Mekens language. The frustrative construction is a subtype of declarative sentence, which is signaled by the particle *etaop* (*taop*). This particle adds a counter-expectation or antithetic meaning to the statement, indicating that the expected outcome of a given event is not reached. The morphosyntactic and discourse properties of this frustrative construction are discussed, looking especially into its interaction with epistemic and discourse modality in the language.

KEYWORDS: frustrative construction; epistemic modality; Tupian langauges

RESUMO

Este artigo descreve a construção frustrativa na língua Mekens. A construção frustativa é uma sub-categoria de sentenças declarativas, marcada pela partícula *etaop* (*taop*). Essa partícula acrescenta à proposição um significado de contra-expectativa ou antitético, indicando que o resultado esperado de um determinado evento não se realiza. Descreveremos as propriedades morfossintáticas e pragmáticas dessa construção frustrativa, dando especial atenção à sua interação com modalidade epistêmica e unidades de discurso na língua.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: construção frustrativa; modalidade epistêmica; línguas Tupi

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1. INTRODUCTION[2]

Several Amazonian and other South American languages belonging to distinct genetic groups (Arawakan, Cariban, Makuan, Panoan, Tucanoan, Tupian, and some isolate or unclassified languages) are known for having a special grammatical category of frustrative which expresses the notion that the action or event described by the proposition is unsuccessful or 'in vain' (Rodrigues 1953, Ramirez 1997, Aikhenvald 2003, Sparing-Chávez 2003, van der Voort 2004, Epps 2008, Carlin 2009).[3] Even though this feature is not unique to South America, its widespread occurrence in the region prompted it to figure as one of the typologically relevant traits of South American languages (Campbell 2012: 291). In a typological survey of tense, aspect, modality, and evidentiality marking in South American indigenous languages, involving 60 languages belonging to 25 families plus 11 isolates, Mueller (2013) describes the presence of frustrative modality in 23 of the investigated languages. Mueller (2013:158) defines frustative modality as refering to an event that did not have the expected outcome or that was finished unsuccessfully, and differentiates it from incompletive modality. Whereas incompletive modality simply states that the action or event is not finished, and makes no reference to whether the actual outcome was expected or desired, frustrative modality can indicate that the action or event was left unfinished or that it was finished but not as expected or that it was done in vain, that is, it does make reference to whether or not the expected outcome was reached.

For Tupian languages, this feature has long been recognized. One of the first analyses of the frustrative feature in Old Tupi or Tupinambá (Rodrigues 1953) describes it as part of the verbal aspect system. The so-called frustrative aspect in Old Tupi, marked by the suffixe *-biã*, is added to the indicative aspect, and apports the meaning that the goal of the process described by the verb is not attained (Rodrigues 1953: 139). Some of the examples illustrating the frustative in Old Tupi are given in (1) below, extracted from Rodrigues (1953:139).[4]

(1)　　a.　　*a-só-biã*　　　　　　　'I went, but got nothing'
　　　　b.　　*a-ra-só-biã*　　　　　　 'I took it in vain'
　　　　c.　　*a-îuká-biã*　　　　　　'I killed him but to no avail'

In this paper I will present the frustrative construction in Mekens, a language also known as Sakurabiat, and spoken by the Sakurabiat People, in the Brazilian Amazonia. There are only about 22 speakers of Mekens, and they are all located in the *Terra Indígena Rio Mekens*, in the state of Rondônia, near the Brazilian-Bolivian border, as indicated on the Map below, which shows the demarcated Indigenous Territories in the state of Rondônia.[5] Mekens is one of the five members of the Tupari branch of the Tupian linguistic family. The other members of this branch are Akuntsu, Makurap, Tupari, and Wajoro, all of which are spoken in the same region, in the state of Rondônia.

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3. It should be noted that other labels such as counter-expectation, adversative, declarative adversative are also sometimes found in the literature referring to the same concept.

4. In the original paper, the examples were glossed in Portuguese: a-só-biã 'fui, mas não consegui nada', a-ra-só-biã 'levei-o debalde', a-îuká-biã 'matei-o, mas sem resultado'.

5. Map by Willem Doelman. It is used here by courtesy of Hein van der Voort.

Map 1: Localization of the T. I. Rio Mequens, in the Brazilian state of Rondonia.

The frustrative in Mekens can be characterized as a subtype of declarative sentence, the declarative adversative (Galucio 2001), but also as a feature of the language's modality system. Declarative adversative or frustrative sentences differ from the general unmarked declarative sentences by having a specific function combined with a formal marker. The Mekens frustrative is signaled by the particle *etaop* or *taop*,[6] which can modify a verbal or nominal phrase, in affirmative or negative clauses. The use of this frustative particle adds the specific semantics of frustration or of not reaching the expected result of a proposition. The morphosyntactic and discourse properties of this frustrative construction will be described, with special focus on its interaction with epistemic and discourse modality in the language.

All the linguistic data used in this paper come from the author's own field notes, collected between 1994 – 2013, and recorded, transcribed and translated with the help of Mekens native speakers. The examples used here come from formal elicitation sessions, as well as from natural speech. They are presented in a phonemic representation, following the Leipzig glossing rules and conventions for interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme glosses (Comrie et al. 2008).The complete set of Mekens data is deposited at the Museu Goeldi Language Archive and is currently being catalogued and annotated. The remainder of the paper is structured in the following way. Section 2 gives a brief overview of Mekens main morphosyntactic features in a typological perspective. Section 3 presents a summary of the Mekens epistemic modality system. In section 4, the frustrative modality is introduced as a subtype of declarative sentence, and its semantics and structural properties are discussed, including its interaction with negation and adverbial modification. Section 5 discusses the interplay of the frustrative construction with modality and discourse, and its co-occurrence with other modality markers. The paper concludes in section 6 with a summary of the topics covered in the previous sections.

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6. There are some instances of the frustrative particle as taop, instead of etaop (cf. examples (16b), (19a) and (19d) in the text). The the form etaop is much more frequent in the corpus, and I have not found any structural or semantic diffference between the two forms.

2. MEKENS MAIN TYPOLOGICAL FEATURES

Mekens is a typical head-final and head-marking language. Possessive noun phrases (NP) have the order possessor-possessed, verb phrases (VP) show the verb in final position, and any morphological marking appears on the head of the relevant constituent (NP, VP, PP etc). SOV/SV is the basic constituent order in main unmarked clauses but pronominal subjects tend to cliticize to the verb in final position (Galucio 2002). The grammatical functions of subject and direct object are not overtly marked. The order of constituents indicates subject/object functions for nominal referents (2a-b). Other verbal complements are expressed by postpositional phrases, identified by semantic cases such as locative (2c), dative (2d), and ablative (2e-f).

(2) a. *ameko*   *aose*   *so-a-t*
    jaguar;dog   man   see-TV-PST
    'The jaguar saw the man'

  b. *aose*   *ameko*   *so-a-t*
    man   jaguar;dog see-TV-PST
    'The man saw the jaguar'

  c. *roque*   *se-er-a*   *naat*   *top*   *se-teg=ese*
    Roque   3C-sleep-TV COP   AUX.LYE.IPFV-NPST 3C-house=LOC
    'Roque is sleeping in his own house'

  d. *tabisarã*   *kipe*   *õ-a*   *aose=bõ*
    chief   machete give-TV man=DAT
    'The chief gave the machete to the man'

  e. *o-si*   *teg=eri*   *ka*   *õt*
    1S-mother house=ABL move   I
    'I came from my mother's house'

  f. *kiakop*   *se-kojpe* *tap-poka-a-t*   *kibaa*   *pi=eri*
    Kiakop   3C-sister hair-burn-TV-PST field   inside=ABL
    'Kiakop burned his own sister in the field'

The major word classes identified in Mekens are nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, demonstratives, auxiliaries, postpositions, and particles. There are three classes of verbs: transitive, intransitive and uninflectable or particle verbs (Galucio 2001). The transitive verbs are further classified in simple transitive and ditransitive verbs. Both transitive and intransitive verbs take person prefixes, which mark the absolutive argument (subject of intransitive verbs or direct object of transitive verbs). Only the direct object of ditransitive verbs is marked on the verb stem; the indirect object is indicated by a postpositional phrase. Semantically, the theme is the argument marked on the verb, and the target is expressed by the postpositional phrase. Uninflectable or particle verbs form a special class of verbs that do not take agreement markers, neither person prefixes nor any of the TAM and polarity suffixes.

Uninflectable verbs may be either semantic transitive or intransitive, but their conceptual arguments are not formally expressed on the verb. Uninflectable verb subjects may be expressed by an NP (nominal or pronominal) or may be omitted under co-reference to previously mentioned arguments; objects, on the other hand, are either omitted under co-reference to previously mentioned arguments or expressed in an oblique phrase. The examples in (2) above illustrate intransitive (2c), simple transitive (2a-b) and (2f), ditransitive (2d) and uninflectable (2e) verbs.

Tense, aspect, mood and polarity are expressed through postverbal particles, except for the past tense, repetitive mode and one type of negation, which are marked by verbal suffixes. Mekens has overt markers for future and past tense, but while future tense requires an overt morphological marking, past tense may be left unmarked given the appropriate context. That is, even without overt past morphology certain predicates can be interpreted with a past reference time when other elements of the clause provide the information or when past reference time was already established in previous clauses.

(3) a. *o-pe*   *okwa* *kot*   *ke*   *õt*
         1s-clothing   wash   FUT   QUOT.12   I
         'I am going to wash my clothing' (Lit. 'I will wash my clothing, say I')

    b. *se-kwar-a*   *nõãt* *piïm=õ*
         3c-hunt-TV   NEG   yesterday=DAT
         'He didn't go hunting yesterday'

    c. *poret* *sete*   *sorok*   *neara*
         then   he;she   sink   again
         'Then he sank again'

    d. *e-e-pïbor-a-ra-r-ap*
         3c-INTVZ-arrive-TV-REP-PST-NEG
         'He hasn't arrived yet'

Similar to other Tupian languages, Mekens has two series of personal pronominal morphemes: free pronouns and the corresponding personal prefixes. These two series are used with transitive and intransitive verbs, auxiliaries, nouns, adjectives and postpositions, following specific distributional patterns. The distribution of personal morphemes with transitive and intransitive verbs follows an ergative-absolutive pattern, as shown in the examples (4a-c). Whereas the person prefixes mark the absolutive argument (S of intransitive verbs and O of transitive verbs), the free pronouns mark the A argument of transitive verbs. The free pronouns are also optionally used with intransitive verbs, cross-referencing person and number of the S prefix on the verb.

(4) a. *e-er-a-t*   *(ẽt)*
         2s-sleep-TV-PST   you
         'You slept'

b. *e-so-a-t*   *sete*

2s-see-TV-PST   he;she

'He;she saw you'

c. *i-so-a-t*   *ẽt*

3s-see-TH.V-PST   you

'You saw him/her/it'

3. FRUSTRATIVE AS PART OF MEKENS EPISTEMIC MODALITY SYSTEM

Modality is defined here as a semantic domain that "covers a broad range of semantic nuances (jussive, desiderative, intentive, hypothetical, potential, obligative, dubitative, hortative, exclamative, etc.) whose common denominator is the addition of a supplement or overlay of meaning to the most neutral semantic value of the proposition of an utterance, namely factual and declarative" (Bybee and Fleischman 1995: 2). I add to the list of semantic nuances given by Bybee and Fleischman (*ibid*.) the frustrative, which is the topic of this paper.

Palmer (2001) provides a general classification of modality in terms of event modality and propositional or epistemic modality, and further subdivides epistemic modality into the categories of judgments, evidentials and discourse.[7] He argues that epistemic modality can consist of belief and knowledge about the truth or factual status of the proposition and also the evidence the speaker has for it. Following this classification, the Mekens frustrative particle can be analyzed as part of the epistemic modality system of the language, relating to the subsystems of judgment and discourse. It informs the addressee about the status of the speaker's knowledge (understanding) of the proposition, but it also supplies real world or discourse information.

The Mekens modality system includes several semantic distinctions that are expressed by means of postverbal particles (Galucio 2001). In general, these particles come immediately after the verb stem, and form a complex phrase with it. A list of the main semantic distinctions included in the Mekens epistemic modality system is presented in Table 1. Illustrative examples are given in (5a-d). Note that these modality particles can cooccur, as shown in (5d). In section 5, we discuss the distribution of the frustrative particle vis-à-vis the other modality particles in Mekens, including the possibility of co-occurrence.

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7. However, evidentiality has been convincingly proposed to be a separated category, indepedent of the epistemic modality system (de Hann 1999, Aikenvald 2004), and as such will not be further discussed here.

kẽra	Speculative; non-assertive
toẽt	Presumptive; inferential
eteet	Hypothetical
nẽŋat	Similative
ebõ, eba, te	Assertive, emphatic markers
kot=ke, kot=kaat	Desiderative[8]
pegat	Conditional; irrealis[9]
(e)taop	Frustrative

Table 1: Mekens grammaticalized modality distinctions[8,9]

(5) a. *ɨkɨ=bõ*   *ka*   *pɨbot*   *te=bõ*   *ɨkɨ*   *se-aso-a*
water=DAT   move   arrive   3S=DAT   water   3C-bathe-TV
se-ko-a   ***kẽrã***
3C-AUX.MOV.IPFV-PST   SPEC
'He went to the small river, got there, at the river, and apparently stayed there bathing'

   b. *oẽp*   *ekagɨka*   ***tõẽt***   *te*   *ek*   *poot*
already   fall   PRESPT   FOC   house   old
'I think it has fallen down by now, that old house'/'It has probably fallen down by now, that old house'

   c. *aose*   *nã*   ***eteet***   *eke-e*
person   COP   HYP   DEM-FIN
'Ah, if only that one were a man'

   d. *se-aso*   ***pegat eteet***   *ikão*   *se-aso-a*
3C-bathe   COND   HYP   DEM   3C-bathe-TV
kot-kaat-*aab=ese*
FUT-QUOT.3-NMZ=LOC
'He could have bathed at that time, if he had wanted to bathe'

   e. *o-po-ãkã*   *kora*   ***etaop***
1S-hand-bone   search   FRUST
'He/she looked for my bracelet in vain'/ 'He/she looked for my bracelet, but didn't find it'

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8. Desiderative is a complex marker, a combination of the imediate future and quotative morphemes.

9. The conditional is a complex marker formed by the future and past tense markers: *pek* 'future' + (a)t 'past'. It is also commonly employed together with the hypothetical particle (cf. example (5d) in the text).

Mekens epistemic modal markers (table 1) can be compared to the so-called 'truth and knowledge markers' found in some Cariban and Arawakan languages, in which a set of grammatical morphemes are used to express epistemological ideas of reality and truth (Carlin 2009: 135). In the Cariban language Wayana, the 'truth and knowledge markers' include the facsimile or similative, several assertive or emphatic markers, nominal tense markers, evidential markers, and a frustrative marker (Carlin 2009: 135; 140). The indication of these categories are thus grammaticalized in the language and the markers are obligatorily employed when pragmatically required by context.

Mekens epistemic modality markers are similar in that respect. Note that sentence (5e) above, with the frustrative marker, expresses knowledge of the speaker about the truth and reality of the world where the proposition is uttered. I turn now to the discussion of the major semantic and morphosyntactic properties of the frustrative particle, as part of the modality system found in Mekens.

4. FRUSTRATIVE OR COUNTER-ASSERTIVE MODALITY

There are three sentence types in Mekens: declarative, interrogative and imperative. From a structural point of view, sentences with the frustrative modality are a subtype of declarative sentences, termed adversative or frustrative sentences (Galucio 2001).

From a semantic point of view, frustrative sentences, like unmarked declarative sentences, express a statement, although one with adversative or frustrative results. There are no attested examples of the frustrative particle in interrogative and imperative sentences. The frustrative particle adds a counter-expectation nuance to the statement, indicating that the expected outcome of a given event was not reached, as in (6a-b). Note that even though sentences such as (6b) can be translated as complex coordinate clauses, they are single declarative frustrative clauses in Mekens.

(6) a. *isɨɨ*   *o-so-a*   *kwat* *õt*   *i-taka*   *etaop*
     deer   1s-see-TV   leave I   3s-follow   FRUST
     'The deer saw me and ran away, I ran after it, but couldn't get it'/ 'The deer saw me and ran away, I followed it, in vain'

   b. *pedro* *makɨyã*   *mĩ-a-t*   *etaop*
     pedro agouti   kill;shoot-TV-PST   FRUST
     'Pedro shot but didn't kill the agouti'/ 'Pedro shot the agouti, in vain'

When added to a noun, the frustrative indicates that the set of properties associated with the noun does not apply to its referent or that the noun referent lacks some or all of its intrinsic properties. This is illustrated in examples (7) and (8). Example (7) is extracted from a mythological narrative about the origin of the moon, which recounts how a brother deceives his sister and tricks her into having sex with him by pretending to be her husband (Parobaro). The narrator is telling how the sister, after becoming suspicious, decided to mark the one she believed to be Parobaro with genipap (*Genipa americana*) fruit dye. In that example, there is a combination of the frustrative particle and the presumptive modal particle, which gives the modalization of the sentence (cf. Section 4 for more examples of the

co-occurrence of the frustrative and other modal particles). The NP Parobaro denotes a property of "being Parobaro". The use of that NP together with the presumptive modal particle creates the expectation that the referent "*is presumably Parobaro*", but the frustrative particle after the noun negates that expectation, making it clear that the referent is not Parobaro.

(7) | *s-i-so-ab* | *nã* | *s-ebapi* | *s-õ-taa* | *te=bõ* | *toẽt* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3s-?-see-NMZ | COP | 3s-forehead | 3s-CAUS-spread | 3s=DAT PRESPT | PRESPT |

te	*parobaro*	*etaop*
FOC	parobaro	FRUST

'(She) spread it in his forehead to mark it, to the one's (she) believed to be Parobaro, but it wasn't him'

The frustrative particle is also employed with nominal predicates, as shown in example (8d). Nominal predicate clauses in Mekens show a two-way system that distinguishes between present and non-present predicates. Simple present tense nominal predicates are characterized by having no copula; the two NPs are simply juxtaposed, as in (8a). However, I assume that given the right context, a sentence like (8a) could also be interpreted with a past reference time, since the use of past tense morphology can be obviated in certain contexts (cf. Section 2). Non-present tense nominal predicates employ one of the two copulas (*nã* or *nẽ*) found in the language plus any relevant tense, mode and/or polarity marker (8b-c). One exception is the simple past tense that can be indicated only by the frustrative marker, as in (8d),[10] which is interpreted with past reference time meaning that the attributes of being a shaman expressed by the predicate no longer apply to the nominal subject. It results from the template of neutral nominal predicate clauses in Mekens that the structure [NP NP] is an assertion that the addressee's father is or was a shaman (cf. 8a), and the frustrative construction gives the adversative interpretation that at the moment of the utterance he no longer is a shaman.

(8) a. *o-top   kwamõã*
  1s–father   shaman
  'My father is a/the shaman'

  b. *e-top   kwamoa ne paat*
   2s-father   shaman COP FUT.3
   'Your father will be a/the shaman'

  c. *e-top   kwamoa na kot-kaat*
   2s-father   shaman COP FUT-QUOT.3
   'Your father wants to be a/the shaman' / 'Your father is going to be a/the shaman'

  d. *kwamõã   etaop   e-top*
   shaman   FRUST   2   s-father
   'Your father was a/the shaman, but he no longer is'

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As for its distribution in the clause, the frustrative marker generally follows the constituent (verb phrase, noun phrase or clause) it modifies, and has local scope over the modified constituent. This is shown in (9), where the frustrative marker comes at the end of the clause, and adds the interpretation that the situation described by the proposition preceding the frustrative marker no longer applies. In this case, something that used to take place in the remote past no longer occurs in the present.

(9) *i-mõt-ka*   *kwariat*   *õt*   *etaop*
     3S-make-VBZ   long.ago   I   FRUST
     'I used to make it, but do not do it any more'

However, there are a few examples in our corpus where the frustrative particle is more freely distributed in the clause. One such example is given in (10), in which the frustrative particle occurs inside a conjoined relative clause. In that particular example, the frustrative particle occurs twice, once *before* the relativized verb in the first relative clause, and again *after* the relativized verb in the second relative clause. The frustrative adds a counter-expectation meaning to the proposition, indicating that the expected outcome of the interaction between the jaguar and the other (smaller) animal did not occur, that is, even after being beaten and bitten by the jaguar, the animal still did not die. Another example of non-canonical ordering of the frustrative particle is given in (19a) below.

(10) *kwe* *amẽko* *etaop*   *s-õpot*   *i-sogop*   *etaop*
     animal jaguar FRUST   NMZ-kill.by.beating   NMZ-bite   FRUST
     'The injured animal' (Lit.: 'The animal that the jaguar had beaten and bitten, but not killed')

4.1. Frustrative modality and negation
The frustrative in Mekens falls only partially under the modal scope of negation. The truth value of an assertion like the one in (6a), repeated here as (11), for instance, is not that the speaker did not follow the deer, but rather that he followed it in vain, that is, that following the deer did not produce the expected result of his catching it.

(11) *isɨɨ* *o-so-a*   *kwat*   *õt*   *i-taka*   *etaop*
     deer   1S-see-TV leave   I   3s-follow FRUST
     'The deer saw me and ran away, I ran after it, but couldn't get it'/ 'The deer saw me and ran away, I followed it, in vain'

When the frustrative is employed in negative declarative clauses, as in (12), it has scope over the negated proposition. The frustrative cancels the negation, and the final result is a positive assertion. In (12) the proposition asserted by the negated verb was on the verge of happening, but in the end it was narrowly avoided. This state of affairs is expressed by the use of the frustrative marker, which can be translated as "almost", in such cases. A similar property is found in Tariana, an Arawakan language from Northern Brazil which also has frustrative modality. In Tariana when the frustrative clitic is used in combination with non-visual evidentials and other specific adverbs, it is described as reversing its functional meaning from indicating that an action failed or is bound to fail to indicate that an action was on the verge of happening but did not happen (Aikhenvald 2003: 381-82).

(12) *e-teg=õ*   *ka*   *õt*   *e-so-a-r-apo=õt*   *etaop*
      2S-house=DAT   move   I   2S-see-TV-PST=NRG=I   FRUST
      'I went to your house, and almost missed you' / 'I went to your house (and) it was nearly the case that I didn't see you'

A distinct reading results in sentences where an affirmative clause, and not a negated one is under the scope of the frustrative modality marker. Compare sentence (12) above with sentences (13a-b) below. In (13a) the frustrative particle occurs between two declarative sentences, an affirmative followed by a negative clause. The frustrative particle has scope over the preceding unit, adding the counter-expectation nuance to the event described in the first clause. Example (13a) is said in a context where the speaker went to the addressee's house, and the neutral expectation is that he or she would see the addressee, but that expectation was not fullfilled, as the two didn't meet. In this case, the negated clause is not under the scope of the frustrative particle, only the affirmative first clause is. Note also the second translation provided for (13a) below. Given the distribution of the frustrative particle *etaop* between the two clauses, it functions as an adversative connector, indicating denial of expectation. Comparing examples (12) and (13a), we realize that their meanings are quite the opposite of each other. In (12) the frustrative has scope over the negated clause, and the result is that speaker and addresse *do* meet, while in (13a) they do *not* meet. On the other hand, sentence (13b), without the frustrative particle, has a translation similar to (13a), but it has a more neutral meaning, since there is no implication that some previous expectation was not met.

(13) a. *e-teg=õ*   *ka*   *õt*   *etaop*   *e-so-a-r-apo=õt*
      2S-house=DAT   move   I   FRUST   2S-see-TV-PST-NEG= I
      'I went to your house, in vain, I didn't see you'/ 'I went to your house, but didn't see you'

    b. *e-teg=õ*   *ka*   *õt*   *e-so-a-r-apo=õt*
      2S-house=DAT   move   I   2S-see-TV-PST=NEG=I
      'I went to your house, but didn't see you'/ 'I went to your house and didn't see you'

A similar interaction between the scope of the frustrative particle and negation can be observed in the examples in (14). In (14a), the frustrative particle follows a negated verb phrase. The use of the frustrative marker adds the information that the expected outcome of the event described by the negated verb is not reached, thus reverting the meaning of the negated proposition, that is, the meaning of the sentence is that the tapir did die. The sentence in (14a) is similar to one shown in (12) above. On the other hand, example (14b) which is similar to (14a), but without the frustrative particle, means that the expected outcome of the event described by the negated verb is reached. Thus, in (14b) the final meaning of the sentence is that the wounded animal did not die, contrary to (14a) which means that wounded animal did die.

(14) a. *pooriat*   *mĩ-a*   *õt*   *se-pakwa-r-ap*   *etaop*
      tapir   kill;shoot-TV   I   3C-die-PST-NEG   FRUST
      'I shot the tapir, and it almost survived, but ended up dying'/ I shot the tapir, and it almost did not die'

b. *pooriat*   *mĩ-a*   *õt*   *se-pakwa-r-ap*
    tapir   kill;shoot-TV   I   3C-die-PST-NEG
    'I shot the tapir, but it didn't die'

5. THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN MODALITY AND DISCOURSE

In the previous section, I have described the frustrative particle as part of the epistemic modality system in Mekens. I have shown that frustrative modality indicates that the expected result of a given event is not attained or that the properties or a set of the properties associated with a given noun are not satisfied. In this section, I would like to argue that in Mekens the frustrative particle lies on the frontier between epistemic modality and discourse. As might be clear from the examples in the previous sections, the frustrative relates not only to the assertion given in the statement, but also to the expectation of the proposition, which may be based on the real world knowledge about a situation and not just on purely linguistic context. For instance, in (15a), which was uttered in a conversational situation, the proposition refers not only to the desire to drink coffee, but also to the knowledge that there is not any coffee available; thus, to the impossibility of fulfilling that desire. The full package of information is entailed by the use of the frustrative particle. In (15b), extracted from a mythological tale in which an owl carries a young boy and leaves him in the middle of a river, the frustrative particle helps convey all the information given in parenthesis in the free translation, none of which is lexically verbalized.

(15) a. *põĩ-piik*   *sobekar-a*   *sete*   *etaop*
      guts-black   desire-TV   she;he   FRUST
      '(S)he wants (to drink) coffee, but can't (there isn't any)'

    b. *etaop*   *per-a*   *kẽrã*   *etaop*   *soboj soboj*
      FRUST   wake.up-TV   SPEC   FRUST   splash splash
      'Then he woke up, apparently (he wanted to get up), but (there was all water around him, so when he put his feet outside the hammock) it just went 'splash, splash''

It is important to note the distribution of the frustrative particle vis-à-vis the other modality particles in Mekens. An indication that the frustrative relates modality and discourse is the possibility of its co-occurrence with the other epistemic modality particles, affecting the semantic scope of the whole proposition. There are plenty of examples in our corpus of co-occurrence between frustrative and dubitative/speculative, inferential (presumptive), desiderative, and other modal markers. Sentences (16a-b) illustrate the co-occurrence of the frustrative with the inferential or presumptive particle *tõẽt*, which indicates that the speaker presumes or believes something to be true. Note that the frustrative has scope over the whole sentence, adding a counter-assertion meaning that undermines the judgment information and negates the expectation given by the presumptive particle.

(16) a. *Parobaro*   *tõẽt*   *ki-mẽt*   *tõẽt*   *etaop*
      Parobaro   PRESPT   1PL.INCL-husband   PRESPT   FRUST
      '(I) assumed it to be Parobaro, (I) thought it was our husband, but it is not'

b. *s-jarap*   *tõẽt*   *taop*   *te*   *Roque ẽr ~ ẽt*

    3S-happy;smart   PRESPT   FRUST   FOC   Roque 2s~EMPH

    'Roque thought that you were smart, but you are not' (Lit. 'He could be smart, but he isn't, Roque (said) of you')

The same interaction is seen with the speculative particle *kẽra* (17a-b). The particle *kẽra* is a marker of general inferential modality. A sentence with *kẽra* asserts that something seems to be the case, but it might or might not be true.[11] When combined with the frustrative marker, the truth value of the proposition with *kẽra* is that the apparent result is not actually achieved.

(17)   *piit*   *kẽra*   *õt*   *pe=kwe*   *etaop*

    shoot   SPEC   I   OBL=animal   FRUST

    kaga   *kaat*   *nẽŋãt*   *sete*

    fall   DEM   similative   (s)he

    'It appears that I shot the animal, but I missed it. It only seemed like it had fallen down'

The desiderative mode in Mekens is obtained by a combination of the immediate future particle '*kot*' and the quotative morphemes '*kaat*' or '*ke*'. When the frustrative particle occurs in combination with these desiderative particles, it adds to the proposition the general meaning that the object of the desiderative verb phrase will not be realized (18a-b). In the case of (18b) the second clause states the reason why the desired event will not take place.

(18) a. *o-ser-a*   *kot*   *ke*   *õt*   *etaop*

    1s-go-TV   FUT   QUOT.12   I   FRUST

    'I want to go, but I won't'/ 'I would like to go, but I can't'

  b. *o-erek-kwa*   *kot*   *ke*   *o-sesoe-r=õt*   *etaop*

    1s-speech-TR.PL.EV   FUT   QUOT.12   1S-AUX.MOV.NPST-link=I   FRUST

    i-ot   *sese*

    3S-full   many

    'I want to go talk there, but I won't, it is very crowded'

Another example illustrating the distribution of the frustrative as a discourse particle is given in (19), which shows the co-occurrence of the frustrative with the assertive or emphatic particles *emõ* "really" and *te* "truly". The excerpt in (19), from a hunting story, shows that the frustrative particle can be used reiteratively (19d) to emphasize the fact that the action failed to produce the expected result.

(19) a. *poret*   *taop*   *kwak*   *pia*   *o-ta-a*   *te=pe*   *i-pi-kwak*

    then   FRUST   noise   wait   1S-AUX.stand-IPFV   3s=OBL   3s-inside-noise

    'Then I stayed there waiting for the noise, for its roar'

---

11. The particle k ra is also used as an interrogative particle in yes/no questions.

b. *nõp   emõ.*
   NEG   really
   'But there was nothing'

c. *sete   se-pi-kwak   aor-a-ra   se-pi-kwak*
   (s)he   3C-inside-noise   leave-TV-REP   3C-inside-noise

   aor-a-ra   paat   te
   leave-TV-REP   FUT   truly
   'It (out there) will roar pretty soon'

d. *ke   o-ta-a   etaop   nõp   emõ   taop   te.*
   DEM   1S- AUX.stand-IPFV.PST   FRUST   NEG   really FRUST   truly
   'I was there (thinking or saying that), but nothing, really nothing, nothing happened'

As a final example, consider sentences (20a-b). These sentences are extracted from a mythological tale where a boy, forced to do something against his father's will, ends up being killed in the process, and is thus replaced by another entity pretending to be him. In the case of (20a), the sentence expresses the the boy's unfulfilled request to stop what was being done without his father's authorization. The only grammatical information that the boy's orders are not obeyed comes from the frustrative marker *etaop*. Similarly in (20b), after the boy is replaced by the alternate being, his mother calls for him but is also not answered, since the entity that has taken her son's place is not human, and as such, does not understand her call.

(20) a. *arẽp   sete   poret   poret   oẽp   oẽp   oẽp   etaop   te   kïrit*
        then   he;she now   now   already   already   already   FRUST   FOC   child
        sara   se-ajaj-kʷa
        bad   3C-cry-VBZ
        'Then he (the boy said) "now now enough enough enough" in vain, the poor guy was crying'

    b. *arẽp   etaop   pega   te   i-si   kïrïr-ap   etaop   pega*
        then   FRUST   call   FOC   3S-mother   child-NEG   FRUST   call
        etaop   pega
        FRUST   call
        'Then his mother called, in vain, (to the one who was) not a boy, (she) called, and called, in vain (he didn't come)'

Sentences such as (19) and (20) make it clear that the frustrative marker lies between a grammatical marker of adversative or counter-expectation meaning and the realm of pragmatics and epistemiological modality. Its iterative use in the discourse has also an emphatic function; it reafirms the unfulfilled nature of the expectation present in the proposition, which is implied not as much by what is uttered, but by the speaker's knowledge of the truths and realities of the world in which the proposition is uttered.

6. FINAL REMARKS

The present discussion of frustrative modality in Mekens has highlighted the main properties of the frustrative morpheme and how it combines with other modality particles in the language. I have shown that the frustrative particle *etaop* (*taop*) adds to the proposition the specific meaning that the expected outcome of a given event is not achieved or that an action or event was done in vain, that is, it failed to reach the expected result. In the case of nominal phrases, the use of the frustrative indicates that some property or set of properties associated with the noun are not present. The frustrative is characterized in Mekens as part of the epistemic modality system, together with the speculative, presumptive, hypothetical, affirmative, and similative markers. In the case of the frustrative, it is used to express the speaker's knowledge of the truth and reality of the world in which the proposition is uttered. The interaction of frustrative with other epistemic modality markers shows an interesting convergence that brings together epistemic and discourse modality in the language.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

?	unidentified morpheme	INCL	inclusive
1, 2, 3	first, second, third person	INTVZ	intransitivizer
AUX.LYE	auxiliary for lying	IPFV	imperfective
AUX.MOV	auxiliary for motion	LINK	linking morpheme
AUX.STAND	auxiliary for standing	LOC	locative
C	coreferential	NEG	negative
CAUS	causative	NMZ	nominalizer
COND	conditional	NPST	non-past
COP	copula	OBL	oblique
DAT	dative	PL	plural
DEM	demonstrative	PRESPT	presumptive
EMPH	emphatic	PST	past
EV	event	QUOT	quotative
FIN	final	REP	repetitive
FOC	focus	SPEC	speculative; non-assertive
FRUST	frustrative	TR	transitiver
FUT	future	TV	theme vowel
HYP	hypothetical	VBZ	verbalizer