

New paths of contact and variation: background and design for a future study of Capeverdean in New England¹

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The main goal of this paper is to describe the case of morphosyntactic variation concerning the markers for the habitual and the progressive in Capeverdean, a Portuguese-based creole, the mother tongue of virtually all inhabitants of the Republic of Cabo Verde (around 500,000) and of most Cabo Verdeans living abroad. Then, a line of future research is proposed that takes a current analysis of this linguistic phenomenon to a different level, involving a brand-new challenge in terms of approach. This may be outlined as follows. The current analysis of this case drains into the proposals that (i) some types of variation may be the result of underspecification between some (functional) lexical items and the morphological forms, and that (ii) in Capeverdean, all temporal interpretations are obtained without dedicated tense morphemes, but rather through a combination of mood and aspect, pragmatic inferences, and linguistic and non-linguistic context. Taking (i) and (ii) as the main working hypotheses, it will then be interesting to study how these properties of Capeverdean behave in the contact situation it experiences in New England (USA), to where hundreds of thousands Cabo Verdeans have immigrated since the early 19th century. More specifically, given the existence of many attested lexical borrowings, it will be investigated whether these temporal Capeverdean phenomena are vulnerable to the influence of English.

Keywords: Capeverdean, linguistic contact, mood and aspect, temporal meaning, micro-variation.

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1. Introduction

Migrants take their mother tongues with them wherever they go. They need them for communication, at least during the initial stages in their new environments, but, most significantly, their native languages are a natural part of their identity, even more than food or music, two features widely recognized as important cultural properties of a group. This is the case of Cabo Verdeans and their Kriolu: it always is wherever they are, and they are in many places (an estimated one million Cabo Verdeans live in different countries, mainly in Europe and the Americas).²

The United States, in particular the New England states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, have received Cabo Verdean migrants in different waves usually connected with different islands (people from Brava were the first to go, starting in the early 19th century, hired by the American whaling vessels from New Bedford, which stopped in these Atlantic islands for provisions and repairs),³ and is now the host of the largest community of Cabo Verdeans in the diaspora (the estimates vary between 300,000 and half a million), followed by Portugal (which hosts less than a fifth of this). For this huge community of Cabo Verdeans away from their origin land, be they first generation immigrants or children and grandchildren of those, Kriolu is also a powerful means to defend and negotiate their status as a group with a distinct culture and history, not to be obscured by the heavily marked label ‘African-American’, linked with an enduring racism and active discrimination within the American society.

The second part of this paper (section 4) sketches a novel approach to this socio-linguistic reality as a promising working scenario to study the results of language contact and, thus, to better understand human language itself. In fact, this is a very specific contact situation for a so-called contact language, raising the following interesting question: what results from this subsequent linguistic contact can possibly be registered in a language that was born as a creole?⁴ The current situation at stake here has English as the other language,

² See Carling (1997) and Batalha & Carling (2008), for an overview of studies on the Cape Verdean diaspora.

³ But, prior to this, New Englanders had already brought with them an undetermined number of Cape Verdean slaves (Pilgrim 2008: 5).

⁴ Traditionally acknowledged as a creole, Capeverdean in fact developed through a naturalistic process of language learning and language change, inheriting most part of its lexicon from Portuguese and revealing the influence from West African languages, especially Mandinka and

the official language of the host country, thus determining a certain type of influence (see Winford 2003 for a summary of the main points involved in language contact, including the effect of certain relations of power between the different groups).

For the current purposes, this topic can only be very briefly presented through two different kinds of sources: the scarce documents that have been written about its ethnographic aspects; the relevant information collected in ten interviews that I have recorded myself during an exploratory trip in October 2018 to Rhode Island and Massachusetts. This brief approach is here combined with the larger topic of linguistic variation at the level of the main temporal morphemes available in the language.

The remaining subsections of this introduction present the other concepts and guidelines of this paper, including a brief and general note on internal language variation (1.1), a list of the basic scientific assumptions which guide this research (1.2), the methodological steps that have been used to put the different parts together (1.3), and the outline of the other sections (1.4).

1.1. A note on internal variation

Capeverdean has two main varieties, roughly associated with the two most populated islands of the archipelago: (i) the Sotavento variety, which developed in the 16th century, in Santiago, and then in two other southern (leeward) islands, Fogo and Brava (Lang 2014 and references therein), from the contact between Portuguese and several different languages from the Mande and Atlantic families spoken by the African slaves brought there by the Portuguese slave traders; and (ii) the Barlavento variety, which developed in the 17th century in Santo Antão, the biggest and most productive among the northern (windward) islands, mainly peopled by migrants from the southern islands (Swolkien & Cobbinah, this volume), and received further influence from the contact with Portuguese, due to the continuously arriving Portuguese settlers, among migrants from various other European countries. São Vicente was the last island to be peopled, in the early 19th century, mainly by migrants from other northern islands (Swolkien 2014, and references therein). These varieties are thus also spoken in other islands, with additional internal variation, but the main data presented here are from Santiago and São Vicente. There is substantial variation at the phonological level, but this will not be accounted for in this paper (see

Wolof (for a debate on the persistent misconceptions about language in the context of creoles, see Mufwene 2010 and Aboh & DeGraff 2017, among others).

Swolkien and Cobbinah, this volume, for a study of some phonological features specific to the Barlavento variety of Santo Antão).

Although this has been the subject of an intense political debate, Capeverdean is in practice not an official language in its own country. This also means that there is no standard variety, and that the attempts to settle an official spelling may be sound but still hindered by several problems, namely the lack of its teaching at school and some claims about the (un)fair representation of the Barlavento varieties (see for instance Carling 2002). In fact, the official writing system ALUPEC, *Alfabeto Unificado para a Escrita do Cabo-Verdiano*, is based on the variety spoken in Santiago, and it is clearly insufficient for writing in other varieties – the correspondence with different phonological features in the same words is neither intuitive nor, sometimes, linguistically motivated. In these circumstances, the lay people who want to write in Capeverdean, namely in informal text messages or in social media posting, write however they feel is the correct way to spell the specific sound(s) of the words, often using clues of the Portuguese spelling they have learned at school. In some cases, these words must be read out aloud for their nature and content to be perceived: for instance, *sgá*, which stands for the São Vicente word *jgá* ‘play’, or *unbai*, which stands for *N bai* ‘I’ve gone’. This may be described as “a sort of [orthographic] anarchy”, in an adaptation of Carling’s (2002) expression (the author calls it “a sort of linguistic anarchy”, but it is only orthographic, not linguistic).

1.2. Three main scientific assumptions

The analysis of the case of linguistic variation to be described here is grounded on three scientific assumptions. One, more general assumption is that, following the seminal works by Labov, language variation involves “alternative ways of ‘saying the same thing’” (Labov 1969: 738, fn20).

There are then two more specific assumptions, which identify the theoretical framework to be used here, the generative enterprise in some of its more contemporary approaches:

(i) the Borer-Chomsky conjecture, as it is named and stated in Baker (2008: 156): “All parameters of variation are attributable to differences in features of particular items in the lexicon (e.g. the functional heads)”;

(ii) the notion that variation, in the ‘Labovian’ sense, involves “underspecification in the mapping between [functional] categories and morphological forms” (Adger & Smith 2010). More concretely, this means that

the same semantic features of a given functional head in the lexicon may be spelled out by different morphological units.

1.3. Methodology

The main data analysed in this paper are, as stated above, from the two varieties spoken in the two currently most populated islands of the archipelago: Santiago and São Vicente. This is also the case for the nine Capeverdean speakers living in New England who are themselves immigrants from one of these two islands (the other consultant I interviewed is a second-generation Cabo Verdean, not an immigrant). Most of these data have been gathered in my own fieldwork sessions, either in recorded semi-informal interviews or in programmed elicitation sessions: in Santiago, this was achieved in several fieldtrips between 2001 and 2016; in São Vicente, this was done in my first fieldtrip to this island at the end of January 2018; in New England, this has been done during my first fieldtrip, in October 2018. All these interviews, a total of 44 (14 of which are from the Barlavento variety and 30 from the Sotavento variety), are in the process of being transcribed and tagged, to be made available in the oral corpus within the current project *LUDVIC – Language Unity and Diversity: Language Variation and beyond* (IF/00066/2015).⁵

The mixing of examples that were obtained in these semi-spontaneous conversations and data specifically elicited for this research is based on the proposals by Matthewson (2004) on semantic fieldwork. Essentially, she argues that, although “elicitation [...] does not involve direct inquiry about meaning”, we still need to confirm, the best we can, the exact meaning of the speakers’ utterances – which in my view may be especially delicate when we are dealing with tense, aspect, and mood values. Therefore, “the fieldworker must obtain indirect clues to truth conditions and to felicity conditions” (Matthewson 2004: 379-380). For this paper, I have used two of these indirect means: (i) creating a scenario/context and asking for the translation of the Portuguese sentence which I believe is felicitous in that scenario; (ii) creating a scenario/context and asking for the correct linguistic continuation in that scenario.

1.4. Outline of the paper

This paper has two distinct, complementary parts and is organized as follows. In the first part, section 2 summarizes previous key points about the role played

⁵ Some of these have been imported from a previous project, *Events and subevents in Capeverdean* (PTDC/CLE-LIN/103334/2008), and its own database, cvwords.org.

by aspect in the temporal interpretation in the language and argues that none of the relevant temporal morphemes is a tense marker. Section 3 sketches a new proposal regarding temporal interpretation, which takes into account the diachronic path of the preverbal morpheme *ta* and the separation between realis and irrealis mood as defined in Comrie (1985). Then, in the second part, section 4 raises some interesting questions surrounding the future study of Capeverdean variation in the particular contact situation in New England. The final section, 5, outlines the main conclusions and questions of the paper.

2. Temporal morphemes from Santiago and São Vicente

This section presents the data to be analysed in the remaining sections. In 2.1, I summarize some key points about the crucial role played by aspect that have been pointed out in previous works. In 2.2, the list of the relevant morphemes is presented, and empirical evidence is provided as to why none of these is a tense marker.

2.1. Previous key points about aspect

The following Capeverdean examples, in (1a) and (1b), present a very interesting puzzle, which has been the subject of much debate (e.g. Silva 1985, 1990; Suzuki 1994; Veiga 1995; Baptista 2002; Swolkien 2014).

(1) a. *Bu sata/tita kume bolu.*

2SG SATA/TITA eat cake

‘You are eating (the/a) cake.’

b. *Bu kume bolu.*

2SG eat cake

Possible meaning: ‘You ate (the/a) cake.’

The past interpretation in (1b) would be very difficult to explain through any other means than a null perfect morpheme, in which case the underlying reading is: ‘You have eaten (the/a) cake.’ Namely, it cannot be argued that the bare verb is inherently past, since if it were the case, we would have a past progressive in (1a). And the fact is that progressives in the past have a different configuration.

- (2) a. [...] *Bu sata kumeba bolu.* [Santiago]
 2SG SATA eat:BA cake
- b. [...] *Bu tava ta kume bolu.* [São Vicente]
 2SG TAVA TA eat cake
- ‘You were eating (the/a) cake.’

A very important note at this point, which will be recovered in several parts of this paper, is that, for the sentences in (1) to be past-shifted, we need a context, linguistic or extra-linguistic.⁶ Therefore, and since the linguistic context of the examples presented in the current study is often omitted for space reasons, the mark of missing text [...] is provided to signal this omission. What guarantees the present reading in (1a) will be pointed out below.

Resuming the relevant facts in the examples in (1), what we have in Capeverdean (1b) is a zero-morpheme conveying a perfect interpretation, which is in complementary distribution with a progressive morpheme. This progressive morpheme maps onto slightly different morphological forms according to the region of the country: the preverbal *sata* or *aita* in Santiago, and *tita* or *tite* in São Vicente. This contrasts with the typological observation that “perfects and progressives are overwhelmingly periphrastic” (Dahl & Velupillai 2005: 2). In most cases in English, for example, progressive and perfect values are indeed obtained through a structure that includes an auxiliary verb, namely *be* + *V-ing* for the progressive, *have* + participle for the perfect (see also Bertinetto *et al.* 2000 for an overview of the progressive in European languages). Capeverdean also exhibits a few periphrastic forms expressing various temporal meanings which involve some auxiliaries, but they are generally used when a further aspectual value is added. In Santiago, this is the case of the habitual progressive: *ta + sta + ta + V* (in contexts like *N ta sta (tudu dia) ta durmi oki bu ta txiga* ‘I’m (always) sleeping when you arrive’). In São Vicente, there is also a periphrastic form for the progressive that similarly combines with different aspectual/modal meanings (*ta + stod + ta + V*).

Therefore, the salient opposition regarding aspect in Capeverdean is between the progressive and the perfect, rather than between the imperfective and the perfective (Pratas 2010, later refined in 2012, 2014, 2018a,b). As

⁶ I abstain from stating here that this is true for other languages, since I am not analysing any other than Capeverdean (this – what is the true nature of past encoding cross-linguistically – is the topic for future research).

semantically complex categories, the progressive and the perfect involve certain temporal characteristics (Smith 1991). Moreover, there are two main specific points about this perfect. One is that, unlike the English perfect, this reading is not incompatible with adverbials like ‘yesterday’. And the other is that this perfect proposal considers two different states resulting from the past situation, which still hold at the Topic Time (as defined in Klein 1994, see below):

(i) a resultant state, which is “an abstract state of the event’s ‘having occurred’” (Portner 2011: 1230) and is equivalent to the “post-time of the situation described by the predicates” (Klein 2014: 962). This is what we get with all dynamic predicates and with some types of statives (therefore, for *kridita* ‘believe’ or *gosta* ‘like’, which have some stative and some non-stative interpretations, the resultant state is compatible with either case). Note that, according to the predicate in question, the resultant state/post-time of the situations described by the predicates has different implications regarding the current state of affairs, which does not interfere with the temporal reading of the situation;

(ii) a result state, which is part of the event structure (Moens & Steedman 1988; Smith 1991). This is what we get with some other statives, like *sta duenti* ‘be sick’ (stage-level), *e altu* ‘be tall’ (individual-level), some instances of modals like *pode* ‘can’, and some instances of *sabe* ‘know’, whose bare forms have a present interpretation. In this case, we have the intuition about a past resultative situation of the type ‘get sick’, ‘get tall’, ‘get permission’, ‘get to know’, with the temporal reading being directly anchored on the current result state (for a previous analysis of states in the language see Pratas 2012, 2014).

The temporal interpretation through these aspectual distinctions is explained with the help of the following specifications. Three different times are relevant to the construction of temporal reference, which were labelled in Reichenbach (1947) as:

- (i) Speech Time (S)
- (ii) Event Time (E)
- (iii) Reference Time (R)

The proposal in Klein (1994) presents a new distinction, i.e. the one between past perfective and past imperfective. In his model, the relevant three times are:

- (i) Time of Utterance (TU)
- (ii) Situation Time (T-Sit)
- (iii) Topic Time (TT)

This mediating time is defined by Klein as the time span about which an assertion is made (see also Stowell 2014 for a discussion of this terminology, and Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, and subsequent work).

Klein later raises important questions about the notion of Time of Utterance (e.g. the speech event itself takes time; so, what slice of it are we considering here?), but here it simply means ‘now’, the deictic temporal anchor of root clauses. Also, his distinction between perfective and imperfective is not relevant here, but the terminology adopted is nevertheless the one from Klein (1994). Thus, the ordering of TU regarding TT corresponds to a past, a present, or a future time reference, and the ordering of T-Sit regarding TT corresponds to a prospective aspect, the progressive, and the perfect, respectively.

Therefore, the temporal orderings for dynamic predicates in root clauses are the following. Regarding Aspect: (a) the bare verb form means that T-Sit precedes TT – we get a perfect reading – and (b) a progressive morpheme means that T-Sit includes/coincides with TT. Regarding Time reference: (c) when something in the context (linguistic or not) orders TU after TT, we have past perfect and past progressive readings, respectively, and (d) in the absence of that information, the coincidence between TU and TT is assumed through a pragmatic inference, thus corresponding to a present perfect and a present progressive. These relations are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Temporal relations established by the perfect and the progressive (from Pratas 2018a: 109)

	temporal ordering (aspect)	temporal ordering (tense)	temporal reference
bare verb (null perfect morpheme)	T-Sit precedes TT	TU and TT coincide	Present Perfect
		TU is after TT	Past Perfect
progressive morphology	T-Sit includes/ coincides with TT	TU and TT coincide	Present progressive
		TU is after TT	Past progressive

These aspectual distinctions must now be inserted into a more complicated picture, which includes: (i) the morpheme *ta*, and (ii) the more salient variation regarding other functional items (Pratas 2018a,b).

2.2. The temporal morphemes and why none of them is a tense marker

In Table 2, we have all the relevant temporal morphemes and the corresponding meanings in both varieties.

Table 2: Temporal morphemes in both varieties (from Pratas 2018b)

	Santiago	São Vicente
zero/null \emptyset	gives the bare form of some predicates an apparent past reading	gives the bare form of some predicates an apparent past reading
preverbal progressive	<i>sata/aita</i> used in past and non-past progressives	<i>tita/tite</i> used in non-past progressives
preverbal <i>ta</i>	used in past and non-past habituals, attitudinal, generics, futures	may also be <i>te</i> used in non-past habituals, attitudinal, generics, futures
postverbal <i>-ba</i>	combines with the above morphemes and appears associated with past situations	-----
preverbal <i>tava/tá</i>	-----	-- used in habituals in the past -- combines with <i>ta</i> or <i>te</i> in past progressives

Summarizing the data that are common to both varieties, with only some minor morpho-phonological differences, we have the present progressive and the present perfect, as illustrated in (1), here repeated for convenience:

- (1) (repeated)
- a. *Bu sata/tita kume bolu.*
2SG *SATA/TITA* eat cake
'You are eating (the/a) cake.'
- b. *Bu kume bolu.*
2SG eat cake

Underlying meaning: 'You have eaten (the/a) cake.'

Also common to both varieties is the present attitudinal/present habitual/future,

which are marked with preverbal *ta* (may be *te* in São Vicente⁷), as illustrated in (3).

- (3) *N ta da aula di portugues.*
 1SG TA give class of Portuguese

‘I am a Portuguese teacher.’

‘I teach Portuguese.’

[if preceded by an adverb, like *manhan* ‘tomorrow’]

‘I will give a Portuguese class tomorrow.’

When something in the context, linguistic or not, orders TU after TT, all these values exhibit morphological differences between the two varieties, including some distinct order of the morphemes regarding the verb. This is the case of the perfect in the past, which in Santiago is marked with \emptyset V-*ba* and in São Vicente with *tinha* + suppletive form of a Portuguese past participle. These are illustrated in (4) and (5).

- (4) [...] *N kumeba pexe* [...].
 [...] 1SG \emptyset eat:BA fish

‘[before I went to bed] I had eaten (the) fish.’

- (5) [...] *N tinha kmid pex* [...].
 [...] 1SG had eaten fish

‘[before I went to bed] I had eaten (the) fish.’

This is also the case with the attitudinal/habitual in the past or the conditional (which may be described as the future of the past). In Santiago, we have these values marked with *ta* V-*ba*, and in São Vicente with *tava* or *tá* V. These are illustrated in (6) and (7).

⁷ For a detailed description of more temporal morphemes in São Vicente, I refer the reader to chapter 5 in Swolkien (2014).

- (6) *N ta viveba ma nha madrasta i nha pai [...]*
 1SG TA live:BA with my stepmother and my father [...]
 ‘I used to live with my stepmother and my father [...].’
- (7) *M tava vive ma nha madrasta i nha pai [...]*
 1SG TAVA live with my stepmother and my father [...]
 ‘I used to live with my stepmother and my father [...].’

Finally, this is the case also with the progressive in the past, which is marked with *sata V-ba* in Santiago, and with *tava* or *tá + ta* or *te V* in São Vicente. These are illustrated in (8) and (9).

- (8) *Kantu bu txiga N sata kumeba banana.*
 when 2SG arrive 1SG SATA kume:BA banana
 ‘When you arrived I was eating (the/a) banana.’
- (9) *Kond João txga, Ana e inda tava ta trabaia.*
 when João arrive, Ana 3SG still TAVA TA work
 ‘When João arrived, Ana was still working.’

When we look at these data and if we take the past tense, as said above, to order the Time of Utterance after the Topic Time (Klein 1994, 2010), it could be argued that Santiago *-ba* looks pretty much like a tense marker, as was also defended in Pratas (2007, 2012, 2014). The contribution of São Vicente preverbal allomorphs *tava/tá* seems less straightforward, since they mark more than just the order of TU regarding TT. But at least the case of *-ba* needs to be addressed, and the point here is that there are arguments against its meaning as a tense marker. These are listed below.

The first argument is a weak one: these morphemes are not needed when we have a past interpretation through the perfect, as in (1b). This argument is weak because, although the relevant situation here occurred in a time prior to the TU, the underlying temporal reference is present (TT coincides with TU) – this is, after all, the idea of the perfect to account for this reading.

But there is a stronger argument: Santiago *-ba* occurs in clauses where it doesn't have a past meaning, namely in many embedded contexts. Compare the purpose adverbial clauses in (10):

- (10) a. *Otu algen ta fikaba la n-igreja pa ka*
 other people TA stay:BA LOC PREP-church PREP NEG
moreba.

die:BA

Literally: '[when there were floods] other people would take refuge in the church, to not die.' (so that they wouldn't die)

- b. [...] *e pa nu ba panhaba lenha na txada pa nu*
 be PREP 1PL go grab:BA firewood at grove PREP 1PL
bendeba.

sell:BA

'It was for us to go grab firewood at the grove for us to sell.'

The temporal location of 'die' and 'sell' in (10a) and (10b) might be after TU. Therefore, this embedded *-ba* does not convey a past meaning. The next section sketches an integrated solution to all these puzzles.

3. Alternative proposal

Here, I further develop an alternative analysis for the interpretation of these temporal morphemes, starting with the Santiago *-ba* (3.1) and then extending it to the São Vicente *tava/tá* (3.2), which includes a slightly different morphological form for the same lexical item, in a case of micro-variation perfectly aligned with the Borer-Chomsky conjecture. In 3.3, I summarize the analysis for all the temporal meanings in agreement with the proposal of Pratas (2018a).

3.1. Santiago *-ba* is clearly a temporal agreement morpheme

It seems now quite straightforward that if verbs embedded by non-epistemic modals are non-finite, as they seem to be for syntactic reasons,⁸ there are absolutely no grounds to defend that this embedded *-ba* is a tense morpheme.

Since some of these embedded predicates with *-ba* have a modal meaning – nothing is said about whether, or when, these situations truly occurred – it could therefore be argued that what we have here is a mood agreement morpheme. It does not, however, occur in modal contexts whose embedding situations are not in the past, and thus the strict mood agreement hypothesis is not correct either.

Hence, I propose that that *-ba* is a temporal agreement/concord⁹ morpheme associated with some past environments. It appears (i) in root clauses where a past interpretation is provided by the context, and (ii) in finite and non-finite embedded verbs whose embedding clauses convey past situations.

The same reasoning holds for the preverbal *tavaltá* in the São Vicente variety, with some specificities related to the diachrony of *ta*, which will be explored in the next subsection.

3.2. São Vicente *tavaltá* includes another form of the same lexical item

In order to account for the different morphological forms in Santiago and São Vicente, defending that they are a case of micro-variation in Capeverdean, another conjecture has been formulated, at a different level, about a diachronic phenomenon in the language: Capeverdean *ta* underwent a complete progressive cycle (Pratas 2018a: 120).

It is uncontroversial that *ta* comes from the Portuguese reduced form of *está*, the third person singular of *estar* ‘be’ (stage-level). As documented in Schuchardt (1882),¹⁰ *ta* was initially the progressive marker in Capeverdean, and then suffered a process of grammaticalization, generalizing its use to a more general imperfective meaning, which includes habituais (as proposed in Kihm 1994 for Guinea-Bissau Creole).

⁸ The lack of non-finiteness morphology in the language leads the search for infinitival forms to some syntactic diagnostics, such as the non-permission of aspect markers

⁹ I choose to keep this double classification here to avoid confusion with syntactic agreement.

¹⁰ In Schuchardt (1882: 911, translated in Hagemeyer & Holm 2008) there is the observation that, “originally”, Capeverdean *N ta da* means, in Portuguese, *eu estou dando* or *eu estou a dar* ‘I am giving’, a meaning that has later “blurred to *eu dou*” ‘I give’ (adapt. from Hagemeyer & Holm 2008: 148).

My proposal goes even further, in that I argue that *ta* underwent a complete progressive cycle, such as the one which has been proposed for progressive markers in other languages (see Dahl 1985; Bybee & Dahl 1989; Bybee *et al.* 1994, Deo 2015, among others). This means that, after that shift of *ta* to a more general imperfective use referred to by Schuchardt (1882: 911) for Capeverdean, and Kihm (1994) for Guinea-Bissau Creole, some reinforcement emerged to fill the gap for a more specific progressive marker. With this proposal, I believe that one of the great puzzles about Capeverdean ‘various’ instances of *ta* has been solved: there is only one *ta*, for all contexts (see Pratas 2018a for further details).

The account for the progressive reading of *ta* in embedded clauses headed by perceptive verbs (*N odja Maria ta badja* ‘I have seen Maria dancing’) is now straightforward – in this context, *ta* keeps its original progressive meaning, since there is no possible ambiguity with the habitual.

And, with respect to progressives in root clauses, we now have both the periphrastic forms where *ta* has been reinforced by locative auxiliaries, and the alternative non-periphrastic forms which always involve *ta* (or the allomorph *te*) preceded by some other morphemes with a locative content.

More specifically, in Santiago we now have the progressive forms *sta + ta + V* and also variants of *sata* (*ata*, *aita*). In past environments, licensed by some context that locates TU after TT, there is the temporal agreement/concord *-ba* on the verb; this agreement/concord *-ba* sometimes appears doubled in what seem to be non-finite embedded predicates.

In São Vicente, we now have the non-periphrastic progressive form *tita* (or *tite*), and a periphrastic form with *stod* (*stod + ta*). During the spread of the language from the southern islands, *-ba* was lost (Swolkien 2014: 233 fn82). By analogy with the Portuguese third person singular, past imperfective of *estar* (*estava*), this Capeverdean *tava* is a multifunctional form associated with distinct past environments:

- (i) in past habituais (*tava + V*);
- (ii) as the reinforcement of past progressives (*tava + ta* or *te + V*).

This is a case of micro-variation perfectly aligned with the Borer-Chomsky conjecture, in that we have different morphological forms expressing the abstract features of equivalent functional items, although these features may sometimes be combined in some of the forms and not in the other(s). The theoretical implications of this are still being refined and will be developed in future work.

3.3. The full picture regarding these morphemes

Comrie (1985: 45) makes a statement that is truly precious to account for the temporal meanings in Capeverdean: “[...] some languages have a basic modal distinction between realis and irrealis, where realis refers to situations that have actually taken place or are actually taking place, while irrealis is used for more hypothetical situations, including situations that represent inductive generalisations, and also predictions, including also predictions about the future.” And this is precisely what we have here:

- (i) an irrealis mood, in its various values (generalizations, futures, attitudinals);
- (ii) a realis mood, expressed through the perfect or the progressive.

This motivates the idea that in natural language past, present, or future meanings of a sentence may be expressed without any dedicated tense morphemes. This occurs in Capeverdean in the following way: there is a distinction that is strictly of mood (realis vs. irrealis) and, within the realis mood, there is an aspectual distinction between the perfect and the progressive. To be shifted into a past interpretation, all these irrealis and realis meanings need a context (discourse, adverbs, or other sources of linguistic and/or non-linguistic temporal information) which locates TU after TT. In the absence of this context, an interpretation where TU and TT coincide is obtained through a pragmatic inference. Therefore, the specific morphological forms associated with the past-shifted versions of these mood and aspect meanings are not tense markers, but rather behave like temporal agreement/concord: they do not bring about any past meaning on their own – in conditionals, for instance, they may even occur in embedded clauses that can refer to the present or the future (in cases similar to those which Iatridou (2000) has described as ‘fake past’ for Modern Greek – see Pratas 2007, 2010).

I also propose that there is an underspecification in the mapping between the functional head at stake here and the morphological forms (Adger & Smith 2010), allowing the language to have the different units for this lexical item (temporal concord/agreement) that we find in each variety: in the older variety of Santiago, we have the postverbal *-ba*; in the younger variety of São Vicente, we have *tava/tá*, which is more complex, since it incorporates this temporal agreement/concord and either the habitual meaning or the locative reinforcement of the progressive. Also in São Vicente, some suppletive forms from Portuguese are used in other contexts where Santiago has *-ba*, such as

tinha ‘had’ + suppletive form of the participle for the past perfect. The following tables, from Pratas (2018b: 119), illustrate all these relations.

Table 3: Mood and aspect values, with the temporal agreement/concord -ba (Santiago)

	realis		irrealis
	perfect	progressive	habitual or prospective
TU coincides with TT	V (present perfect) (1b)	<i>sata</i> V (present progressive) (1a)	<i>ta</i> V (present habitual or future) (3)
TU is after TT (provided by the context)	<i>V-ba</i> (past perfect) (4)	<i>sata V-ba</i> (past progressive) (2a)	<i>ta V-ba</i> (past habitual or conditional) (6)

Table 4: Mood and aspect values, with the temporal agreement/concord tava/tá (São Vicente)

	realis		irrealis
	perfect	progressive	habitual or prospective
TU coincides with TT	V (present perfect) (1b)	<i>tita/tite</i> V (present progressive) (1a)	<i>ta</i> V (present habitual or future) (3)
TU is after TT (provided by the context)	<i>tinha</i> + participle (past perfect) (5)	<i>tava</i> or <i>tá</i> + <i>ta</i> or <i>te</i> V (past progressive) (2b)	<i>tava</i> or <i>tá</i> V (past habitual or conditional) (7)

In the next section, I return to the follow-up of this study in a new contact situation: Capeverdean in contact with English in the large community of Cabo Verdeans living in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, on the East Coast of the United States.

4. A new contact situation

Before the outline of the main questions that will guide my future research, in 4.3, I present the relevant information that I recently gathered to characterize the understudied contact situation at stake here, the one between Capeverdean and English in a specific area of the United States. The first two subsections summarize some historical and social data (4.1) and what we know so far about the linguistic effects of this contact on the local varieties of Capeverdean (4.2).

4.1. Some historical and social data

Massachusetts and Rhode Island were the first destinations of the significant immigration movement from Cabo Verde in the 19th century. Sánchez Gibau (2005) describes how this movement started in the beginning of the 19th century, when whalers from the American East Coast “acquired cheap labour from Cape Verde as well as from other Atlantic Islands, such as Madeira and the Azores. These crewmen would form the bases of settlement communities that emerged principally in the cities of New Bedford, Massachusetts, and East Providence, Rhode Island.” (Sánchez Gibau 2005: 408). In fact, men were the first to go, and, “after years in the whaling and in other industries such as fishing, textiles, and agriculture”, they could also bring along their wives and children (ibid.). When the whaling activities started to decline, many began to work in the cranberry business, followed by a period of decline in immigration to this area due to more restrictive state laws. And then immigration from Cabo Verde intensified again in the last quarter of the 20th century.

Nowadays, and according to the many interesting data in the publication dedicated to the local Cabo Verdean immigrants in the series “Imagine all the people”, produced by the Boston Redevelopment Authority for the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Advancement,¹¹ specific attention is paid to this immigrant community in New England, and more particularly in Massachusetts, since this state alone is officially home to more than 25,000 of these immigrants, of which almost 8,000 live in Boston, making them the sixth largest foreign-born population living in this city. However, these official numbers do not represent the whole community, which constantly receives new immigrants, many of which stay undocumented for large periods, and comprises also many people with Cabo Verdean ancestry who were born in the US. Therefore, if we include all the foreign-born and second, third and fourth generations of Cabo Verdeans, we are dealing with an estimated 400,000 people, which is a huge number considering that Cabo Verde itself has around half a million inhabitants.

Interestingly, the official statistics¹² report that approximately 46% of all (officially acknowledged) foreign-born Cabo Verdeans in Boston have ages between 35 and 64, with an average age of 41 years. Most of them are female (63%) and naturalized U.S. citizens (56%). Although the younger generations of Cabo Verdean immigrants are better schooled than their parents, there is still

¹¹ Accessible at: <https://pt.slideshare.net/alvaroelima/cape-verdeans-in-boston>

¹² U.S. Census Bureau’s ACS Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS), 2009-2013, cited in that brochure.

a high rate of foreign-born Cabo Verdeans in Boston who are 25 years or older and did not complete high school (48%).

Even though Cabo Verdeans in this area are generally less educated in comparison with other local communities – which in some cases also means a less proficiency in English – they are well represented in the local labour force, mostly in lower-income activities: services, food preparation, construction, extraction, maintenance, transportation, and production.

Among the Cabo Verdean children between 5 and 17 who have exclusively foreign-born parent(s), about 19% only speak English at home. It is very interesting to relate this with the importance of Kriolu within the community. According to the few ethnographic studies on this topic, such as Lima (2012), Pilgrim (2008), and Sánchez Gibau (2005), Cabo Verdeans in America contend they are black, that their ancestors came from an African archipelago, and that they may love this host country a lot, but they are not African-Americans. Sánchez Gibau, who is herself a fourth generation Cabo Verdean, affirms in her ‘Narratives of Race and Ethnicity in the Cape Verdean Diaspora’ that “Cape Verdeans in Boston, as an African diasporic community, actively challenge the United States system of racial classification in their self-identification practices” (Sánchez Gibau 2005: 413). They feel closer to the “Latino population because of the similarity of foreign status and linguistic issues experienced as residents of Boston” (Sánchez Gibau 2005: 421). In the case they choose any hyphenated name, they prefer Cabo Verdean-Americans.

Their language is a very salient part of this identity affirmation at all levels: people not only speak Capeverdean at home and with family and friends, but many also have started to study it in several courses offered at local clubs, schools, and even universities,¹³ which has a particular impact on the younger generations of speakers – they may have English as their dominant language, having acquired it in kindergartens and sometimes also at home, especially when their parents feel the need for integration, but then they re-discover the language of their parents and grandparents, and want to master it too, not only out of curiosity but also as a means to affirm their belonging to the community. In this sense, this is a very promising situation to study all types of relation with their heritage language (see, for instance, Kupisch & Rothman 2016).

Among the ten consultants I interviewed in October 2018 in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, nine were born in Cabo Verde – the other one is a speaker who re-discovered Capeverdean as an adult and has become a language activist. Four of them are in their late thirties, early forties, and have

¹³ This is the case of the LusoCentro, the Bristol Community College, Fall River, Rhode Island.

children who, according to them, speak English very well, which has further improved through education. Their concern is precisely that their children do not master Kriolu as well as they master English. Since they consider that their own mother tongue (and their heritage language) is of extreme importance to define their identity in the host country, they have these two goals for their American-born children: they want them to be fluent in English, so that they can feel completely at home in their daily lives, and, at the same time, they do not want them to abandon their Cabo Verdean identity, including Kriolu.

Given that English usage is guaranteed at school, they use Kriolu at home, or even send the children to their grandparents during the Summer holidays, so that they have an opportunity to practice Capeverdean. Differently from their parents or grandparents in Cabo Verde, who went to school in Cabo Verde, most of these children do not speak Portuguese at all.

4.2. Linguistic effects of this contact: what we know so far

One of my male consultants, age 36, who came from Santiago to Providence when he was almost 16, says that in the beginning he found the locally spoken Kriolu strange, which he believes was the result of the predominance of the Brava variety in that specific area: *Nha Kriolu era mutu mas diferenti di ki ses* ‘My Kriolu was very different from theirs.’ This points to another feature of this complex contact situation: besides (or before) the effects of the contact with English, we have the effects of the local mixing between people with different native varieties. Moreover, there are Cabo Verdeans who immigrated a long time ago and whose grammar still exhibits linguistic features that no longer have a perfect match in Cabo Verde. None of these stages of linguistic contact has ever been rigorously described for this community.

Interestingly, this consultant from Santiago also told me that he later studied in local, American high schools, greatly improving his English (he had already learned some at high school in Cabo Verde). Today he is a proficient bilingual, and professionally successful. He fondly recalls how, in the times when he still spoke English with some accent, a teacher of English Literature once told him (he translated this into Kriolu): *N ten serteza ma ora bu ta pensa, bu ka ta pensa ku asentu* ‘I’m sure that when you think, you don’t think with an accent.’

As for the linguistic innovations that were brought about by the contact with English, they are acknowledged by the coined items Creonglish, Crenghlish or Kringlish, which seek to capture this expression of variation and are accepted with affection by many local Cabo Verdeans. Ambrizeth Lima has already

referred to “a new language” and says that “[n]ewly arrived immigrants would have problems understanding Creenglish because of the heavy English influence [on Capeverdean].” (Lima, at the quizlet.com/_3wrajy) She summarizes some of its features, most of which are lexical, and others have been reported to me by my local consultants. For example, English borrowings have been accommodated to the Capeverdean syllable structure: *buku* (from ‘book’) instead of *livru*; *sno* (from ‘snow’) instead of *nevi*; *loka porta* (from ‘lock the door’) instead of *tranka porta*; *gabineti* (from ‘cabinet’) instead of *armariu*. Some of these new words can be modified by typical Capeverdean morphology: *disloka porta* (compare to English ‘unlock the door’ and to Capeverdean *distranka porta*); or *disfriza* (compare to English ‘defrost’). Finally, there are specific constructions that may already involve some morphosyntactic phenomena, such as:

(11) *N txoma-l pa tras.* [rather than *N txoma-l di volta*]
 1SG call-3SG to back 1SG call-3SG of back
 ‘I called her/him back.’

(12) *N bai Pedru si kaza.* [rather than *N bai kaza di Pedru*]
 1SG go Pedru 3SG house 1SG go house of Pedru
 ‘I went to Pedru’s house.’

Since last December, a list of words generically called Kringlish has been circulating in Cabo Verdeans’ social networks with the humorous stimulus: “pick a word and use it in a sentence”. One of my consultants, who pointed this out to me, says these words show a lot of influence from the varieties of Brava and Fogo, but are now used regularly and freely by people from different islands. Crucially, when we first meet these words in the written form, one of the first challenges is to recognise them, since their spelling may vary significantly. Therefore, we may better figure out both their meaning and origin when we say them out loud, since the phonological clues are much better identified within a language which has no fixed spelling for its original words, let alone new products of the speakers’ creativity, like *compiura*, *striti* or *gabedja* (respectively: ‘computer’, ‘street’, and ‘garbage’).

4.3. Lines for future research

So far these are mainly anecdotal examples, which indeed call for a rather extensive study. In pursuing this novel line of inquiry, we hope to understand whether this contact situation can be considered a case of language maintenance, which refers “to the preservation by a speech community of its native language from generation to generation” – a process in which the “various subsystems of the language – the phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and core lexicon – remain relatively intact” (Winford 2003: 11-12). The word “relatively” thus predicts some space for cases of “borrowing”, in the sense also used by Winford, following Thomason and Kaufman (1988: 37): “the incorporation of foreign features into a group’s native language by speakers of that language.” This specific definition is relevant here, since it states that the agents of change are its native speakers. In other words, this is also something to be investigated: is it the case that this influence is imposed from the outside (the speakers of the source language – English, in this context) or are they voluntarily used by the speakers of the recipient language (Capeverdean)?

My primary focus, however, concerns whether contact is having any effect at the level of temporal meaning and micro-variation described in section 2 and 3. There are cases where “prolonged social interaction between members of different speech communities may result in varying degrees of mixture and structural change” (Winford 2003: 2). In the interviews with my local consultants, who are educated people with strong language-awareness, there was no sign of any structural interference of English at the level of aspect and mood marking, that is, at the level of the compositional expression of temporal meaning. This is itself a very interesting piece of information, which raises questions about contact-induced change in different domains of grammar. Hence, the possible effects of contact in this specific domain of Capeverdean grammar requires further research, considering the different sociolinguistic profiles found in the community, and this is under planning and expected for the near future.

5. Concluding remarks

This paper has two clearly distinct parts. The first part, consisting of sections 2 and 3, defends that in natural language past, present, and future meanings of a sentence may be expressed without any dedicated tense morphemes. This occurs in Capeverdean in the following way: there is a distinction that is strictly

of mood (realis vs. irrealis) and, within the realis mood, there is an aspectual distinction between the perfect and the progressive. To be shifted into a past interpretation, all these irrealis and realis meanings need a context (discourse, adverbs, other information, linguistic and non-linguistic, etc.) which locates TU after TT; in the absence of this context, an interpretation where TU and TT coincide is obtained through a pragmatic inference.

The specific morphological forms associated with the past-shifted versions of these mood and aspect meanings behave like temporal agreement/concord rather than strict tense markers. Moreover, there is underspecification in the mapping between this functional head (temporal agreement/concord) and the morphological forms (Adger & Smith 2010), allowing the language to exhibit the different units we find in each variety: in the older variety of Santiago, we have postverbal *-ba*; in the younger variety of São Vicente, we have *tava/tá*, which is more complex, since it incorporates (i) this temporal agreement and (ii) either (a) the habitual meaning or (b) the locative reinforcement of the progressive (reinforcement that results from a complete progressive cycle of *ta*). Moreover, in São Vicente some suppletive forms from Portuguese are used in other contexts where Santiago has *-ba*, such as *tinha* + suppletive form of the participle for the past perfect.

Taking these properties of the language as the main working hypotheses, in the second part of the paper (section 4) I am proposing to investigate how these features react to the contact situation that Capeverdean now experiences in New England, the United States area to where hundreds of thousands Cabo Verdeans have immigrated since the early 19th century. More specifically, given that there are already many attested lexical borrowings, it will be important to verify whether these Capeverdean phenomena are vulnerable to the influence of English, the dominant language. The basis of this future work has been established during an exploratory fieldtrip to Rhode Island and Massachusetts in October 2018, in which it was confirmed that the local linguistic situation, which is very complex and allows for different sources of variation, has never been extensively described, let alone properly studied.

Abbreviations

1SG=first person singular (with correspondent forms for other pronouns); **LOC**=locative; **NEG**=sentential negation; **PREP**=preposition

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