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Title

Elements of denial in Capeverdean: the negator *ka* and the properties of *n*-words

Short title:

Elements of denial in Capeverdean

Abstract

This paper deals with the expression of negation in Capeverdean. More specifically, it aims at showing that this Portuguese-based Creole is a strict Negative Concord language. In fact, *n*-words (Laka 1990) like *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ always co-occur with sentential negation, be they in preverbal or postverbal position. This means that they are prohibited in all non-negative clauses, including modal contexts. Syntactically, they show a behavior typical of weak Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), which are variable underspecified for negative features (Martins 2000). Following Giannakidou (2002), I will propose that, semantically, these Capeverdean *n*-words are universal quantifiers with no intrinsic negative meaning. Finally, I briefly address the adverbs *tioxi* and *nunka*, which roughly mean ‘never’, and show that whereas the former is also a weak NPI but not a quantifier, the latter may be ambiguous between a strong and a weak NPI and seems to be a quantifier.

Keywords: Capeverdean, sentential negation, Negative Concord, *n*-words, universal quantifiers

1. Introduction

In the Santiago variety of Capeverdean,¹ a Portuguese-based Creole language, sentential negation is expressed by the word *ka*, as illustrated in (1) (Pratas 2012b):

- (1) *E ka ta furta.*
3SG NEG TMA steal²
‘He does not steal.’

¹ For the rest of the paper, I will refer simply to Capeverdean, but the only variety under analysis here is the one spoken in the Santiago Island.

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² List of abbreviations: 1SG/1PL - 1st person singular/plural; ADV - adverb; COMP - complementizer; NEG - sentential negator; PREP - preposition; PST - past; REL - relative pronoun; TMA - temporal morpheme (used in some cases for preverbal *ta*, which has a complex modal function).

The word *ka* generally occurs in a preverbal position, just as seen in (1). The verb here is *furta* ‘steal’, but this order occurs with all the other verbs, the only exception being the present copula *e* ‘be.INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL’,³ with which the negative marker appears postverbally.⁴ See this occurrence in (2) (Pratas 2012b):

- (2) *El e ka malkriadu.*
 3SG be.INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL NEG rude
 ‘He is not rude.’

Note that in (1) we have a different *e*, the subject clitic for the third person singular. These homophonous words never co-occur: as we see in (2), in the presence of the copula *e* the third person singular pronoun is not a clitic, but rather a free form.⁵ In this context, a clitic is ruled out:

- (3) **E e ka malkriadu.*
 3SG be.INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL NEG rude

Interestingly, the word order in (2) does never occur when this copula is in the past: *era* ‘be.PST’. Moreover, in negative sentences the present copula *e* can be null. In (4), we have a set of examples that captures these facts regarding this copula and the sentential negation (Pratas 2007: 125). In (4a), we have the past copula *era* ‘be.PST’ and we see that the word order is the same as with all the other verbs. The example in (4b) shows that the copula ‘be’ may be null in negative contexts and, when it is, the only temporal reading available is present. In (4c), we see that the copula cannot be null in non-negative clauses.

- (4) a. *Wosvaldu ka era riku. / *Wosvaldu era ka riku.*
 Wosvaldu NEG be.PST rich / Wosvaldu be.PST NEG rich
 ‘Wosvaldu was not rich.’
 b. *Wosvaldu ka riku.*
 Wosvaldu NEG rich
 ‘Wosvaldu is not rich.’ / * ‘Wosvaldu was not rich.’

³ There is another present copula in the language: *sta* ‘be.STAGE-LEVEL’. For simplicity, however, *e* is from now on only indicated as ‘be’.

⁴ I refer the interested reader to Baptista (2002: 104 fn 15) for different judgements in other varieties.

⁵ In Capeverdean, there are three types of personal pronominal forms: emphatic forms, free forms and clitics. The clitics are the most commonly used. The emphatic forms are generally used in clitic doubling contexts (see the second coordinate clause in (5)) and the free forms are obligatory in cases where there is some specific local restriction, e.g. the copula *e* requires a free pronoun in the subject position and the past affix *-ba* requires a free pronoun in the object position.

c. * *Wosvaldu riku.*

Wosvaldu rich

The proposal in Pratas (2007: 123-124) for the syntactic status of *ka* is that it is a head. It is also assumed in the present paper that *ka* shows a specific head behavior, namely regarding the impossibility of being focalized (5) or occurring isolated (6). In both cases we must use the adverb *nau* ‘no’:

(5) *N gosta txeu di katxupa, mas abo, bu *ka /nau.*
1SG like much of katxupa but 2SG, 2SG NEG / no
‘I like katxupa a lot, but you, you don’t.’

(6) Question: *Bu ta ben ku mi?*
2SG TMA come with 1SG?
‘Do you come /are you coming with me?’
Answer: * *Ka / Nau.*
NEG / ADV
‘No.’

The DP’s *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’, which from now on I will simply mention as *n*-words in the sense of Laka (1990), always co-occur with this sentential negator *ka*, be they in preverbal or postverbal position. Note that this co-occurrence of *ningen* ‘no.one’ or *nada* ‘nothing’ with *ka* keeps the negative value of the sentence. See the example in (7), with *ningen* ‘no.one’ in the subject position (Pratas 2007: 124):

(7) *Ningen *(ka) gosta di mi.*
no.one NEG like of 1SG
‘Nobody likes me.’

Therefore, Capeverdean exhibits strict Negative Concord (NC). Contrast this with the correspondent sentence in Portuguese, the European lexifier of this Creole language, which displays non-strict Negative Concord – only *n*-words in postverbal position co-occur with the sentential negator *não* ‘not’:

(8) a. *Ninguém (*nãõ) gosta de mim.*
no.one not like of me
‘No one likes me.’
b. *Eu *(nãõ) vi ninguém.*
1SG NEG see.1SG.PST no.one
‘I didn’t see anybody.’

The facts just described raise some very interesting questions about these Capeverdean words. Namely:

- (9) a. What is the semantic status of the DP's *ningen* 'no.one' and *nada* 'nothing'? I have affirmed above that I am calling them *n*-words in the sense of Laka (1990). But does their morphology – which in fact includes the initial 'n' – mean that they have an intrinsic negative meaning?
- b. Moreover: are they indefinites or quantifiers?

Furthermore, these facts also raise interesting questions about the expression of negation in the language. Namely:

- (10)a. How is logical negation obtained for the sentence in (7)? In other words, what is the syntactic configuration that accommodates both the sentential negator *ka* and the word *ningen*, maintaining the meaning of one logical negation only?
- b. What about adverbs like *nunka* or *tioxi*? Roughly, they both mean 'never', but does their distribution regarding sentential negation obey the same constraints as *ningen* or *nada*?

The present paper addresses the questions in (9) and (10), providing a proposal based on generative approaches for other languages (Zanuttini 1991, 1994, Martins 2000, Giannakidou 2000, 2002, among others). In so doing, it will also bring a substantial contribution to a better understanding of the mechanisms for expressing negation in natural language.

Regarding the questions in (9), I will argue that the *n*-words *ningen* 'no.one' and *nada* 'nothing' are universal quantifiers with no inherent negative meaning, just as Giannakidou (2002) has proposed for Greek and Romanian, also strict NC languages. Their semantic properties as quantifiers, namely their inherent operator status, are important to account for the fact that they are able to bind a specific kind of variable (Costa & Pratas 2012).

This characterization as quantifiers, however, does not provide a satisfactory answer to the questions in (10). Thus, regarding the relation of these *n*-words with sentential negation (SN), I will follow the feature system in Martins (2000) and propose that they are weak Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), variable underspecified for negation. They enter into an agreement relation with PolP (Zanuttini 1991), which is responsible for the polarity value of the sentence. Thus, these *n*-words plus *ka* are part of the same logical negation.

The structure of the paper is as follows. In section 2, I will show that these Capeverdean *n*-words cannot occur non-negative contexts, and I will discuss their status regarding the structure of negative clauses. In section 3, I will propose that these *n*-words are universal quantifiers. In section 4, I will briefly discuss the adverbs *nunka* and *tioxi*, which roughly mean 'never'. Finally, section 5 will present some concluding remarks and leaves open some points for future research.

2. Capeverdean *n*-words are weak NPIs

In strictly descriptive terms, we can say that in Capeverdean there is Negative Concord (NC), a more recent expression to the facts previously known as *double attraction* (Jespersen 1917), *negative attraction rule* (Labov 1972) or *neg-incorporation* (Klima 1964). Moreover, NC in the language is strict: as opposed to languages with non-strict NC, Capeverdean *n*-words *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ always co-occur with the sentential negator *ka*, even when they are in a preverbal position. Consider the sentence in (7), here repeated in (11a). In (11b) we have an example with *nada* ‘nothing’, adapted from Pina (2006: 139):

- (11) a. *Ningen ka gosta di mi.*
 no.one NEG like of 1SG
 ‘No one likes me.’
 b. *Nada ka txiga.*
 nothing NEG arrive
 ‘Nothing has arrived.’

At first sight, one could consider that there are two negations in each of these sentences, which contradicts their actual interpretation: we know that each of the sentences conveys only one logical negation. Nevertheless, as Giannakidou (2000) puts it, this type of structure only poses a problem for compositionality – according to which the meaning of a sentence is built from the meaning of its words – if we take *n*-words to be inherently negative. If we do, the problem for compositionality is the following: since we do have two negative imports in the clause (the negative operator that provides sentential negation and the *n*-word), how come that they do not cancel each other, resulting in an affirmative clause?

The main goal of this section is to demonstrate that Capeverdean *n*-words *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ show a behavior typical of weak NPIs, which are variable underspecified for negative features (Martins 2000). In subsection 2.1, I will describe their distribution in greater detail, showing that they cannot occur in non-negative contexts,⁶ and I present an account for the structure of the negative sentences in which they participate. In subsection 2.2, I will argue that they do not have an intrinsic negative meaning: following Giannakidou (2002), I will oppose the evidence usually taken from fragment answers.

2.1. The distribution of *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’

Both *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ are barred from non-negative contexts. More specifically, they are not allowed in modal contexts like

⁶ This is opposed to other modern Romance languages, where *n*-words such as ‘no.one’ and ‘nothing’ may appear in modal contexts of the same type as the ones illustrated here, in subsection 2.1. For more details about this, see Martins (2000).

interrogatives, under the scope of words conveying prohibition or doubt, or under the scope of modal verbs. This is shown in the next set of examples:

(12)* *Bu odja ningen?*
 2SG see no.one
 Intended meaning: ‘Have you seen anyone?’

(13) * *Xefi proibi pa ningen sai di skritorio.*
 boss forbid for no.one leave of office
 Intended meaning: ‘The boss has forbidden everyone from leaving the office.’

(14) * *N ka ta seta ma bu ta oferese-m nada.*
 1SG NEG TMA accept COMP 2SG TMA offer-1SG nothing
 Intended meaning: ‘I do not believe that you don’t offer me anything.’

(15) * *N ka ta fla segredu ki pode ofende ningen.*
 1SG NEG TMA tell secret that may offend no.one
 Intended meaning: ‘I don’t tell secrets that may offend anyone.’

These distributional properties are similar to the ones described in Martins (2000) for two modern Romance languages: Romanian and Venetian. In this paper I adopt for Capeverdean her proposal to account for those languages, although, for reasons of space, I will not be making comparisons to other Romance varieties.⁷

Following Rooryck's (1994) application of the phonological notion of underspecification to syntactic features, Martins (2000) assumes that features are associated with one of three possible values: specified (+), nonvariable underspecified (0) and variable underspecified (α). This means that “an element with a [0 neg-feature], for example, is simply unable to enter any operation related to the expression of a negative meaning” (Martins 2000: 9). As for elements with variable underspecified features, they “can enter operations leading to the filling in of their former underspecified value – a feature-filling ‘agreement’ relation converts [α F] to [+ F].” Now, dealing with the specific features under analysis – polarity features –, she follows Laka (1990) and Zanuttini (1994, 1997), among others, in assuming that “the structure of the clause includes a functional projection, say PolP, where polarity features are located” (Martins 2000: 10). She “[takes] Pol to always contain the same set of features: aff(irmation)-features, neg(ation)-features and mod(ality)-features – roughly corresponding to the grammatical encoding of

⁷ For the details of these other languages, and also for a diachronic analysis that includes the properties of Old Romance and the linguistic changes occurred regarding *n*-words, I refer the interested reader to Martins (2000).

the semantic notions of ‘veridicality’, ‘[anti]veridicality’ and ‘non-veridicality’ respectively (cf. Zwarts 1995, Giannakidou 1997 and Espinal 1998).”⁸

Roughly, these features are schematized in (16):

(16) Polarity features:

- affirmative
- modal
- negative

Each of these features of Pol may exhibit a value that is:

- specified [+]
- or
- underspecified
 - nonvariable [0]
 - or
 - variable [α]

Thus, for different interpretations, we have different values associated with each of the features of Pol. She gives this set of correspondences as an example (Martins 2000: 10):

(17) Pol [+ aff, 0 neg, 0 mod]	John left
Pol [0 aff, + neg, 0 mod]	John didn’t leave
Pol [0 aff, 0 neg, + mod (mod: ‘interrogative’)]	Did John leave?

With Zanuttini, she also assumes that there is variation across languages regarding the strength of the neg-features of Pol. In languages where the neg-features of Pol are strong (Spanish and Portuguese are examples for this), checking must take place before Spell Out; in this case, either the negative marker or another negative element must precede the verb. In languages where the neg-features of Pol are weak (like, say, French), checking takes place at LF; in this case a negative element will not necessarily precede the verb.

Another important assumption for Martins’ (2000) system is that the distinction between strong and weak NPIs is a matter of specified *vs.* α -underspecified neg-features. Strong NPIs are elements specified for neg-features – [+ neg]. Therefore, in the terms of Zanuttini (1994, 1997), as long as they are in the domain of Pol, they can check the [+ neg] feature of Pol in negative clauses before Spell Out (which is required in languages with strong neg-features). Weak NPIs are variable underspecified for neg-features – [α neg]. Thus, even when they are in the domain of Pol, they cannot check the strong neg-feature of Pol in negative clauses before Spell Out. Because of this, in languages with strong neg-features the presence of the overt negative marker

⁸ As explained in Giannakidou (2000: 468): “[roughly], an operator is non-veridical iff it does not entail the truth of the proposition it embeds”; and “[antiveridical] operators are ‘negative’ in that they entail the falsity of the proposition they embed”.

is needed. Since α -features are ‘transparent’, the preverbal weak NPI will have its neg-feature value ‘filled in’ under an agreement configuration with the negative marker, and, thus, there is no clash between the underspecified neg-feature of the weak NPI and the strong neg-feature of Pol.

I will follow this proposal and argue that the structure of Capeverdean negative clauses depends on two properties: (a) just like what happens in Spanish or Portuguese, the neg-feature of Pol is strong; therefore, checking must take place before Spell Out, which means that the relevant negative element must precede the verb; (b) the *n*-words *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ are weak NPIs; thus, they are [α neg]; this means that, even when they are in the domain of Pol, they cannot check its strong neg-feature in negative clauses and the presence of the overt negative marker, *ka*, is needed. Furthermore, the neg-feature of these *n*-words, which is lexically underspecified, gets ‘filled in’ under an agreement configuration with the negative marker.

Under this system, the prohibition of *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ in non-negative contexts nicely follows. These Capeverdean *n*-words are non-variable underspecified (0) both for aff-features and for mod-features. Summing up, just like what Martins (2000) has proposed for Romanian and Venetian, here is the representation of their values for the different polarity features:

- (18) Values for the polarity features of *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’
[0 aff, α neg, 0 mod]

One final note in this subsection is that, although this analysis accounts for the distribution of these *n*-words, it does not cover all their properties in Capeverdean. In section 3, we will see that a further semantic characterization is needed, and I will explore the proposal in Giannakidou (2000, 2002), regarding the possibility that they are universal quantifiers. Note that, just like this author argues for Greek and other strict NC languages, they are *not* negative quantifiers (in the terms proposed in Zanuttini 1991, Haegeman and Zanuttini 1991): in fact, they do not have an intrinsic negative meaning. This might have become clear in this subsection – being [α neg], they cannot check the strong neg-feature of Pol in negative clauses before Spell Out. But there is always the traditional argument that, if they can provide negative fragment answers, they must have a negative import (cf. Pina 2006). Again, I will follow Giannakidou (2002) and contradict this traditional line of reasoning. This is the subject of the next subsection.

2.2. Capeverdean *n*-words do not have an intrinsic negative meaning

Recall the following reasoning from a previous section: as Giannakidou (2000) puts it, the type of structures exemplified in (7) only poses a problem for compositionality if we take *n*-words to be inherently negative. Therefore, in Capeverdean this problem does not exist. The empirical facts described above

show that the *n*-words under analysis are not specified for a negative-feature (contra Pina 2006, who, without any detailed consideration of feature values, affirms that they are like the Portuguese strong NPIs, following Matos 2003). Moreover, the traditional argument that takes negative fragment answers as evidence for the negative nature of these words is easily contradicted when we assume that these fragment answers are a result of ellipsis. Take the following example, adapted from Pina (2006: 140):

- (19) Q. *Kenha ki txiga?*
 who that arrive
 ‘Who did arrive?’
 A. *Ningen.*
 no.one
 ‘No one.’

If we assumed that the answer is exclusively constituted by the *n*-word, a straightforward conclusion would be that it has an intrinsic negative meaning. But let us consider what Giannakidou (2002: 27) says that “counts as a fragment answer:

- (20) Fragment answer:
 An answer α to a wh-question Q is a fragment answer iff:
 (a) α corresponds in form to the wh-XP constituent in Q; and
 (b) α is interpreted as a proposition.

It follows from (a) and (b) jointly that a fragment answer is an elliptical structure, since α is a non-sentential constituent which nevertheless receives the interpretation of a sentence.”

Thus, the true meaning of the answer in (19) is as follows:

- (21) *Ningen ~~ka~~ txiga.*⁹
 no.one NEG arrive
 ‘No one has arrived.’

The proposal here is, therefore, that the participation of these *n*-words in fragment answers must also be licensed by sentential negation *ka*, under which their [α neg] feature gets ‘filled in’. Although a part of the clause is not pronounced, it is active in its syntactic effects and interpretation, as is typical

⁹ A reviewer pointed out that this explanation fails to account for the fact that a fragment answer with *algun djenti* ‘someone’ is ungrammatical in Capeverdean. Note, however, that the restrictions imposed on positive polarity items with an existential import may be different from the ones affecting the NPIs under analysis here. Hence, I consider that this is not even a valid argument against the ellipsis proposal illustrated in (20). Moreover, according to my consultants, the full clause *Algum djenti txiga* is odd as a non-fragment answer to that question.

of ellipsis configurations. This perfectly contradicts the use of fragment answers as evidence that Capeverdean *n*-words have an intrinsic negative meaning.

In the next section I will argue that these *n*-words are universal quantifiers.

3. Capeverdean *n*-words are universal quantifiers

As noted above, although this analysis accounts for the distribution of these *n*-words, it does not cover all their properties in Capeverdean. As we will see in greater detail in subsection 3.2, they must indeed have a quantifier status, since in certain contexts they function as operators, able to bind a specific kind of variable. Before discussing this, however, in subsection 3.1 I will show that they obey some of the relevant diagnostics proposed in Giannakidou (2002).

3.1. Capeverdean *n*-words are licensed locally and may be modified by almost

According to Giannakidou (2002), one can tell the difference between universal *n*-words and existential *n*-words through some relevant diagnostics.

(22) Diagnostics for **universal *n*-words** [slightly adapted from Giannakidou 2002: 42]

A universal *n*-word has the following properties:

- (a) It is licensed only by local negation; long-distance licensing may be allowed only through an infinitival or subjunctive clause.
- (b) It expresses existential commitment, i.e. we tend to interpret it with a non-empty restriction.
- (c) It can be used as topic in topicalization structures. In these cases it may be coindexed with a clitic pronoun (or, in other languages, a free pronoun).
- (d) It can be modified by modifiers corresponding to *almost/absolutely*.
- (e) It cannot bind donkey pronouns (at another point, Giannakidou acknowledges that this “may actually not be one of the most reliable diagnostics”).
- (f) It cannot be used as a predicate nominal.

Here I present empirical evidence for the diagnostics in (21a) and (21d), which point to a contrast between universal *n*-words and existential *n*-words – the latter are licensed long-distance in complement clauses and cannot be modified by adverbs corresponding to *almost/absolutely*. The other tests will be used in future works about other Capeverdean *n*-words, when other lexical items, with different properties from the ones under analysis here, will be studied. This will be the case of the modifier *ninhun*, roughly corresponding to the Greek *kanena*, as in *kanena vivlio*, meaning ‘no book’.

Resuming the analysis of the DPs *ningen* and *nada*, we have the following examples regarding their local licensing: (23) shows that they are not licensed

across the complementizer *ma* ‘that’;¹⁰ (24) shows their possible licensing long-distance through an infinitival clause:

(23) * *Maria ka fla m-e odja ningen.*
 Maria NEG say COMP-3SG see no.one
 Intended meaning: ‘Maria didn’t say she hasn’t seen anybody.’¹¹

(24) *Maria ka kre odja ningen.*
 Maria NEG want see no.one
 Intended meaning: ‘Maria doesn’t want to see anybody.’

As for the modification by degree adverbs, such as the ones equivalent to ‘almost’, again, Capeverdean data show that *n*-words behave like universal quantifiers. See this in the examples in (25):

(25) a. *Kuasi ningen ka ben festa.*
 almost no.one NEG come party
 ‘Almost nobody came to the party.’
 b. *E ka kume kuasi nada.*
 3SG NEG eat almost nothing
 ‘He has eaten almost nothing.’

In the next subsection, I will provide some further independent evidence in favor of the quantifier nature of Capeverdean *n*-words like *ningen* ‘no.one’.

3.2. Capeverdean *ningen* has an inherent operator status

An independent motivation for the idea that the Capeverdean *n*-word *ningen* ‘no.one’ is a quantifier is that it reveals an inherent operator status regarding the possibility of licensing a null embedded subject as a bound variable, in very specific contexts. The argumentation goes as follows: the language has null expletive subjects of the type illustrated in (26), but prohibits null referential subjects in root clauses, here illustrated in (27) (examples from Pratas 2007, Costa & Pratas 2012):

(26) *Sata txobe na Lisboa.*
 PROG rain in Lisbon
 ‘It’s raining in Lisbon.’

(27) *(N) *Sta duenti.*¹²

¹⁰ Note that, at least in this respect, NC in Capeverdean is different from NC in Haitian Creole; in the latter, NC is unbounded (see Déprez 1999 for the details of this).

¹¹ A double negation reading is not accepted either.

¹² Baptista (2002) includes two other cases in which, according to her, root null subjects are possible in Capeverdean: with stage-level predicates and with copular predicates, such as in (i) and (ii), respectively:

1SG be.STAGE-LEVEL sick
 ‘I am sick.’

However, it allows for one specific type of embedded null subjects, in sentences like the one in (27):

(28) *Ningen_i / Tudu algen_i ka atxa livru ki Ø_i perdeba.*
 no.one every person NEG find book REL lose:PST

Note that the embedded null subject is co-indexed with the *n*-word *ningen* ‘no.one’ or with *tudu algen* ‘everybody’, and in Costa & Pratas (2012) it has been argued that it is licensed as a bound variable, such as was proposed in Modesto (2000) for Brazilian Portuguese. This way, it is predicted that it can occur in islands, a prediction that is borne out in Capeverdean, as shown in (28), in which the null subject is inside a relative clause. Thus, Costa & Pratas (2012) argue that *pro* is in fact available in Capeverdean, but is restricted to contexts in which it establishes a relation with a *c*-commanding operator.

Crucially, we verify that the same type of null embedded subjects is also available with *wh*-antecedents. As was extensively argued in Nicolis (2005), in Capeverdean extraction out of an embedded subject position past an overt complementizer is fully grammatical. See this in (28), from Costa & Pratas (2012: 10):

(29) *Kenha ki bu ta pensa ma kunpra livru ?*
 who COMP 2SG TMA think COMP buy book
 ‘Who do you think has bought the book?’

In sentences in which the subject of the matrix clause is a non-quantified DP, *pro* is ruled out. In this respect, Capeverdean is a non-consistent null subject language (cf. Holmberg 2005) that differs from Brazilian Portuguese, in which the antecedent may be a non-quantified DP, as in (30) (Modesto 2000).

(30) Brazilian Portuguese

-
- (i) *(Bu) sta livri.*
 you are free
 (ii) *(El) e nha pai.*
 he is my father

Pratas (2002, 2007) disputes that these cases are proof of the *pro*-drop status of the language: (i) is not productive at all, based on corpus studies and judgments of native speakers who strongly reject null subjects in these contexts; and, as for (ii), the version without an overt subject looks like a presentational sentence, involving an expletive subject, as in the French counterpart *C’est mon père* ‘This is my father’. In this type of context, what we have is a null expletive, which is grammatical in Capeverdean.

*O Pedro₁ disse que Ø_{1/*2} ganhou na lotto.*¹³
 the Pedro say.3SG.PST COMP won in.the lotto
 ‘Pedro said that he won the lotto.’

Contrast this with Capeverdean, where the same sentence needs the embedded clitic:

- (31) * a. *Pedru fla ma Ø ganha na lotu.*
 Pedru say COMP win at lotto
 b. *Pedru fla m-e ganha na lotu.*
 Pedru say COMP-3SG win at lotto
 ‘Pedro has said that he has won the lotto.’

Importantly, Modesto (2000) argues that all subjects in Brazilian Portuguese occupy an A-bar position from which they are able to bind a variable. This is a topic position in the left periphery of the clause, which attracts DPs, in particular the subject DP. Thus, Costa & Pratas (2012) defend that the crucial difference between the two languages lies in the nature of the null subject antecedents. In Capeverdean, in contrast to Brazilian Portuguese, we have seen that only *wh*-antecedents (which occupy an A-bar position) or expressions like *ningen* ‘no.one’ or *tudu algen* ‘everyone’ can serve as binders for the null element in the embedded subject position. Assuming that the Capeverdean matrix subject is in Spec,TP (Pratas 2002, 2007), which has A-properties, the fact that these subjects can serve as operators will then depend on its inherent status. If the DP in question is quantified, it has an inherent operator status and, as such, it can bind a variable – this is the case of the expressions under analysis. A DP like *Pedru*, however, does not have it, and, thus, the fact that it cannot play this role is not surprising at all.

In this section, I have proposed that Capeverdean *n*-words are universal quantifiers. They obey relevant diagnostics pointed out in Giannakidou (2002) and, furthermore, they obviously have an inherent operator status, typical of quantifiers: as subjects, they are in an A-position – Spec,TP – and yet they are able to bind a variable, the specific embedded null subject in some configurations.

Finally, in the next section I will briefly approach the adverbs *nunka* and *tioxi*, both roughly meaning ‘never’.

4. The status of the adverbs *nunka* and *tioxi*

The *n*-words *nunka* and *tioxi* have been left out of the previous discussion because there is a point that deserves a separate treatment. The point is that,

¹³ In European Portuguese, the embedded null subject can be co-indexed with the matrix subject or not – thus referring to someone else. In Brazilian Portuguese, only the first meaning is available.

whereas *tioxi* can only occur in sentences with a Perfect interpretation,¹⁴ *nunka* is ambiguous between this same reading and another one that is compatible with Habitual temporal interpretations. Furthermore, it is very interesting that both *tioxi* (always with the Perfect, be it Present or Past) and *nunka* within a Habitual sentence necessarily co-occur with the sentential negator *ka*, whereas *nunka* within a Perfect sentence (thus, with a meaning corresponding to *tioxi*) may occur without *ka*. I have organized this distribution in Table 1:

	Perfect sentences	Habitual sentences
<i>nunka</i>	Ok – <i>ka</i> optional	Ok – <i>ka</i> obligatory
<i>tioxi</i>	OK – <i>ka</i> obligatory	*

Table 1: Aspectual compatibilities of the adverbs *tioxi* and *nunka*

And the following are some illustrative examples

(32) Perfect interpretation:

- a. *Nunka N (ka) kume karne.* [ka is optional]
 never 1SG NEG eat meat
 ‘I have never eaten meat.’
- b. *Tioxi N *(ka) kume karne.* [ka is obligatory]¹⁵
 never 1SG NEG eat meat
 ‘I have never eaten meat.’

(33) Habitual

- a. *Na sesta-fera santa, nunka N *(ka) ta kume karne.*
 PREP Friday holy, never 1SG NEG TMA eat meat
 ‘On Holy Fridays, I never eat meat.’
- b. **Na sesta-fera santa, tioxi N ka ta kume karne.*
 PREP Friday holy, never 1SG NEG TMA eat meat

Note that for a sentence like (33a), *tioxi* is indeed forbidden (cf. (33b)). These facts raise one observation – about *tioxi* – that is perhaps trivial, and another one – about *nunka* – that seems more complex, and more interesting.

The first observation is that it is not problematic at all to assume that *tioxi* derives from the Portuguese expression *até hoje* ‘until today’. This nicely accounts for its temporal/aspectual restrictions. By means of reanalysis and grammaticalization, typical processes in the formation of Creoles, it has not only extended its meaning to ‘until then’ (see example in fn 15), but may also

¹⁴ For the analysis of allegedly bare verbs that are in fact marked by a zero morpheme which conveys a Perfect reading, see Pratas (2010, 2012a, 2014).

¹⁵ For the sake of clarity, I also include here an example of *tioxi* in a Past Perfect sentence:

(i) *Tioxi e ka odjaba pekador ku si odju!* (Brüser & Santos 2002)
 never 3SG NEG see:PST sinner PREP his eye
 ‘Until then, he had not seen a sinner with his own eyes.’

have acquired the properties of an *n*-word (note that Portuguese adverbial expression *até hoje* is not a *n*-expression), behaving exactly like the DPs *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ (see section 2). This means that it is also a weak NPI with the same values for the different polarity features:

- (34) Values for the polarity features of *tioxi*
 [0 aff, α neg, 0 mod]

However, it does not obey the diagnostics for universal *n*-words, namely it does not allow for the modification by *almost*. Thus, I propose that, differently from *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’, it is not a universal quantifier.

The other observation, this turn about *nunka*, is that, in Perfect sentences, it may be ambiguous between, on the one hand, a weak NPI, with the same set of values as *ningen*, *nada* and *tioxi*, and, on the other hand, a strong NPI, thus specified for negative features. In the latter case, it is able to check the strong negative features of Pol before Spell Out, dispensing with the sentential negation. This ambiguity is summarized in (35):

- (35) a. Values for the polarity features of *nunka* in Habitual constructions
 [0 aff, α neg, 0 mod]
 b. Values for the polarity features of *nunka* in Perfect constructions
 [0 aff, α neg, 0 mod]
 or [0 aff, + neg, 0 mod]¹⁶

Crucially, when we have sentences with both *nunka* and *ningen*, *ka* is needed again. Observe (36):

- (36) *Nunka ningen *(ka) odja nada.*
 never no.one NEG see nothing
 ‘No one has ever seen anything.’

This is easily explained by the fact that, even if this *nunka* is the strong NPI version, it is not in the domain of Pol, since *ningen* is closer to the sentential negation. Given the previously discussed properties of *ningen*, it is predictable that *ka* is obligatory.

¹⁶ Given this ambiguous status of *nunka* (which may be related to a diachronic change of the lexical item imported from Portuguese), it has also been suggested to me by Ana Maria Martins that the weak version of *nunka* could show a variable underspecified value for both the negative and the modal features ([0 aff, α neg, α mod]). In this case, each of the α ’s would be turned into + in the relevant context. This would imply that they had a different distribution: *nunka ka* – negative clause; *nunka* – modal clause. We already know that the latter does not occur in habituais, which could be taken as one type of modal context. But I suspect this might hold in others, such as questions and conditionals. They will be analysed in future studies.

Lastly, note that, when it occurs obligatorily with *ka*, *nunka* may be modified by *kuasi* ‘almost’:

- (37) *Kuasi nunca N ka ta odja tilibison.*
 almost never 1SG NEG TMA watch television
 ‘I almost never watch tv.’

In this section, I have addressed the adverbs *tioxi* and *nunka*, which roughly mean ‘never’. We have seen, however, that *tioxi* is only compatible with a Perfect temporal interpretation and, like *ningen* and *nada*, is a weak NPI, which must co-occur with *ka*. As for *nunka*, it may occur in sentences with a Habitual reading but also in sentences with a Perfect reading. In this later case, it is ambiguous between a weak and a strong NPI. The full aspectual implications of this will be addressed in future works.

5. Final remarks

In this paper, I have discussed the expression of negation in Capeverdean. More specifically, I hope to have shown that this Portuguese-based Creole is a strict Negative Concord language: *n*-words (Laka 1990) like *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’ always co-occur with sentential negation, be they in preverbal or postverbal position. This means that they are prohibited not only in affirmatives, but also in modal contexts, therefore showing a behavior typical of weak Negative Polarity Items (NPIs), which are variable underspecified for negative features (Martins 2000). This has been the topic in section 2.

Furthermore, I hope to have demonstrated, following Giannakidou’s (2002) for Greek *n*-words (Greek is also a strict NC language), that these Capeverdean *n*-words are universal quantifiers with no intrinsic negative meaning. This has been the topic in section 3.

Finally, in section 4, I have addressed the adverbs *tioxi* and *nunka*, which roughly mean ‘never’, and hope to have shown that, whereas the former is also a weak NPI but does not seem to be a quantifier, the latter shows an ambiguous behavior regarding sentential negation and seems to be a universal quantifier.

At this point, one question emerges about the discussion on covert Quantifier Raising (QR) in order to account for the scope of these quantifiers. I will not enter into these details here, but one promising view is the one advanced in Champollion (2011), according to which the event variable is bound inside the verbal denotation, rather than at sentence level by existential closure, thus allowing quantifiers to be interpreted *in situ*; this line of reasoning is to be explored in future research on these Capeverdean quantifiers.

There are also at least three topics related to facts discussed here that have been left out of this paper: (a) the behavior of the antiveridical *sen* ‘without’, which introduces DPs or non-finite clauses (thus, it seems to me that it does not make sense to put it in C, as has been proposed in Pina 2006) and (b) the

behavior/properties of modifiers such as *ninhun*, as in *ninhun livru* ‘no book’; (c) the semantic properties of the word *algen*, which in some cases seems to behave as Positive Polarity Item but in other cases needs the modifier *algun* – which gives a configuration of the type ‘some someone’. These topics, too, will be explored in future research.

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