

Tense results from mood and aspect: temporal meanings in Capeverdean

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Goals

- **describe a case of linguistic variation in Capeverdean**
- **propose** that, in both varieties described here, temporal interpretations are obtained with **no dedicated tense morphemes**, but rather through
 - mood and aspect
 - pragmatic inferences
 - linguistic and non-linguistic context

The language

- Capeverdean is a Portuguese-based Creole, the mother tongue of virtually all inhabitants of the Republic of Cabo Verde (around 500,000) and of most Cape Verdeans living abroad (estimated 1 million)





The language

- it has two main varieties, roughly associated with the two most populated islands of the archipelago:
 - the Sotavento variety, which developed in the 16th century, in Santiago, and then in other southern islands, 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
 - the Barlavento variety, which developed in the 17th century in the northern islands, among migrants from the southern islands, and got further influence from the contact with Portuguese, due the always arriving Portuguese settlers. São Vicente was the last to be populated, only in the early 19th century, mainly (but not only) by migrants from other northern islands.

(Swolkien 2014, and references therein)

The language

- Hence, these varieties are also spoken in other islands, with some variation of their own, but the data presented here are from these two
- there is a huge amount of much interesting features of variation at the phonological level, but these will not be registered in this study

The language

- is not an official language in its own country
(it is in their plans, but these are being delayed by several factors)
- This means that there is no standard variety and the attempts to settle an official spelling are sound but limited
(the ALUPEC is based on the Santiago variety, and so people run into several problems when using it to write in other varieties - the correspondence to different phonological features in the same words has not been addressed)

General assumption

- Language variation



involves “alternative ways of 'saying the same thing’”

(Labov 1969:738, fn20)

Two more specific assumptions



Borer-Chomsky conjecture:

All parameters of variation are attributable to differences in features of particular items in the lexicon (e.g. the functional heads). (Baker 2008:156)



variation, in the ‘Labovian’ sense, involves

“underspecification in the mapping between [functional] categories and morphological forms” (Adger & Smith 2010)

Aspect

- in Capeverdean, the salient opposition regarding aspect is between the **progressive** and the **perfect**, rather than between the imperfective and the perfective

Pratas (2010, later refined in 2012, 2014)

- the progressive and the perfect are here taken to be semantically complex categories, which involve certain temporal characteristics (Smith 1991)

Aspect

- In most cases in English, progressive and perfect values are obtained through a structure that includes an auxiliary verb (BE + *V-ing* for the progressive, HAVE + participle for the perfect)
- This is also the case in many other languages
(see also Bertinetto *et al.* 2000 for an overview of the progressive in European languages)
- ❖ “perfects and progressives are overwhelmingly periphrastic”
(Dahl & Velupillai 2005: 2)

Aspect

- What we have in Capeverdean is rather a progressive bound morpheme, which in different regions maps onto slightly different morphological forms – the preverbal *sata* or *aita* in Santiago, and *tita* or *tite* in *São Vicente*.
- This morpheme is in complementary distribution with a zero-morpheme conveying a perfect interpretation

(1) a. *Bu sata /tita kume bolu.*
2SG PROG eat cake
'You are eating (the/a) cake.'

b. *Bu ∅ kume bolu.*
2SG eat cake
Possible meaning: 'You ate (the) cake.'
Proposal here: 'You have eaten (the) cake.'

Aspect

- The past interpretation in (1b) would be very difficult to explain through any other means than the null perfect morpheme.
- ✓ 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 PROG eat:BA cake
- b. [...] *Bu tava ta kume bolu.* [São Vicente]
2SG PROG eat cake
'You were eating (the) cake.'

Note: [...] means that a context is missing.

Specific points about this perfect

- unlike the English Perfect, this reading is not incompatible with adverbials like ‘yesterday’
- this perfect proposal considers two different states resulting from the past situation, which still hold at the topic time (cont.)

Specific points about this perfect

- (i) a **resultant state**, which is “an abstract state of the event’s ‘having occurred’” (Portner 2011:1230)
- this 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

Specific points about this perfect

(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’ or *debe* ‘must’ 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’, the temporal reading being directly anchored on the current result state

Temporal interpretation through these aspectual distinctions

- Three different Times are relevant to the construction of temporal reference.
 - These were labelled in Reichenbach (1947) as:
 - (i) Speech Time (S)
 - (ii) Event Time (E)
 - (iii) Reference Time (R).

Temporal interpretation through these aspectual distinctions

✓ The proposal in Klein (1994) presents a new distinction, the one between past perfective and past imperfective, and, 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)

(cf. also Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria 2000, and subsequent works)

Although this distinction between perfective and imperfective is not relevant here, the terminology adopted is the one in Klein (1994).

Temporal interpretation through these aspectual distinctions

- ✓ The ordering of TU regarding TT corresponds to
 - (a) a past
 - (b) a present
 - (c) a future time reference

Note: 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.

Temporal interpretation through these aspectual distinctions

- ✓ The ordering of T-Sit regarding TT corresponds to
 - (a) a prospective aspect
 - (b) the progressive
 - (c) the perfect

Temporal relations

- The temporal orderings for dynamic predicates in root clauses are:

Aspect:

- a. the bare verb form means that T-Sit precedes TT – we get a perfect reading
- b. a progressive morpheme means that T-Sit includes/coincides with TT

Time reference:

- c. when something in the context (linguistic or not) orders TU after TT, we have past perfect and past progressive readings, respectively
- 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

Table 1
Temporal relations established
by the perfect and the progressive

	temporal ordering	temporal ordering	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

Some complications

- These aspectual distinctions, first proposed for Santiago (Pratas 2014), must now be inserted into a more complicated picture, which includes:
 - the morpheme *ta*
 - the more salient variation regarding other functional items

Table 2
Temporal allomorphs in both varieties

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

Temporal morphemes in both varieties

- There are a few periphrastic forms expressing various temporal values 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 ‘I am always V-ing...’)
- ✓ In São Vicente, there is also a periphrastic form for the progressive that similarly combines with different aspectual / modal meanings ($ta + xtod + ta + V$). But it still needs to be confirmed that it means exactly the same thing as the alternative bound morpheme – for this, we will need to do careful elicitation tasks (see Matthewson 2004 about semantic fieldwork methods).

Summarizing the common data

- Common to both varieties, with some minor morpho-phonological differences:
 - present attitudinal / present habitual / future
 - present progressive
 - present perfect

present attitudinal / present habitual / future

ta V

(may be *te* in São Vicente)

(3) *N ta da aula di portuges.*

1SG TA give class of Portuguese

‘I am a Portuguese teacher.’

‘I teach Portuguese everyday.’

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

‘I will give a Portuguese class tomorrow.’

present progressive

sata V (in Santiago)

tita or *tite* V (in São Vicente)

(4) *N sata / tita kume pexe.*

1SG PROG eat fish

'I am eating (the) fish.'

present perfect

∅ V

(5) *N* *kume pexe na djanta.*

1SG ∅ eat fish PREP dinner

‘I have eaten (the) fish at dinner.’

The different data

- Distinction between the two varieties: morphological differences which include the order of the morphemes regarding the verb
- this is the case with all the above values when the context orders TU after TT

perfect in the past

Santiago

∅ V-*ba*

(6) [...] *N* *kumeba* *pexe* [...].

[...] 1SG ∅ eat:BA fish

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

São Vicente

tinha + suppletive form of a Portuguese participle

(7) [...] *N* *tinha* *kmide* *pexe* [...].

[...] 1SG had eaten fish

‘[...] I had eaten (the) fish [...].’

attitudinal / habitual in the past conditional / future of past

Santiago

ta V-*ba*

- (8) *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 [...].'
-

São Vicente

tava or *tá* V

- (9) *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 [...].'

progressive in the past

Santiago

sata V-ba

(Pratas 2007:54)

(10) *Kantu bu txiga N sata kumeba un banana.*

when 2SG arrive 1SG PROG kume:BA one banana

‘When you arrived I was eating a banana.’

São Vicente

tava or *tá* + *ta* or *te* V

(Pratas 2018b)

(11) *Kond João txga, Ana e inda tava ta trabaia.*

when João arrive, Ana 1SG still TAVA TA work

‘When João arrived, Ana was still working.’

what may look like tense markers

- **Past:** Topic Time before Time of Utterance (Klein 1994, 2010)
- ✓ in Santiago, the suffix *-ba* seems a past marker
- ✓ in São Vicente there are the preverbal allomorphs *tava / tá*, whose contribution is more confusing

Arguments against these morphemes as tense markers

- ✓ The weak one: they are not needed when we have a past interpretation through the perfect
 - it is weak because, although the relevant situation here belongs to an interval 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

More arguments

- The much stronger ones:
 - ✓ São Vicente *tava / tá* marks more than just the order of TT regarding TU
 - ✓ Santiago *-ba* occurs in clauses where it doesn't have a past meaning – some embedded clauses

embedded contexts

Santiago

Purpose adverbial clauses:

(12) *Otu algen ta fikaba la n-igreja*
other people TA stay:BA LOC PREP-church

pa ka moreba.
PREP NEG die:BA

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

Other embedded predicates...

...from Santiago

✓ Temporal readings under modals

Temporal reading in modal contexts

- Condoravdi (2002); Laca (2008)
- ✓ A modal clause has two time intervals:
 - a **temporal perspective**, which refers to the ‘time from which the modal background is accessed’, i.e. the modal anchor time
 - a **temporal orientation**, which refers to ‘the time at which the temporal property is instantiated’, i.e. the modal evaluation time

(Laca 2008:4)

Table 3

when modals embed apparently bare predicates

- ✓ The temporal orientation depends on the modal base *and* the aspectual class of the embedded predicate:

	non-epistemic	epistemic
stative	subsequence	simultaneity
dynamic	subsequence	precedence

* non-epistemic stands for circumstantial, deontic, etc.

Non-epistemic

(13) *Bu pode sta diskansadu, N ta txiga sedu.*

2SG MOD BE rested, 1SG TA arrive early

‘You can rest easy, I will arrive early.’

[non-epistemic + stative --- subsequence]

(14) *Bu ka debe fla kasi pa bo mosa.*

2SG NEG MOD say/tell lie PREP your girl

‘You must not lie to your girlfriend.’

[non-epistemic + dynamic --- subsequence]

Note: the bare modal *pode* ‘can’ in (13) is one of permission/possibility, and thus it is bare. The same superficial verb, but with an ability reading, must be marked by *ta* in the present, which is a hint about its non-stative reading (like in be able to pay the rent – *ta pode* in both varieties; *ta podeba* in Santiago and *tava pode* in São Vicente)

Epistemic

(15) *E ka debe sta dretu di kabesa.*
3SG NEG MOD BE well of head

‘S/he must be out of his mind.’

[epistemic + stative --- simultaneity]

(16) Context: two friends meet for dinner and one of them wonders whether another friend has worked on that holiday or not; knowing their friend’s habits, the other one says:

Luisa debe trabadja.

Luisa MOD work

‘Luisa must have worked.’

[epistemic + dynamic --- precedence (backward shifted)]

(adapted from Pratas & van de Vate 2012)

Temporal orientation under epistemic modals

- ✓ The reading in (16) confirms the null perfect analysis.

Note: since the temporal reading of perfects is actually anchored on the post-state of the situation, this is in fact similar to what is described for epistemic with statives (for a proposal that all situations are stative in Capeverdean – either basic or derived –, see Pratas 2010:229).

- ✓ This also leads us to another fact about epistemic modals in the language: they occur in biclausal structures with the lower subject raising to the matrix subject position (the underlying meaning of these sentences is something like ‘It is possible / probable that...’)

Temporal orientation under epistemic modals

We see there is a biclausal structure because the embedded verb is marked by aspect morphemes – not only the null perfect morpheme, as in (16), but the progressive too.

- (17) *Ka bu faze raboliso pamodi Maria **pode sata** durmi.*
NEG 2SG make noise because Maria MOD PROG sleep
'Don't you make any noise because Maria may be sleeping.'

(adapted from Pratas & van de Vate 2012)

Crucially...

... , **under non-epistemic modals** these aspect morphemes never occur.

- This means that what we have in these cases is a true bare verb, with no independent temporal specifications brought about by aspect markers
- ✓ In other words, it is a monoclausal configuration
- ✓ The temporal orientation of subsequence depends on other semantic features of the modal – it establishes conditions that are to be met after TT (or the modal anchor time)

- ❖ Now it becomes even clearer that any *-ba* occurring under the modal is not tense.

In fact...

- ...the same relations hold when the temporal perspective changes: TU precedes TT

Non-epistemic

(18) *N kreba serba veterinario, mas N bai pa pursor.*
1SG want:BA be:BA vet, but 1SG go for professor
'I wanted to be a veterinarian, but I ended up a teacher.'

[non-epistemic + stative --- subsequence]

(Pratas 2007:104)

(19) *Nu ten ki dizinfetaba*
1PL have that disinfect:BA

pa nu trabadjaba na midikamentu.
PREP 1PL work:BA PREP medicine

'We've had to [get disinfected] to work with medicine.'

[non-epistemic + dynamic --- subsequence]

(Pratas 2018b)



Epistemic

(18) *N diskunfia ma kel omi debeba serba sinhor Lupódiu.*

1SG guess that REL man MOD:BA BE:BA mister Lupódiu

‘I guessed that that man should be mister Lupódio.’

[epistemic + stative = simultaneity]

(Brüser & Santos 2012)

Note: epistemic in the past embedding a dynamic – perfect – is still missing. It must be checked in future elicitation tasks.

Alternative proposal

- ✓ If the verbs embedded by non-epistemic modals are non-finite, as they seem for syntactic reasons (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), there are absolutely no grounds to defend that *-ba* is a tense morpheme.
- ✓ Then, since some of these embedded predicates with *-ba* have an irrealis meaning - nothing is said about whether, or when, these situations truly occurred -, this *-ba* could be argued to be, in these cases, 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

Alternative proposal

- ✓ Therefore, my current proposal is that *-ba* is a temporal agreement/concord morpheme associated with some past environments. It appears in:
 - (i) root clauses where a past interpretation is provided by the context;
 - (ii) non-finite embedded verbs whose embedding clauses convey past situations.

Alternative proposal

- ✓ The same reasoning holds for the preverbal *tava* in the São Vicente variety, with some specificities related to the diachrony of *ta*.
- Conjecture: Capeverdean *ta* underwent a complete progressive cycle (Pratas 2018a)

The puzzling morpheme *ta*

- *ta* comes from the Portuguese reduced form of *está*, the third person singular of *estar* 'be' (stage-level), and was initially the progressive marker in Capeverdean
- it suffered a process of grammaticalization, generalizing its use to a more general imperfective meaning, which includes habituais

(Kihm 1994)

Progressive cycle

(following, for other languages, Dahl 1985, Bybee / Dahl 1989, Bybee *et al.* 1994, Deo 2015, among others)

- Some reinforcement emerged to fill the gap left by that shift: and here we have both the periphrastic forms with locative auxiliaries, and the alternative non-periphrastic forms which always involve *ta* or *te* preceded by some other morphemes with a locative content (Pratas 2018a)

Current results of the progressive cycle

➤ Santiago

- we now have the present 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; *-ba* sometimes appears doubled in what seem non-finite embedded predicates

Current results of the progressive cycle

➤ São Vicente

- we now have the present progressive form *tita* (or *tite*), and a periphrastic form with *stod* (*stod+ta*, the one that still needs to be better analyzed)
- in the transition from the southern islands, *-ba* was lost
- by analogy with the Portuguese first and third persons singular, past imperfective of *estar* (*estava*), this Capeverdean *tava* is a multifunctional form associated with distinct past environments:
 - in past habituais (*tava* + V)
 - as the reinforcement of past progressives (*tava* + *ta* or *te* + V)

Analysis for the whole picture

Comrie (1985: 45):

“[...] 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.”

Analysis for the whole picture

This is what we have here:

- **irrealis**, in its various values (generics, futures...)
- **realis**, expressed through the perfect or the progressive

Conclusions

- 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

Conclusions

- to be shifted into a past interpretation, all these irrealis and realis meanings need a context (discourse, adverbs, non-linguistic information, etc.) which locates TU after TT;
- in the absence of this context, a present interpretation 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

Conclusions

- there is an underspecification in the mapping between this functional category (temporal concord / agreement) and the morphological forms, allowing the language to have the different units we find in each variety

(Adger & Smith 2010)

- 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 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* + suppletive form of the participle for the past perfect

Table 4

**In Santiago: mood and aspect values in root clauses,
also with the temporal agreement/concord *-ba***

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

Table 5

In São Vicente: mood and aspect values in root clauses, also with the temporal agreement/concord *tava/tá*

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

Mantenha!
Obrigada!
Thank you!

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