Title

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

Short title:
Elements of denial in Capeverdean

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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 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). Moreover, following Giannakidou (2002), I will demonstrate that these Capeverdean *n*-words are universal quantifiers that do not have an intrinsic negative meaning. Finally, I address the adverbs *tioxi* and *nunka*, which roughly mean ‘never’, and show that whereas the former is also a weak NPI but is not a quantifier, the latter is 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, a Portuguese-based Creole language, sentential negation is expressed by the word *ka*, as illustrated in (1) (Pratas 2012b):

(1)  
\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
E & ka & ta & furta. \\
3SG & NEG & TMA & steal^2 \\
\end{array}
\]

‘He does not steal.’

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’. In fact, in negative constructions with this copula *e* the negative marker appears postverbally. See this in (2) (Pratas 2012b):

(2)  
\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
El & e & ka & malkriadu. \\
3SG & be.INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL & NEG & rude \\
\end{array}
\]

‘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), the third person singular pronoun is not a clitic, but rather a free form. In this context, a clitic is ruled out:

(3)  
\[
\begin{array}{ccc}
*E & e & ka & malkriadu. \\
3SG & be.INDIVIDUAL-LEVEL & NEG & rude \\
\end{array}
\]

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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.

I am very thankful to Ana Josefa Cardoso, for her always insightful grammaticality judgments.

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).

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 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 for the subject position and the past affix -*ba* requires a free pronoun for the object position.
Interestingly, the word order in (2) does not occur when the individual-level 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 all these facts regarding the individual-level copula and 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 show that the copula cannot be null in non-negative contexts.

(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.’

   c. * Wosvaldu riku.
   Wosvaldu rich

The proposal in Pratas (2007: 123-124) for the syntactic status of ka is that it is a head. This is also assumed in the present paper, and the arguments for this follow the same line of reasoning exposed there: ka shows a very specific head behavior 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?’
As for the facts described above regarding *ka and the individual-level copula, the proposal is the following (from Pratas 2007): (a) when the copula is in the present form, *e, its morpho-phonological weight determines that it switches positions with *ka; since the past copula *era is morpho-phonologically heavier, this form stays in its post-negation position; (b) as for the null Present copula, the fact that it is disallowed in non-negation contexts favors the hypothesis of an (optional) morphological merger\(^5\) between *e and *ka; this is possible indeed, since the whole meaning of the sentence is maintained and the adjacency conditions required for this operation are met in this configuration.

The fact that the morphological operation in (a) is obligatory (there is no *ka *e order) and the operation in (b) is optional (although the null copula is preferred\(^6\)) depends on other independent factors that distinguish word orders based on weight reasons and the merger of two morphemes, which are out of the scope of the current paper.

For the present purposes, what is relevant is that now the status of the sentential negation marker *ka has been established – *ka is a head. What follows is the presentation of the facts that are to be discussed in this paper.

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\(^5\) This operation has been first proposed in Marantz (1984): a relation between X and Y may be replaced (expressed) by the affixation of the lexical head of X to the lexical head of Y.

\(^6\) Pratas (2007: 126) presents a test about whether the present copula plus sentential negation are allowed (that is, whether copula deletion in negative contexts is not obligatory). This is done with person+number combinations other than 3SG. This is important because of the previously mentioned phonological similarity between the 3SG subject clitic and the present copula (see Itzel 2006 for a historical overview of the two forms, concluding that – as opposed to what has been argued elsewhere – the copula and the 3SG clitic have different origins and natures). Consider the following:

(i)  
\[\begin{align*}
\text{a.} & \quad \text{Wosvaldu e ka riku.} \\
& \quad \text{‘Wosvaldu is not rich.’} \\
\text{b.} & \quad \text{*N / Mi e ka riku.} \\
& \quad \text{‘I am not rich.’} \\
\text{c.} & \quad \text{*Bu / Bo e ka riku.} \\
& \quad \text{‘You are not rich.’}
\end{align*}\]

Without any further information, one could suppose that in (ia) we have a null copula and a clitic doubling context: DP + 3SG clitic. However, if we check (ib) and (ic), we observe that the subject clitic is not allowed in these contexts – as I also have shown in the ungrammatical example in (3). Therefore, in (ia) the form *e cannot be a 3SG clitic. Hence, it must be the lexicalized Present copula, which, obviously, is allowed in negation contexts (although preferably null).

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

(8) a. Ninguém (*não) gosta de mim.
    no.one not like of me
b. Eu *(não) 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 is 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 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 in affirmative or modal contexts, and I will discuss their status regarding the structure of negative clauses. In section 3, I will demonstrate 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):

\[
(11) \quad \begin{align*}
\text{a. } & \text{Ningen } \text{ka } \text{gosta } \text{di } \text{mi.} \\
& \text{no.one } \text{NEG } \text{like } \text{of } \text{1SG} \\
& \text{‘Nobody likes me.’}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{b. } & \text{Nada } \text{ka } \text{txiga.} \\
& \text{nothing } \text{NEG } \text{arrive} \\
& \text{‘Nothing has arrived.’}
\end{align*}
\]

At a 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 Negative Polarity Items (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 modal or affirmative contexts, and I present an account for the structure of the negative sentences they enter into. In subsection 2.2, I will argue that they do not have a negative intrinsic 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 affirmative clauses and in modal contexts like interrogatives or 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: ‘Did you see anyone?’

(13) * Xefi "proibi pa ningen sai "di skritorio.  
    boss forbid for no.one leave of office
    Intended meaning: ‘The boss has forbidden that anybody leaves 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 segreu ki pode ofende ningen.  
    1SG NEG TMA tell secret that may offend no.one
    Intended meaning: ‘I don’t tell secrets that may offend someone.’

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). In this system, “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 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

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).

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 the semantic notions of ‘veridicality’, ‘averidicality’ and ‘non-veridicality’ respectively (cf. Zwarts 1995, Giannakidou 1997 and Espinal 1998).” Thus, for different interpretations, we have different values associated with each of these features of Pol. She gives this set of correspondences as an example (Martins 2000: 10):

(16) 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 negative polarity items (NPIs) is a matter of specified vs. α-underspecified neg-features. Strong NPIs are specified for neg-features – [+ neg]. Thus, as long as they are in the domain of Pol before Spell Out (in languages with strong neg-features), they can check the [+ neg] feature of Pol in negative clauses, in the terms of Zanuttini (1994, 1997). Weak NPIs are variable underspecified for neg-features – [α neg]. Thus, they cannot check the strong neg-feature of Pol in negative clauses and, thus, the presence of the overt negative marker is needed. Moreover, 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 \([\alpha \ neg]\); in this case, they cannot check the strong neg-feature of Pol in negative clauses and the presence of the overt negative marker is needed – now we know that *ka* is the relevant negative element in question. 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 affirmative or modal contexts nicely follows. The examples in (12)-15) show that 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:

(17) Values for the polarity features of *ningen* ‘no.one’ and *nada* ‘nothing’

\[0 \ aff, \alpha \ neg, 0 \ mod\]

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), assuming that they are universal quantifiers. Note that, just like this author argues for Greek and other strict NC languages, they are *not* negative quantifiers (as was 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 \([\alpha \ neg]\), they cannot check the strong neg-feature of Pol in negative clauses. 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):

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

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

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

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

Thus, the true meaning of the answer in (18) is as follows:

(20) Ningen $\{ka\text{-}txiga\}$.
    no.one NEG arrive
‘No one has arrived.’

We have seen that these $n$-words can never occur in non-negative contexts. Therefore, it results very clear that their participation in fragment answers must also be licensed by sentential negation $ka$, under which their $[\alpha \text{ neg}]$ feature gets ‘filled in’. What may confound us is the fact that the relevant part of the
clause is not pronounced. Nevertheless, it is active in its syntactic effects and interpretation, as is typical of ellipsis configurations. This perfectly contradicts the idea that fragment answers may be taken 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 meaning, 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. I will show that Capeverdean ningen ‘no-one’ and nada ‘nothing’ obey at least two of these diagnostics for universal n-words.

(21) Diagnostics for universal n-words [Giannakidou 2002: 41]

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 a pronoun performing the respective function, if a language does not employ clitic pronouns).

(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 predicate nominal.

For reasons of space, I will only present empirical evidence for the diagnostics in (21a) and (21d), which are sufficient to establish the 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 \textit{almost/absolutely}.

As for the local licensing, we have the following examples: (22) shows that they are not licensed across the complementizer \textit{ma} ‘that’,\(^8\) (23) shows their possible licensing long-distance through an infinitival clause:

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(22)] *\textit{Maria ka fla m-\textit{e} odja ningen.}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{tabular}{llll}
\textbf{Maria} & \textbf{NEG} & \textbf{say} & \textbf{COMP-3SG see no.one}
\end{tabular}

\begin{center}
\text{Intended meaning: ‘Maria didn’t say she saw anybody.’}
\end{center}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(23)] \textit{Maria ka kre odja ningen.}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{tabular}{llll}
\textbf{Maria} & \textbf{NEG want} & \textbf{see no.one}
\end{tabular}

\begin{center}
‘Maria doesn’t want to see anybody.’
\end{center}

As for the modification by degree adverbs, such as the ones equivalent to ‘almost’, again, Capeverdean data show that \textit{n}-words behave like universal quantifiers. See this in the examples in (24):

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(24)] a. \textit{Kuasi ningen ka ben festa.}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{tabular}{llll}
\textbf{almost no.one NEG come party}
\end{tabular}

\begin{center}
‘Almost nobody came to the party.’
\end{center}

\begin{enumerate}
\item[(24)] b. \textit{E ka kume kuasi nada.}
\end{enumerate}

\begin{tabular}{llll}
\textbf{3SG NEG eat almost nothing}
\end{tabular}

\begin{center}
‘He ate almost nothing.’
\end{center}

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 \textit{in situ}; this line of reasoning is to be explored in future research on these Capeverdean quantifiers.

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

\begin{footnote}
\(^8\) Note that, at least in this respect, NC in Capeverdean is different from NC in Hatian Creole; in the latter, NC is unbounded (see Déprez 1999 for the details of this).
\end{footnote}
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 (25), but prohibits null referential subjects in root clauses, here illustrated in (26) (examples from Pratas 2007, Costa & Pratas 2012):

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

(26) *(N) Sta duenti.
    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):

(27) *Ningen, / Tudu algen, ka atxa livru ki Ø, perdeba.
    no.one every person NEG find book REL lose.PST
    ‘No one / Everybody has found the book that he lost.’

Note that the embedded null subject is co-indexed with the n-word *ningen* ‘no.one’ or *tudu algen* ‘everybody’, and in Costa & Pratas (2012) it has been argued that it 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 (27), 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 subject 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):
Pratas, Fernanda (forthcoming) Elements of denial in Capeverdean: the negator *ka*
and the properties of *n*-words. In Deprez, Viviane & Fabiola Henri (eds) Negation and
Negative dependencies in Creole languages. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John
Benjamins, Creole Language Library. (manuscript August 2014)

(28) *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 (29) (Modesto 2000).

(29) Brazilian Portuguese

O Pedro1 disse que Ø1/2 ganhou na loto.⁹
the Pedro say.3SG.PST COMP won in.the loto

‘Pedro said that he won the lotto.’

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

(30) * a. Pedru fla ma Ø ganha na lotu.
   Pedru say COMP win at loto

   b. Pedru fla m-e ganha na lotu.
   Pedru say COMP-3SG win at loto

   ‘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
variable in the embedded subject position. Assuming, following Pratas (2002,
2004, 2007), that the Capeverdean matrix subject is in Spec,TP, which has A-
properties, the fact that these subjects can serve as operators will then depend

⁹ In European Portuguese, the embedded null subject can be co-index with the matrix subject or
not – thus referring to someone else. In Brazilian Portuguese, only the first meaning is
available.
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 shown that Capeverdean n-words are universal quantifiers. They obey to relevant diagnostics pointed out in Giannakidou (2002) and, furthermore, they obviously have an inherent operator status, typical of quantifiers: as subjects, they are in a 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, whereas tioxi can only occur in sentences with a Perfect interpretation, 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, corresponding to tioxi) may occur without ka. I have organized this distribution in Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>‘Perfect’ sentences</th>
<th>‘Habitual’ sentences</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>nunka</td>
<td>Ok – ka optional</td>
<td>Ok – ka obligatory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tioxi</td>
<td>OK – ka obligatory</td>
<td>*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Aspectual compatibilities of the adverbs tioxi and nunka

And the following are some illustrative examples

(31) Perfect interpretation:

a. Nunka N (ka) kume karne. [ka is optional]

never 1SG NEG eat meat

---

10 For the analysis of allegedly bare verbs that are in fact marked by a zero morpheme which conveys a Perfect reading, see Pratas (2010, 2012, 2014).
b. *Tioxi N *(ka) kume karne. [ka is obligatory]\(^{11}\) 
never 1SG NEG eat meat
‘I have never eaten meat.’

(32) Habitual
PREP Friday holly, never 1SG NEG TMA eat meat
‘On Holly Fridays, I never eat meat.’

PREP Friday holly, never 1SG NEG TMA eat meat

Note that for a sentence like (32a), tioxi is even forbidden. These facts raise one observation — about tioxi — that is perhaps trivial, and another one — about nunka — that seems more complex and, thus, 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 11), but may also have acquired the properties of an n-word (note that Portuguese até hoje is not an n-word), behaving exactly like the DPs ningen ‘no.one’ and nada ‘nothing’ (see section 2). In other words, it is also a weak NPI with the same values for the different polarity features:

(33) 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 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

\(^{11}\) For the sake of clarity, I put here an example of tioxi with 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.’
features. In the latter case, it is able to check the strong negative features of Pol, dispensing with the sentential negation. This ambiguity is summarized in (34):

(34) 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]

Crucially, when we have sentences with both *nunka* and *ningen, ka* is needed again. Observe (35):

(35) *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.

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

(36) *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 is ambiguous between a weak NPI (in which case it may occur in sentences with a Perfect reading but also in sentences with an Habitual reading), and a strong NPI (in which case it can only occur in Perfect sentences). The full depth 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 is ambiguous between a string and a weak NPI and seems to be a quantifier.

There are at least two topics related to facts here discussed 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 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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