EVENTOS E SUBEVENTOS EM CABOVERDIANO / EVENTS AND SUBEVENTS IN CAPEVERDEAN

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1. Introdução

As diferentes estratégias das línguas para marcação de tempo têm sido alvo de abordagens linguísticas distintas (síntese em Binnick 1991). Na tradição generativista, que inicialmente se centrou nos estudos sintáticos (Chomsky 1957, 1965), a análise das relações temporais viria a ser por algum tempo uma área reservada à semântica formal (Bennett & Partee 1972, Bach 1981, e.o.). Nas últimas décadas, porém, numerosos trabalhos refletem a proposta de que a estruturação temporal e aspetual das frases se situa na interface da sintaxe com a semântica (Giorgi & Pianesi 1997, Ramchand 1997, Demirdache & Uribe-Extebarria 2000, e.o.). As abordagens mais produtivas entre os recentes estudos sobre a sintaxe e a semântica da temporalidade têm em consideração as relações entre o aspeto lexical dos predicados (Aktionsart) e outros possíveis marcadores disponíveis em cada língua (morfemas funcionais, expressões adverbiais, modais, etc.). Assim, a leitura temporal é analisada como estando também dependente, entre outros fatores, da estrutura interna dos eventos. Para este tipo de abordagem têm sido seguidas diversas propostas, como por exemplo a de Dowty (1979), segundo a qual as predicações, associadas aos tipos de situações descritas em Vendler (1967), podem ser decompostas nos predicados básicos Cause, Do e Become, bem como nas possíveis combinações destes.

Em caboverdiano, língua crioula de base lexical portuguesa, um dos poucos fenómenos explorados nesta área pode ser sintetizado como se segue: a interpretação temporal parece ser condicionada pelo traço lexical de estatividade (Silva 1985, Baptista 2002, Pratas 2004, 2007). A partir de algumas formas verbais nuas (não flexionadas) em frases simples podemos de facto assumir que existe um contraste entre alguns verbos estativos, como *sabe* (*N sabe risposta*. 'Eu sei a resposta.'), por um lado, e todos os verbos dinâmicos, por outro lado (*N kume pexe*. 'Eu comi peixe'). A forma nua de *sabe* é interpretada como presente, a de *kume* como passado. No entanto, quando testamos os valores temporais no seio de contextos mais alargados, obtemos interpretações inesperadas.

Estas fragilidades nas análises linguísticas disponíveis para o caboverdiano constituem um forte incentivo para os objetivos científicos deste projeto – descrição exaustiva e análise rigorosa das seguintes interações sintático-semânticas: a) estados consequentes e a sua associação a construções com o Perfeito; distinção entre predicados de indivíduo e predicados de estádio; b) as imposições de certos predicados em orações matriz, como verbos percetivos ou verbos de controlo, no que respeita à interpretação temporal das orações não finitas encaixadas; c) os contextos particulares em que uma leitura reflexiva é obtida sem uma expressão anafórica, e o possível envolvimento do subevento Become; d) a distribuição dos advérbios e a sua contribuição para a temporalidade das frases; e) as restrições de co-ocorrência e diferentes leituras de verbos modais (epistémica, necessidade/capacidade) e possíveis correlações com a sua posição na estrutura funcional da frase, relativamente aos marcadores de tempo e de aspeto.

Capitalizando sobre os trabalhos anteriores dos membros da equipa, o cumprimento destes objetivos envolve: 1) um intenso trabalho de recolha de dados junto de informantes caboverdianos, em Cabo Verde e em Lisboa, acompanhado da respectiva transcrição rigorosa e sistemática; 2) análise e organização dos dados; 3) formulação de propostas teóricas concretas que permitam dar conta dos aspectos sintáticos e semânticos dos resultados.

O resultado final, já em fase de construção, será a primeira base de dados digital sobre verbos e interpretação temporal em caboverdiano, disponibilizada para a comunidade científica, falantes de caboverdiano, professores e equipas responsáveis por políticas de língua.

Benefícios esperados:

A. Um enriquecimento do debate inter-linguístico, pelas revelações empíricas de uma língua ainda pouco estudada numa perspetiva formal. Propriedades específicas conferem ao caboverdiano um reconhecido interesse científico para os actuais estudos sobre a interpretação temporal das frases. Essas propriedades vêm sem dúvida reforçar a posição, ainda sujeita a intenso debate, de que a tradicional linha de divisão entre estados e eventos, por exemplo, não tem uma correspondência universal. Neste campo, também, novas questões têm sido levantadas: qual é a fonte desta variação inter-

-linguística? Poderá ela ser reduzida ao léxico? Será apenas morfológica? Ou deverá também estender-se à estrutura semântica? Como podemos ler em Hale 1996: "[…] queremos saber como é possível que haja uma gramática universal em paralelo com a quase inimaginável diversidade de línguas no mundo."

B. Um contributo significativo para a elaboração futura de gramáticas e instrumentos de trabalho destinados ao estudo e ensino do caboverdiano (língua ainda não oficial no seu país, Cabo Verde, em parte por acusações diversas precisamente quanto à ausência destes materiais científicos).

2. Literature review

One of the attested interesting Capeverdean phenomena is the following: temporal interpretation seems constrained by the property of stativity. None of the few prior approaches on this Portuguese-based Creole language, however, has taken into account the internal structure of events. Crucially, various broader contexts suggest that some stative verbs have indeed a complex event structure involving the argument Become. The notion of a consequent state (Moens & Steedman 1988) allows us to account for a sentence with a bare form such as *N sabe risposta* – 'I knew/got to know the answer', the consequent state being understood as 'I know the answer.' In contrast, there is no possible consequent state 'I eat fish' for the simple perfective sentence 'I ate fish' (Pratas 2008), but only something like 'the fish is eaten'.

The present project is sustained by manifold evidence that this data driven line of inquiry should be extended to other Capeverdean temporal dependencies, which have never been studied under a formal approach.

2.1. Previous approaches

As for the mentioned topic, previous proposals and their limitations can be summarized as follows. Baptista (2002) makes a distinction between verbs that represent a state and those that represent an action. Following Silva 1985, a list of verbs is presented, according to morpho-syntactic contrasts and various properties regarding control and imperatives. The discussion is focused on verbs behaving, or not, as non-statives with respect to temporal interpretation: the ones that assume a behavior typical of dynamics are considered as not true statives. In Pratas (2007), Capeverdean temporal semantics is assumed to be typically compositional. Departing from Baptista (2002) and references therein, a sort of grades in stativity is also mentioned. Adapting Bonhemeyer & Swift (2002), it is assumed that in contexts with bare verb forms a zero morpheme is at stake: combined with statives (inherently atelic), it cannot have a perfective reading; with non-statives, it cannot have an imperfective reading. Syntactically, the different functional morphemes are in head adjunction, under the label T (temporal); generic ta and

progressive sata appear preverbally; the suffix -ba appears post-verbally via lowering (Costa & Pratas 2004). Borik & Pratas (2008) affirm that the generalization stative vs. non-stative with respect to temporal interpretation in Capeverdean is not empirically correct, and consider "tenses" as predicates of temporal arguments. Following Demirdache & Uribe-Etxebarria (2000), it is argued that there are two temporal projections and that both TPs introduce two types of relations: within and after. At the lower T projection, these relations are spelled out by sata (progressive) or the zero morpheme (past perfective). Both these morphemes seem incompatible with sabe-type verbs, therefore it is concluded that these verbs merge higher. At the higher T projection, a second (derived) level of within/after relations is introduced, spelled out by the past morpheme -ba or by its absence.

Also this proposal is insufficient to account for the facts. Namely, it is not clear which lexical property of the sabe-type verbs determines that they are incompatible with progressive sata or the perfective zero morpheme.

2.2. New approaches.

A. Pratas (2008) considers a complex event structure involving a resultant state for sabe. As any other lexical verb, the sabe-type lexical verbs are merged at the lower T projection. Some other insufficiencies with respect to the wide definition of stativity have been previously revealed. Also in Portuguese, some stative predicates may appear in progressive, a combination traditionally assumed as not possible. To account for this, Cunha (2004) proposes a division within the states group: "estados faseáveis" (phase--states), which behave like non-states, and "estados não faseáveis" (non--phase-states). Confront, for instance in English, 'he is being nice' / '*he is being tall'). This division is a crucial tool in order to account for Capeverdean facts.

B. Other constraints imposed by internal properties of verbs on the temporal interpretation of sentences have also been described for Portuguese. Perception verbs, for instance, impose a simultaneous reading on their non--finite complements (either a "gerúndio" form or an infinitive, prepositioned or not: Eu vi a Maria dançando/ dançar /a dançar. 'I saw Maria dancing/dance.'). In Lobo (2006) a typology of gerundive clauses is proposed based on syntactic and semantic contrasts. In Cunha & Silvano (2008), also the temporality in infinitives has been analyzed. For Capeverdean, temporal dependencies involving non-finite clauses, as selected by perception verbs or by control verbs, among others, may be investigated using these lines of inquiry.

C. On the other hand, for the particular Capeverdean contexts where a reflexive reading is obtained without a reflexive (bound) expression – Pedru laba 'Pedru washed (himself)' or Katxor modja 'The dog got wet' –, in Pratas (2007) (elaborating on Fiéis & Pratas 2004) the involvement of subevents

is also considered. There is the intuition that some action of the DP took place for the event result to obtain (either on purpose – get-reading –, or accidentally/involuntarily – become-reading). These constructions have temporal restrictions of their own.

D. As for the functional structure, Capeverdean has no V-to-T. Moreover, adverbs, whose role is crucial for certain interpretations to obtain, the data favor an approach more flexible than the strictly syntactic one (Cinque 1999). In Pratas (2007), and following Costa (2004) for Portuguese, Capeverdean adverbs are assumed to be generated in adjunction configurations, and their distribution is partly constrained by their lexical semantics, by their prosodic weight and/or by general syntax-semantics interface conditions.

E. Finally, Pratas 2007 showed several contexts with modal auxiliaries, like pode 'can' or debe 'must', where different interpretations have distinct morphological markings, including for the embedded non-finites (when the affix -ba also occurs on the lower verb, the reading is counterfactual).

3. Plan and methods

Several analyses have argued that in Chinese, Salish, but also in Creoles, it is hard to distinguish tense from aspect. The natural following question is: what, then, counts as an argument for semantic tense? The null hypothesis is that all languages have at least syntactic tense (TP projection), but even this has been called into question. For instance, Jo-wang (2006) argues that in Chinese there is no evidence for semantic or syntactic tense. Temporal interpretation is achieved via the interaction of default aspect, lexical and grammatical aspect adverbs, modals and pragmatic reasoning. In contrast, Lisa Matthewson (2006) provides some good arguments in favor of the universality of syntactic and semantic tense, based on adverbial modification in Salish languages. An accurate analysis of the temporal interpretation of predicates/sentences in Capeverdean will certainly bring a significant contribution to this debate.

3.1. The challenges

3.1.1. Concerning empirical facts. There is an obvious motivation for gathering an extensive amount of data on Capeverdean predicates, under a theoretically sustained methodology. This has never been accomplished before. These new data, obtained through intensive work (both elicitation and grammaticality judgments) with Capeverdean native speakers, will be explored following a theoretical orientation according to specific goals. This will be described in point 2.

The inherent benefits are:

A. A contribution to the crosslinguistic debate on the temporal interpretation of sentences and its relation to both the internal structure of events and the functional domain, building on the empirical revelations from a language still scarcely studied under a formal perspective.

B. A contribution to the future elaboration of grammars and other tools designed for the study and teaching of Capeverdean, both in its own country (400,000 inhabitants) and abroad. In Portugal, for instance, there is a large community of Capeverdean speakers whose bad results in school have been poorly understood, for language problems have frequently been ignored. A better knowledge of their mother tongue by all the professionals involved in education will certainly reduce this inequality factor and help improve their social integration.

Furthermore, the final outcome of this project will be a unique database of Capeverdean predicates, made available in electronic format to the broad scientific community, as well as to the Capeverdean speakers, teachers and language policy teams.

Syntactic/semantic interactions.

The empirical facts that will guide the data exploration, organization and analysis, as stated in the summary, are the following: a) resultant states and their association with perfective constructions; use of the distinction between individual-level and stage-level predicates, on the one hand, and "estados faseáveis" and "estados não faseáveis" – phase-states and non-phase-states – (Cunha 2004), on the other hand; b) the constraints imposed by certain predicates in matrix clauses, such as perception verbs or control verbs, on the temporal interpretation of embedded non-finite clauses; c) the particular contexts where a reflexive reading is obtained without an anaphoric expression, and the possible involvement of a Become subevent; d) the distribution of adverbs and their contribution for the temporality of sentences; e) co-occurrence restrictions and different readings of modal verbs (epistemic, necessity/ability) and possible correlations of these with their position in the functional sentence structure, regarding tense and aspect markers.

3.1.2. Concerning previous approaches

Most of these Capeverdean empirical facts have never been analyzed under a formal theoretical perspective. Moreover, the previous tentative proposals have been inspired by a relatively small list of illustrative sentences. The flaws of this poor method can be easily predicted. When the language at stake is not the mother tongue of the linguist, these challenges can only be faced and solved when a serious and committed work with numerous, diverse and accurately organized examples is made available.

3.2. Methodological responses

3.2.1. Similarly to what has been done in previous works by members of this team, some intensive periods of fieldwork, both in Lisbon and Cape Verde, must take place. This work consists of well-planned and regular sessions with carefully chosen and prepared Capeverdean informants (native speakers). These sessions may have two different types of work, whose results will complement each other: elicitation and grammaticality judgments. The elicitation sessions will follow strictly planned lists of new required data that are considered relevant by the team, in order to obtain the linguistic environments necessary for a theoretical description and analysis. For each group of predicates (e.g. statives vs. non-statives and subgroups of these; constructions with modals and their various readings; perception verbs or control verbs and their selected internal arguments; several types of infinitives; etc.), different contexts will be provided: combinations with functional morphemes; combinations with adverbs and other adjuncts; matrix clauses and embedded clauses; sequences of sentences; etc. The grammaticality judgments will test the ungrammatical/infelicitous combinations. The constraints and prohibitions revealed will be of crucial importance in order to obtain: a) new proposals for the syntactic phenomena involved; b) important clues for the following lists of data to be tested.

As a source of guidance and discussion on various practical problems and pieces of advice regarding fieldwork, the manuals Vaux & Cooper (1999) and Newman & Ratliff (2001) are fundamental. Given all the particularities of the relation between this language and Portuguese, its European lexifier, and also given that this is a language not spoken by most of the researchers, several crucial principles must be taken into account. Such as: take special care when phonological/prosodic phenomena are involved; be aware of the possible ambiguity of certain sentences; provide the relevant contexts for certain readings to obtain, and many others.

3.2.2. Besides some periods of fieldwork in Cape Verde, the present project will include the frequent (as needed) work sessions with Capeverdean informants in Lisbon. Several potentially good informants will be invited to meetings with the team, where new data shall be discussed. Moreover, one of the team members is a native speaker of the language, which will be crucial for translations and assistance in various occasions.

3.2.3. The data will be systematically transcribed by newly trained members of the team, following ALUPEC (Alfabeto Unificado Para a Escrita do Caboverdiano).

3.2.4. The results and new challenges will be analyzed under a generative approach. The new syntactic/semantic proposals will follow the most

productive literature on this specific interface topic. Demirdache & Uribe-
-Extebarria (2000) proposal of a uniform analysis of Tense and Aspect as
spatiotemporal predicates, projecting their temporal argument structure in
the syntax, will be an important work tool. Other relevant theoretical tools
are the ones available in Dowty (1979), Giorgi & Pianesi (1997), Moens &
Steedman (1988), Ramchand (1997), Vendler (1967), among others. Each
stage of analysis will raise new doubts and needs, thus determining the fol-
lowing work sessions with the informants.

3.2.5. The new results and theoretical proposals will be presented in na-
tional and international meetings and published in journals and proceedings.
They will certainly bring a contribution to the crosslinguistic debate on the
syntax and semantics of temporality.

3.2.6. The final outcome will be a unique database of Capeverdean
predicates, made available in electronic format to the broad scientific com-
munity, as well as to the Capeverdean speakers, teachers and language pol-
icy teams. It will be produced with recourse to the most adequate application
(MS Access 2007 is one possibility).

4. Tasks

For methodological reasons, the core goals of this project have been di-
vided into five subtopics, each corresponding to a different 'task'. Each
'task'/subtopic includes different stages of practical work: data gathering and
transcription, analysis and theoretical proposals regarding 1) States and
events. 2) Infinitives. 3) Reflexive contexts. 4) Adverbs and other adjuncts.
5) Modals.

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