

## Language Variation in Cape Verdean Creole

The archipelago of Cape Verde is characterized by great dialectal variation between the Sotavento (leeward) and Barlavento (windward) islands. Such variation results in part from different periods of settlement and from the different populations that contributed to the formation of Cape Verdean Creole, one of the oldest creoles on record. A number of morpho-syntactic and semantic features found in the Cape Verdean language varieties can be possibly traced back to specific Portuguese dialects and African languages. More precisely, depending on the different periods of settlement and the identity of the original settlers and slaves, the resulting dialect would display distinct morpho-syntactic and semantic features inherited from the languages that came into contact. Evidence of feature-mixing between Portuguese and Mande languages can be found in the Sotavento islands and a parallel phenomenon between Portuguese and British English can be shown in Barlavento. This presentation will examine a set of grammatical morphemes (including Negation, Tense, copular predication and reduplication strategies) and will attempt to demonstrate how exactly their semantic and morpho-syntactic behavior has been influenced by the languages in contact. For instance, in the domain of Negation, morphological and distributional properties of the negator are characteristic of Mande languages in the Sotavento varieties (i.e., Santiago), as seen in (1). In Mandinka, negative tenses are expressed by morphemes *buka* (simple imperfective indicative), *kana* (imperative subjunctive) and *kaka* (imperfective imperative). Manjaku has two negative morphemes: *dika* for the unaccomplished, and *kats(a)* meaning 'no longer'. In Balanta, one of the allomorphs of the negation is /kë/ (Wilson, 1961). In contrast, the Barlavento varieties (São Vicente) display a negator with a morphology and distribution reminiscent of the Portuguese lexifier, see (2):

- (1) *Ano nu ka fronta-l.* (RS) (Santiago)  
Non-CL. CL. NEG challenge+him  
'We did not challenge him.'
- (2) *N sabê ke es koza n' ê drete.* (São Vicente)  
1sgCL know COMP this thing NEG COP good  
'I know that this thing is not good.'

We will also discuss in this paper the observable changes taking place in CVC, as transit between the two clusters of islands has become greatly facilitated in recent years. Finally, in the last part of this paper, cognitive approaches to 'feature-mixing' in creole formation will be explored. More specifically, we will consider the role of congruence in language contact, that is, homophonous grammatical morphemes that may be found in both Wolof/other African languages and Portuguese. We will consider whether these morphemes follow a distributional or semantic pattern reminiscent of the contributing African languages, of Portuguese or is entirely innovative, hence, intrinsic to the grammatical properties of CVC.