

ON THE NATURE OF *pa* IN CAPEVERDEAN CREOLE
AND ITS POSSIBLE HISTORICAL SOURCE

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0. Introduction¹

This paper concerns the nature of *pa* in Capeverdean. It is designed to be a comparative response to Koopman and Lefebvre's (1982) study of the Haitian Creole *pu*. Section I presents the various functions of *pa* and an examination of the similarities and differences between *pa* and the Haitian *pu*. In the second part of this paper, we will explore the possible historical source of Capeverdean *pa*.

I. Functions, distribution and meaning of *pa*.

1.1 The preposition *pa*.

Capeverdean Creole has a preposition *pa* for introducing NPs as illustrated below.

- (1) Faze kel favor *pa* bu mai.
do this favor for your mother
'Do your mother this favor'.
- (2) E more *pa* nos.
he died for us
'He died for us'.
- (3) E sta toma ramedì *pa* se dor di kabesa.
he AUX take medicine for his pain of head
'He's taking medicine for his headache.'

¹ I am deeply indebted to Samuel Epstein, Susumo Kuno and Hoskuldur Thráinsson for their constructive criticisms and numerous insightful comments on this paper. All errors remain of course my own.

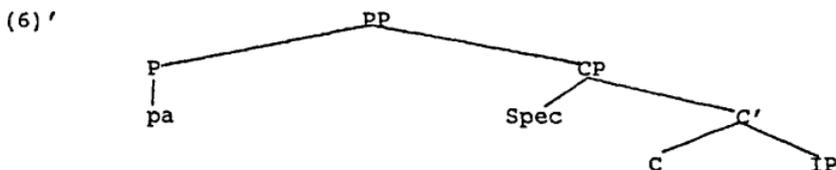
Pa can introduce complements, either infinitival complements, as in (4) or finite as in (5):

- (4) Ez ta papia Portuges pa inkomoda ya pai.
they Asp speak Portuguese for annoy my father
'They speak Portuguese to annoy my father.'
- (5) Nu tive ki trabaja pa nos minizu fikaba na kel skola.
we had to work for our children stay Tense in that school
'We had to work for our children to stay in that school.'

In (4) and (5), *pa* has a purposive interpretation, meaning "for the purpose of" or "in order that" while (1)-(3) have a beneficial meaning. Our assumption that this *pa* is a preposition is based on the fact that a *wh*-phrase can follow *pa* as illustrated in (6) and (8):

- (6) Ing sta gardabu kel saku pa kuandu bu ten mestensa di yel.
I Asp keep you this bag for when you have necessity of it
'I am keeping this bag for you for when you need it'.

We would then assume the tree representation in (6)':



We may observe here that this type of clauses involves a limited number of *wh*-phrases such as *when* in (6) and *if* in (8) (This is not uncontroversial: for an argument suggesting that *whether* is in Spec-CP while *if* is in C, refer to Kayne (1991)). The example Koopman and Lefebvre (henceforth K&L) give contains *si* ("if") and not *when* as illustrated below (K&L 1982:203)

- (7) yo kite mwe mem ak ti-fi-a rete na salo-a
they let me with girl-Det stay in living-room
si ti-fi-a ge parol l di mwe
for if girl-DET have word for she tell me.
'They let me stay in the living room with the girl in case she had something to tell me.'

In Capeverdean, this type of clauses is possible with *when* as illustrated in (6) and *if* (*si*) as in (8) below:

- (8) Ez dichang fika na sala pa si menina tive un kuza pa frang.
they let me stay in room for if girl had a thing to tell me
'They let me stay in the room in case the girl had something to tell me.'

Two observations are to be made regarding the sentence in (8) about the two expressions *dichang* and *frang* meaning respectively "let me" and "tell me". These clusters result from the pronoun *ing* incorporating into the verbs *dicha* ("to let") and *fra* ("to say"). Due to a phonological rule prohibiting two successive vowels, the vowel *a* from the verb takes over and leads to the deletion of the vowel *i* of the pronoun. This is in keeping with the tendency for the vowels of lexical words taking over the vowels of function words. A similar phenomenon is found in French where the vowel of the definite article is deleted when the following lexical item starts with a vowel:

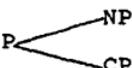
French:

- (9) *Le argent ---> l'argent
'The money'

The second observation is that although the pronoun *ing* ("I") has an accusative counterpart *mi* ("me"), verbs like *dicha* and *fra* do not case-mark the pronoun as accusative as illustrated by the ungrammaticality of (10a). Instead, it remains nominative as in (10b).

- (10) a. * Ya pai *dicha* me bai.
 my father let me go.
 b. Ya pai *dichang* bai.
 'my father let me go'.

The data in (1)-(8) suggests that the base rule for PPs is:

- (11) PP ---> P 

1.2 The Complementizer *pa*:

Contrary to the Haitian complementizer which occurs exclusively in tensed sentences, the Capeverdean complementizer *pa* may introduce both tensed and infinitival sentences as illustrated in (14a) and (14b). It is difficult to tell tensed sentences from infinitivals. The only ground we have to assume that the complementizer *pa* introduces tensed sentences is that we find tense particles like *ba* in such sentences. It was believed at some point that *ki* introduced finite clauses and *pa* infinitivals but the picture is no longer so clear cut, based on the presence of tense and aspect particles in sentences introduced by *pa*. The complementizer *pa* can occur after verbs. Examples of verbs followed by *pa* are given in (12) and (13):

- (12) Ya parentes kre pang bai Cabu Verdi.
 my parents want for me go Cape-Verde
 'My parents want me to go to Cape-Verde'.

- (13) Ya parentes fra pang bai Cabu Verdi.
 my parents told for me go Cape-Verde
 'My parents told me to go to Cape-Verde.'
- (14) Fin. a. El fra pa bu odjaba bu mai.
 he tell for you see Tense your mother
 'He told you to see your mother'.
 Inf. b. Ez fra pa fika li.
 they said for stay here
 'They said to stay here.'

At this point, we may wonder how to tell the preposition *pa* apart from the homophonous complementizer *pa*. Recall earlier that we assumed that the first *pa* in (1) through (8) was a preposition, based on the fact that it could precede a *wh*-word. We hypothesized that the *wh*-word was in Spec-CP and *pa* the head of PP. Note that in the same way that verbs do not case-mark the pronoun *ing* as accusative, *pa* in (13) does not either and we observe here the same phonological phenomenon as in (8) where the vowel *i* to the pronoun *ing* deletes by incorporating with the preposition *pa* yielding *pang*.

Interestingly, as seen in (13), when *pa* introduces an IP and the subject of IP is the first person pronoun *ing*, *ing* is not case-marked accusative. However, if *pa* has a benefactive meaning (to do something for the benefit of someone), then *pa* does case-mark the pronoun accusative as illustrated in (15).

- (15) a. Faze keli pa mi
 Do this for me.
 b. *Faze keli pang.

This may provide us with a clue to distinguish between the preposition and the complementizer *pa*. We can tell them apart thanks to the exceptional change in morphology of the first person singular. Due to poor morphological variation, the other pronouns keep the same form regardless whether they are assigned nominative or accusative case. The preposition case-marks the pronoun as accusative and the complementizer does not. The pronoun gets its nominative case from an Infl node.

Pa is found with a few performative verbs such as *kre* ("to want") and *fra* ("to say"), *pregunta* ("to ask") but not with *promete* ("to promise"), *espera* ("to hope") and *regreta* ("to regret").

- (16) a. E regreta ki se avo more.
 He regreted that his grand-mother died.
 'He regreted his grand-mother's death'.
 b. *E regreta pa se avo more.
 *he regrets for his grand-mother die

We also find *pa* in sentences that could be analyzed as infinitival relatives:

- (17) Ing ten un kuza pa mostrabo.
I have a thing to show you
'I have something to show you.'
- (18) a. Ing kre pel ben.
I want for him come
'I want him to come.'
- b. Ing kre keli.
I want this
'I want this one.'
- c. *Ing kre pa keli.
I want this.
- d. El kre pang bai.
he wants for me to go
'He wants me to go'.

The verb *kre* takes a *pa*-complement in (18a). There are two possibilities: either this is a prepositional complement and the *pa* obviously is a preposition or it is a CP-complement introduced by the complementizer *pa*, in this case *kre* does not take a PP complement. The fact that (18b) is grammatical and (18c) ungrammatical indicates that *kre* does not take a PP complement and that *pa* in (18a) is hence not a preposition but a complementizer. Being a complementizer, it will not assign accusative case to the first person pronoun as illustrated in (18d).

1.3 The AUX or TENSE *pa*?:

Pa combined with *sta* also occurs as a particle with the meaning of futurity.

- (19) El sta pa ten fidju.
she AUX about have child
'She is expecting a child.'
- (20) El sta pa ser professor.
he AUX about be professor
'He is planning on becoming a professor.'

One observation is to be made at this level: if the expression *sta pa* is not followed by *ten* or *ser*, it may not express intentionality or controllability on the part of the agent as illustrated in (21):

- (21) El sta pa more.
he is about die
'He is dying.'

We may wonder what the position of this *pa* is. Is it in AUX with *sta* or is it in TENSE? So far, we have shown that there are several types of *pa* in Capeverdean: first, the preposition introducing NPs and clauses, second, *pa* the complementizer

subcategorized by certain verbs (in infinitival relatives) and third, *pa* the marker occurring in AUX with the AUX *sta*.

At this point it would be relevant to review K&L's analysis of the Haitian modal marker *pu*. On the grounds that the Haitian auxiliary *ap* and *pu* never cooccur, hence are in complementary distribution, K&L hypothesize that they occupy the same position, namely, the Haitian modal marker *pu* is in AUX. In contrast, in Capeverdean, the AUX *sta* and *pa* cooccur adjacently. At least two analyses regarding the position of *pa* are possible. The first analyzes *pa* in AUX together with *sta* as no word or constituents may intervene between both elements as illustrated by (22):

- (22) *El *sta* *manya* *pa* *ten* *fidju*.
She Aux tomorrow *pa* have a child.

The other possibility would be to hypothesize that *pa* occupies the position in Tense by AUX by virtue of its connotation of futurity. However, at this point, I do not have enough evidence to choose one position over the other.

The similarities and differences of the Haitian *pu* and the Capeverdean *pa* are summarized in (23):

(23)

	Haitian <i>pu</i>	Capeverdean <i>pa</i>
I Preposition		
(i) Before NPs.	yes	yes
(ii) Before finite complements	yes	yes
(iii) Before infin. complements	yes	yes
II Complementizer		
(i) in Tensed clauses	yes	yes
(ii) in infinitival clauses	no	yes
III		
(i) Modal	yes	no
(ii) AUX	no	yes

II. The assumed syntactic historical source of the complementizer *pa*.

K&L investigated whether the Haitian Aux *pu* is derived from the complementizer or from the homophonous modal *pu* which occupies AUX. In other words, is the change from AUX to COMP or from COMP to AUX? They dismiss considering whether it is derived from the preposition *pu* based on the fact that its usage is too limited in the language.

They base their findings on Sylvain and Faine. In Sylvain (1936) they find instances of *pu* in AUX but none in CP. In Faine (1937), they find instances of *pu* in both AUX and CP with the majority

of occurrences in AUX. In Hall (1953) though, they find 16 occurrences of *pu* in CP but only one in AUX. Based on these data, K&L conclude then that the change is from AUX to COMP as the position of *pu* in COMP becomes stronger.

I tried to follow the same methodology by consulting Black Slaves' speech as it is reported in the writings of the 16th century Portuguese playwright Gil Vicente. He reports the speech of black slaves who are believed to be the ancestors of the Capeverdeans among other lusophone colonized people (Sao-Tome, Guinea Bissau).

I found a condensed compilation of his work in the impressive study "La Langue de Gil Vicente" by the French author P. Teyssier. I found 6 occurrences compiled in Teyssier (1959) of *para* apparently later reduced in Capeverdean to *pa*. Incidentally *para* in the Black speech corresponded to the Portuguese *para* in the 16th century. Later on, *para* apparently was reduced to *pa* in Capeverdean while it became *para* in Portuguese. The occurrences were the following:

- (24) Frágoa d'Amor (1524)
 a. *para mim*
 'for me'
 b. *para bossa cama*
 'for your bed'
- (25) Nao d' Amores (1527)
para malo benturaro
 for bad venture
 'for misfortune'
- (26) Clérigo da Beira (1529? 1530?)
 a. *Para que?*
 for what?
 'why?'
- b. *Para come?*
 for eat
 'To eat?'
- c. *Para que furta*
 for what steal
 'Why steal?'

Although the data I have access to so far from the 16th century is quantitatively infinitesimal, (further research is definitely required), we may tentatively make the following assumption. Given that in these data as limited as they may be, (three occurrences of *para* introduce NPs, one introduces a *wh*-word and two others introduce infinitival verbs) we may assume that *pa* or rather *para* was the head of PP. Hence, this might suggest that the Capeverdean COMP *pa* is historically derived from the preposition *pa*. Although these Black slaves are believed to have been the African ancestors of both Capeverdeans and Sao Tomenses (among others) we have to remember that we are not dealing

with the only possible ancestors to the Capeverdeans. Besides, this is not really a comparable analogy to K&L's study as they were studying much more contemporary data (Sylvain and Faine in the mid 1930's and Hall in the early 50's).

It seems that the link between the preposition *pa* introducing NPs and complements, and the homophonous complementizer *pa* is a possible one. In other words, the complementizer *pa* may have derived from the preposition *pa* in Capeverdean.

We may suggest the hypothesis in (27) as it is formulated in K&L (1982:215)

- (27) (i) Complementizer may derive from prepositions introducing final complements.
 (ii) Complementizer may derive from modal markers.
- (i) may be valid for some creole languages such as Capeverdean whereas (ii) seems to be valid for Haitian as claimed by K&L .

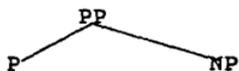
III. Conclusion, assumptions and further research:

The analyses above have led us to assume that what makes *pa* the preposition distinguishable from *pa* the complementizer is its case assignment property. *Pa* as a preposition is a governor and is a Case-marker for the following NP. In spite of the poor morphological variation of Capeverdean, such an observation could be made due to the exceptional morphological change of the first person pronoun, the nominative *ing* and the accusative *me*. The preposition *pa* can assign accusative to an NP as illustrated in (28a) or introduce CP as in (28b). In this respect, the position of *pa* preceding a *wh*-phrase allows us to identify it as a preposition.

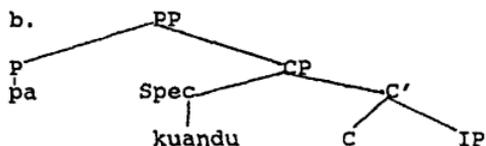
The complementizer *pa* is not a case assigner and the NP is assigned nominative by INFL as shown in (28c).

As far as the historical development of *pa* is concerned, the data we found in Gil Vicente lead us to assume that *pa* was first a preposition (as in (28a)) introducing NPs only before introducing CPs (as in (28b)) and was in its last stage reanalyzed as a complementizer (as in (28c)). (See trees in (28) on the next page).

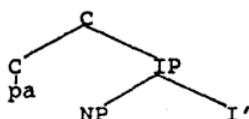
(28) a.



b.



c.



To corroborate this assumption, more data from 16th century Black Speech need to be collected for further research.

The analysis of the type of clauses introduced by *pa* revealed that it may introduce both infinitival and finite clauses. It would be interesting to examine within the minimalist framework to what extent the Portuguese inflected infinitivals as described by Raposo (1987) has influenced the behavior and reanalysis of *pa*.

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