

# Grammaticalization of Tense in the Upper Guinea Creoles

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# Goals

- To introduce the three Upper Guinea Creoles (UGCs)
- To provide an overview of the syntax and semantics of temporal *ba(η)* in the UGCs
- To discuss substrate languages as a source for UGCs past marker
- To propose a grammaticalization scenario of *ba(η)* across the UGCs
- To argue for a verb movement analysis in Kriyol

# The Upper Guinea Creoles

- The following creole languages belong to the Portuguese-related Upper Guinea Creole group (UGCs)
  - Capeverdean Creole
  - Kriyol (Guinea-Bissau Creole)
  - Casamancese Creole (Casamance region, Southern Senegal).



# The formation of the UGC

- A common protolanguage for the UGC is typically assumed in light of the high level of shared lexicon and grammatical features (e.g. Holm & Patrick 2007; Jacobs 2011; Michaelis *et al.* 2013; Quint 2000)
- Development of an UG pidgin from the mid-15th century on from the contact between Portuguese and continental Africans, which were predominantly Wolof and Mandinka speaking slaves
- Primary hypotheses regarding proto-UGC (cf. Jacobs 2011)
  - Insular hypothesis: the proto-language formed on the island of Santiago (Cape Verde) and spread to the continent through a luso-African trade network
  - Continental hypothesis: the proto-language formed in the rivers of Senegambia/Guinea-Bissau and expanded through a luso-African trade network
- Casamancese Creole is a later offshoot of Kriyol (17th century)

# Tense marking in the UGC

- UGCs stand out among Atlantic Creoles insofar they exhibit a postverbal past tense morpheme *ba(ŋ)*
  - Attached to dynamic verbs, *ba(ŋ)* yields a pluperfect reading
  - Attached to stative verbs, *ba(ŋ)* yields a simple past reading

(1) *Omi kume pon.* (dynamic verb)

‘The man ate bread.’

(2) *N tene un primu na Cacheu.* (stative verb)

‘I have a cousin in Cacheu.’

(3) *Omi kume-**ba** pon.* (dynamic verb)

‘The man had eaten bread.’

(4) *N tene-**ba** un primu na Cacheu.* (stative verb)

‘I had a cousin in Cacheu.’

(Kriyol examples)

# Tense marking in the UGC

- Among UGCs, there is an important difference as to the grammatical status of tense morpheme *ba(ŋ)*
  - In the leeward varieties of Capeverdean (CVC), *-ba* is a suffix (e.g. Baptista 1997; Quint 2000)
  - In Kriyol and Casamancese, *ba* and *baŋ* respectively, are usually labeled ‘free morphemes’ (e.g. Biagui 2012; Kihm 1994)

# **-ba in Capeverdean Creole**

- Past tense marker *-ba* is a suffix
  - Object pronouns cliticize on bare verbs (5) but not onto *-ba* (6)
  - In a grammaticalized sequence of suffixes (*-da*), *-ba* occurs in rightmost position (7)

(5) *Omi da-l/\*el pon.*  
‘The man gave him/her/it bread.’

(6) *Omi daba el/\*l pon.*  
man give.PST 3SG bread  
‘The man had given him/her/it bread.’

(7) *Dja m flada...* (*da* < \**du-ba* (attested in the 19<sup>th</sup> century))  
already 1SG tell.PASS.PST  
‘I was told...’ (adapted from Quint 2000:235)

# *ba* in Kriyol

- Kriyol past marker *ba* has developed into a clitic – less common in post-object positions (but cf. Kihm 1994)
  - Object clitics intervene between the verb and *ba* (8)
  - *ba* preferentially precedes strong pronouns (Themes) in Double Object Constructions (cf. 9a vs. 9b)
  - As in Capeverdean, *ba* is the outermost morpheme in clusters (10)

(8) *Omi da-l-ba pon.*  
man give-3SG-PST bread

‘The man had given him/her/it bread.’

(9) a. *Omi da-nu-ba el.* (preferred reading)  
man give-1PL-PST 3SG

b. *Omi da-nu el ba.*

Both: ‘The man had given it to him.’

(10) *Yagu firbi-nti-du-ba.*  
water boil-CAUS-PP-PST

‘The water had been boiled.’



# *baŋ* in Casamancese

- Casamancese *baŋ* shows a similar behavior to Kriyol *ba*
  - *Baŋ* in Casamancese is separated from the verb by clitics (11)
  - *Baŋ* may precede or follow strong pronouns (Themes) in Double Object Constructions (12 vs. 13)

(11) *Ladron yentrá-nos baŋ, pabiya janela yabri-du baŋ.*  
thief enter-1PL PST because window open-PASS PST  
'The thief had gotten in because the window was open.'

(12) *Saliña na kumé-bu baŋ yel buk*  
squirrels CONT eat-2SG PST 3SG IDEO  
'The squirrels have completely eaten it (from you).'

(13) *Pádur fasí-nu yel baŋ.*  
priest do-1PL 3SG PST  
'The priest had done this for us.'

(Adapted from Biagui 2012:175f.)

# 19th century sources

- The oldest data of Capeverdean and Kriyol from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century show that the contemporary patterns already existed

(14) *N ta mostraba nho.*

1SG HAB show.PST 3SG.formal

‘I was showing him.’

(Capeverdean, adapted from Schuchardt 1888)

(15) *Fomi na kastiga-l-ba.*

hunger CONT punish-3SG-PST

‘He was suffering severe hunger.’

(Kriyol, adapted from Schuchardt 1888; *castigalba* in the original)

# Nonverbal *ba*

- In Kriyol and Casamancese, but not in Capeverdean, *ba(η)* may follow nominals or adverbials and may occur in sentence-final position.
- In such cases, *ba(η)* contributes a meaning of past and a sense of completion (Kihm 1994).

(16) *Kil omi **ba** i kin?* (Kriyol, Kihm 1994)

DEM man PST PRED who

‘Who is that man (who was there)?’

(17) *Purmeru **ba** nan, e ta da-ba nan.* (Kriyol)

first PST indeed 3PL HAB give-PST indeed

‘In fact, previously, they used to give [scholarships].’

(18) *...e ta fala basi di analisi linguistika **ba**.* (Kriyol)

3PL HAB say base of analysis linguistic PST

‘...they used to call ‘Introduction to linguistic analysis.’

(19) *Anos tudu di la **banj** na Sindon.* (Casamancese, Biagui 2012)

1PL all of there PST in Sindone

‘All of us were from Sindone.’

# The origins of *ba*

- **Hypothesis:**

- *ba(η)* started out as a free morpheme, without a specialized host, related to the temporal interpretation in the (expanded?) pidgin-stage and started acquiring functional status during the nativization process



- **Second Language Acquisition:**

- The lexical stage: bare verbs, time reference is provided by temporal and locative adverbs and certain connectives
- The morphological stage: appearance of verbal morphology  
(Cf. Winford 2011 and references therein)

# The origins of *ba*

- Against several previous claims, we dismiss Portuguese imperfective *-va* (e.g. *falava* ‘spoke’) as the source for *ba(η)*
  - i. Pidgins shed inflectional morphology
  - ii. Creoles do not develop tense markers from imperfective morphology
  - iii. Semantic mismatch (imperfective vs. perfective)
- In support of a previous free morpheme status
  - i. Syntactic flexibility of *ba(η)* in the contemporary UGCs
  - ii. *Ba* is the most external suffix/clitic in Capeverdean and Kriyol morphological clusters
  - iii. Pronouns cannot cliticize to Capeverdean suffix *-ba*, despite availability of a clitic paradigm
  - iv. Possible connection with Portuguese *acabar* ‘to finish’ (Rougé & Kihm 2008)  
→ cf. Perfect forms derived from *done*, *finish* in English Creoles (e.g. Winford 2011)

# ***Ba* and the substrate**

- The form and syntax of *ba(η)* are arguably substrate-related
- Substantial evidence for a historical and linguistic founder role of Wolof and Mandinka in the formation of proto-UGC (e.g. Jacobs 2011; Lang 2004; Quint 2008; Peck 1988; Rougé 2004; Soares & Torrão 2007)
- Examples of Wolof and Mandinka substrate influence
  - Main sources of African lexicon in the UGCs
  - Syntactic passives without passive auxiliary (Wolof)
  - Causative morphology (Mandinka)
  - Complex pronominal systems with strong/weak contrasts (Wolof)
  - ...

# Tense/Aspect in Wolof

- Wolof exhibits an identical basic dynamic/stative contrast as in the UGCs
  - Unmarked dynamic verb forms → perfect
  - Unmarked stative verb forms → simple present

(20) *tiit-na-a*  
be.afraid-*na*-1SG  
'I'm afraid.'

(21) *dem-na-a*  
go-*na*-1SG  
'I left.' / 'I have left.'

# Tense/Aspect in Wolof

- Wolof exhibits remote past forms (pluperfect) which overlap semantically with *ba(ŋ)*
  - affix *-oon*
  - clitic/free morpheme *woon*

(22) *tiit-oón-na-a.*

be.afraid-PST-*na*-1SG

'I was afraid (but I am not now).'

(23) a. *lekk-oon-na-a.*

eat-PST-*na*-1sg

'I had eaten'

b. *lekk-na-a woon.*

eat-*na*-1sg PST

'I had eaten'

(Torrence, 2005:51)



# Tense/Aspect in Wolof

- Wolof exhibits a morpheme *ba* which takes on several functions related to remoteness

- Distal deictic marker in the nominal domain

(24) *xale ba* (Robert 2006)  
child DEF.DIST  
'that child'

- Past temporal conjunction (when, until)

(25) *Ba ma waxee, ñu dem .* (Stewart 2018)  
'When/after I had spoken, they left.'

- Completion marker in semi-lexicalized chunks

(26) *Añ naa ba pare.* (Stewart 2018)  
lunch na.1SG until finish  
'I already had lunch.'

# Mandinka

- Mandinka exhibits a form *baŋ* (often written as *bã* or *ban*)
  - Nominal : ‘end, limit’
  - Adverbial : ‘up to now, so far’
  - Verbal: ‘to end, to complete, to finish’ , expressing completion and result

(27) a. *A kè-ra ka **bã*** (Delafosse 1955)  
‘it is entirely concluded’

b. *A ye k’-ya kè **bã*** (idem)  
‘he finished the act of working’

In sum, morphophonetic, semantic and syntactic features of Wolof and Mandinka appear to have been crucial in shaping the UGCs Tense/Aspect system and may have converged to some extent with Portuguese *acabar* ‘to finish’

# Grammaticalization of *ba*

- The UGC reflect different stages of grammaticalization and possibly also different adstrate effects
  1. Casamancese *baŋ* → temporal adverbial [+PAST, +COMPLETION] (?)
  2. Kriyol *ba*
    - clitic tense marker [+PAST]
    - temporal adverbial [+PAST, +COMPLETION]
  3. Capeverdean *-ba* → tense suffix in Capeverdean [+PAST]

# Verb movement

Pollock (1989) and subsequent work

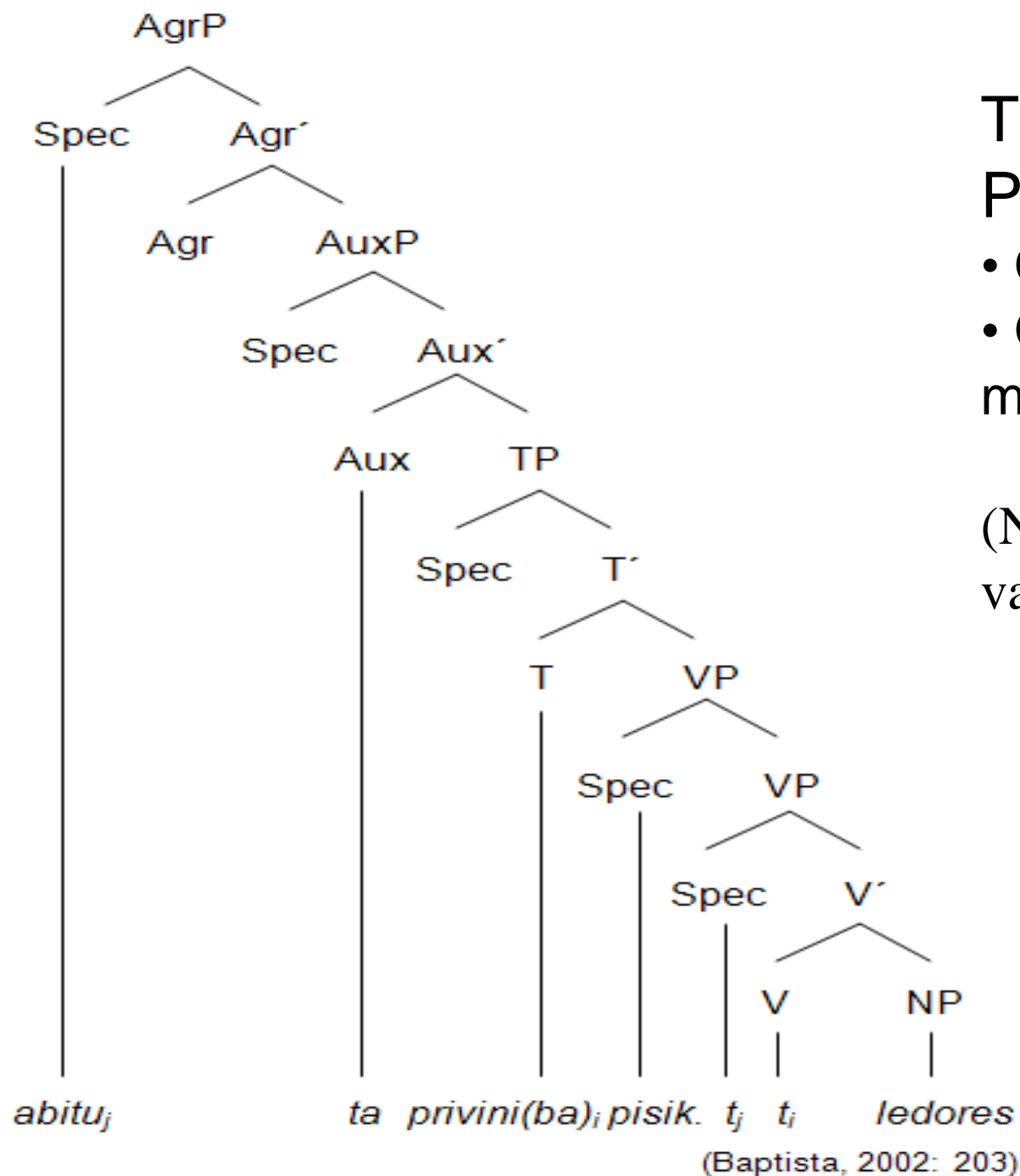
- Several syntactic tests, such as sentence negation, adverb placement and quantifier floating show that verbs in English and in French are in different structural positions
  - English lacks V-to-T movement
  - French exhibits V-to-T movement

# Verb movement in creoles

- (i) Creole languages lack verb movement (e.g. Roberts 1999)
  - Lack of inflectional morphology
  - Preverbal particles block V-to-T (otherwise violation of the HMC)
  
- (ii) Yet, for some Creole languages V-to-T analyses have been proposed:
  - Mesolectal varieties of Louisiana French (Rottet 1992)
  - Capeverdean Creole (Baptista 2002)

# V-Movement in Kabuverdianu

Baptista (2002: 203)



This analysis has been discussed by Pratas (2007) and Alexandre (2009):

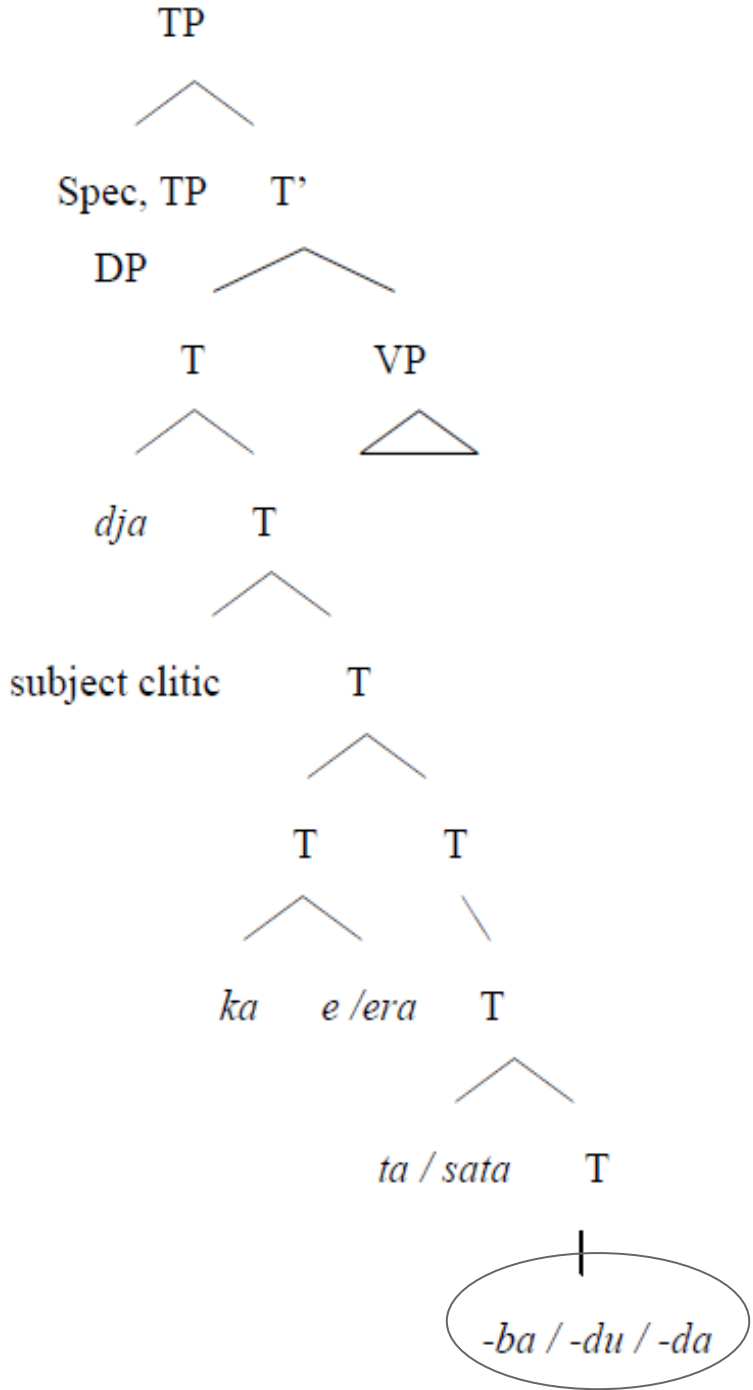
- Order V-ADV-OBJ is severely restricted
- Quantifier floating is restricted to monoargumental predicates

(Note that Capeverdean varieties appear to exhibit variation wrt these tests)



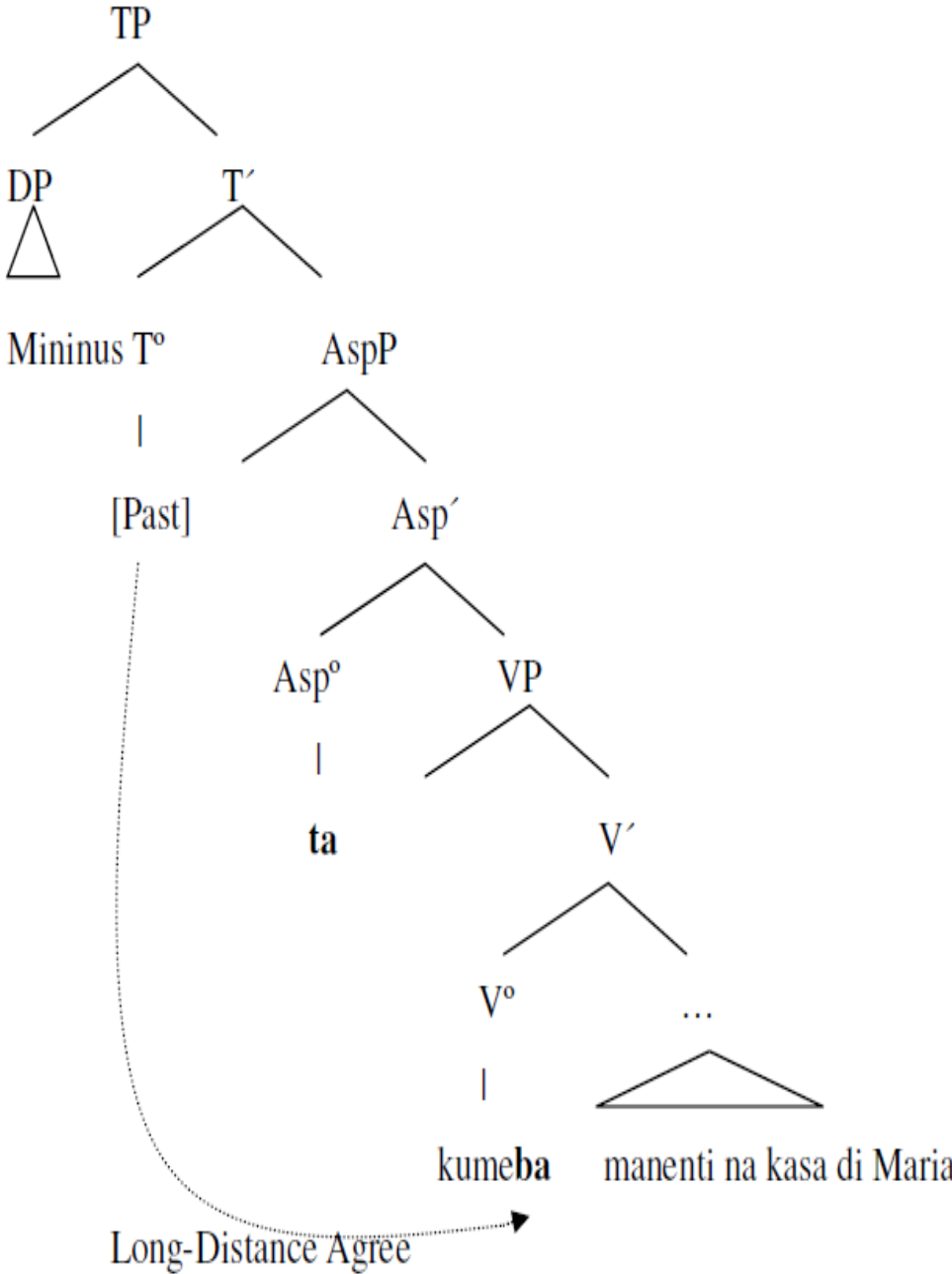
# V-Movement in Kabuverdianu

Pratas (2007: 149)



Affixes are lowered to V°

Alexandre (2012: 27)



Affixes hop to V° + agreement relation T-V

# Kriyol: Adverb placement

- Kriyol shows unrestricted adverb placement between verb and object, irrespective of the presence of *-ba*

(28) *Na Bissau, Barbosa ta kumpra **sempri** arus ku kana...*  
in Bissau Barbosa HAB buy always rice and rum

‘In Bissau, Barbosa always buys rice and rum ...’ ... (ECU 2009: 3)

(29) *I kumpu **dja** vinti kasas.*  
3SG build already twenty houses

‘He has already built twenty houses.’ (BGB, 2010: 128)

(30) *I solteru, i ka tene **inda** fidjus...* (BGB, 2010: 50)  
3SG bachelor 3SG NEG have yet children

‘He is a bachelor, he doesn’t have children yet....’

(31) *Alunu studa **diritu/ben** si lison.*  
student study well POSS lesson

‘The student studied his/her lesson well.’ (Maria 2013: 29)





# Kriyol: Quantifier floating

- Kriyol exhibits generalized quantifier floating

(32) a. ***Tudu*** *mininus lei librus.*  
all children read books

‘All the children read books.’

b. *Mininus* ***tudu*** *lei librus.*  
‘The children all read books.’

c. *Mininus lei* ***tudu***, *librus.* (Maria 2013: 30)

(33) (***tudu***) *alunus* (***tudu***) *kuri* (***tudu***)

‘All the students ran.’ (Maria 2013: 31)

# Kriyol: Clitic+*Ba* constructions

- The position of clitics with respect to clitic *-ba*

(34) a. *Omi ta da-ba mininu pon.*  
man HAB give-PST boy bread

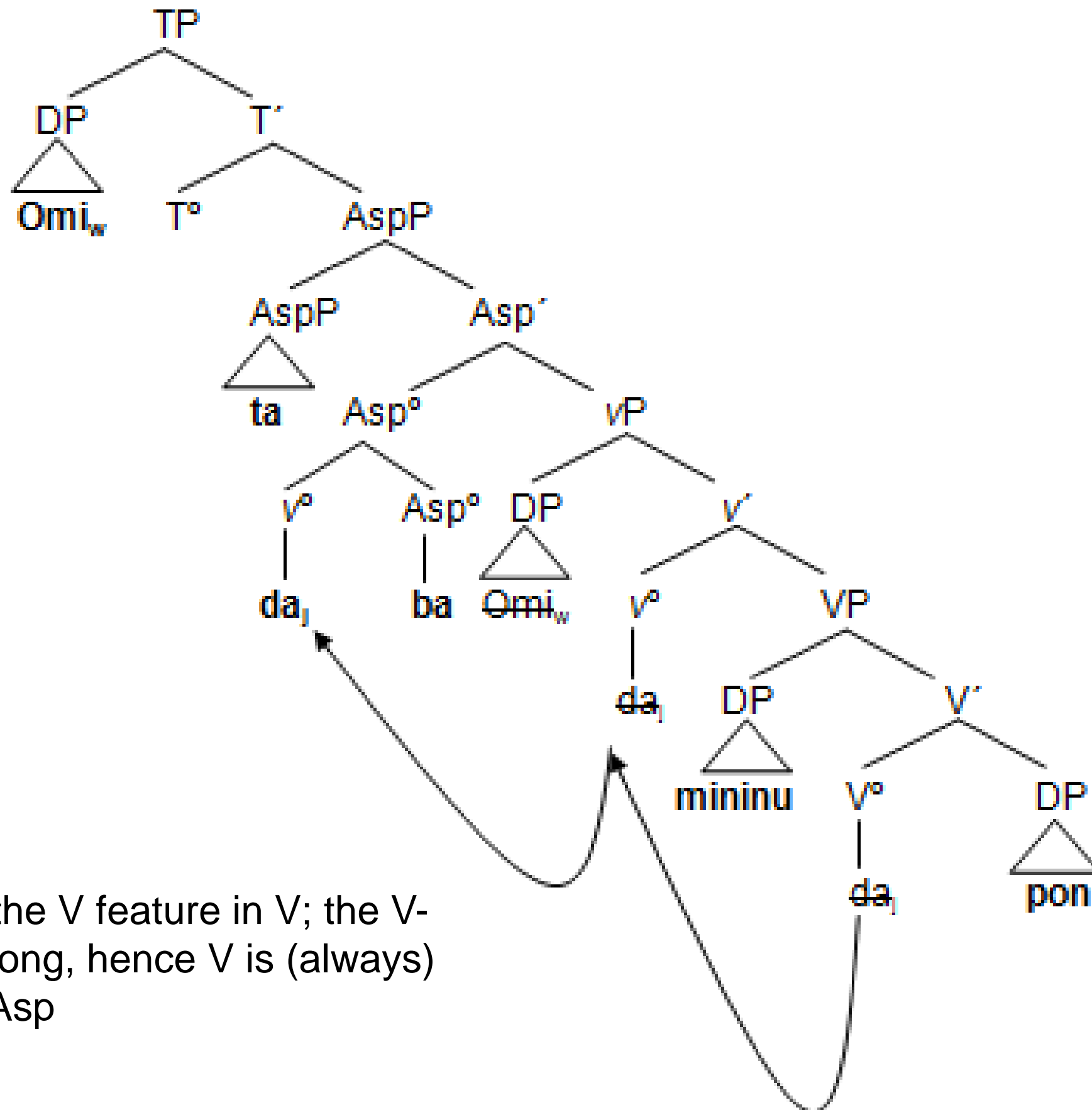
‘The man used to give the boy bread.’

b. *Omi ta da-l-ba pon.*  
man HAB give-3SG-PST bread

‘The man used to give him bread.’

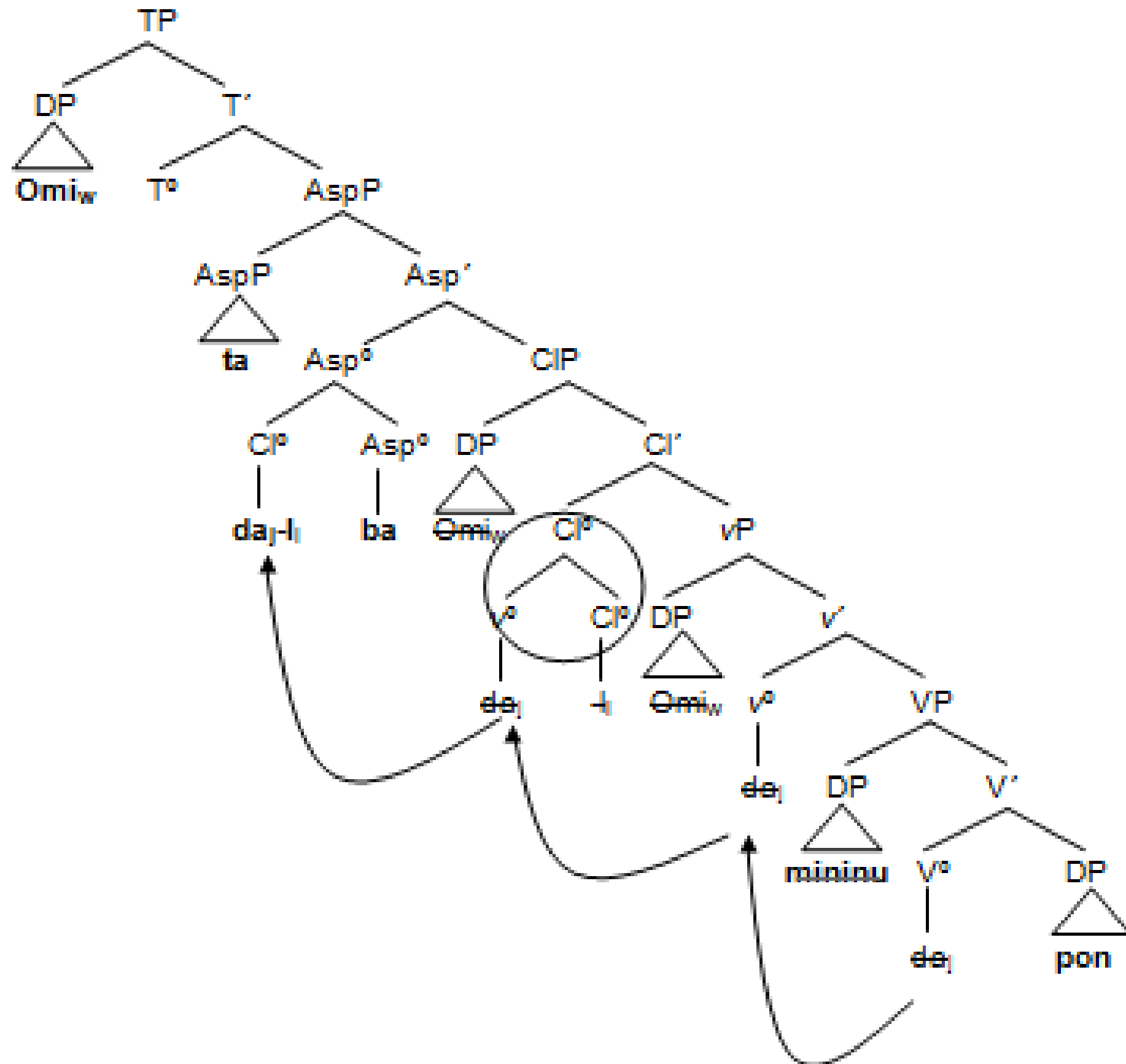
- Altogether, Kriyol exhibits several syntactic properties that are considered indicative of verb movement
- Proposal:
  - *Ba* is the head of an aspectual projection (AspP)
  - Kriyol exhibits generalized verb movement to Asp<sup>0</sup>

**Derivation:** *Omi ta da-ba mininu pon.* ‘The man used to give the boy bread.’



Asp probes the V feature in V; the V-feature is strong, hence V is (always) attracted to Asp

**Derivation:** *Omi ta da-l-ba pon* 'The man was giving him bread'/'The man used to give him bread.'



# Final remarks

- The UGCs arguably show ongoing change from an isolating to a agglutinating typology through universal processes of grammaticalization and primary and secondary contact with agglutinating languages (Kriyol and Casamancese).
- Grammaticalization processes, such as the development of clitic past marker *-ba* in Kriyol, may lend additional support to syntactic analyses
- Kriyol in particular contradicts the idea that creole languages lack verb movement altogether and that verb movement is related to (rich) inflectional morphology
- The lexically filled AspP-shell agreeing with an empty T formalizes the idea that aspectual information is prominent in Creole languages

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