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Nicolas Quint

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Nicolas Quint

## 19 Guinea-Bissau

**Abstract:** Guinea-Bissau is a highly multilingual country. Alongside over twenty African local languages, two main Romance varieties are in use: Portuguese, the official language, and Guinea-Bissau Creole, the main spoken vehicular variety. This chapter first gives an overview of the present-day linguistic situation in Guinea-Bissau before dealing in detail with the respective status and linguistic characteristics of Portuguese and Guinea-Bissau Creole in this West African country.

**Keywords:** Atlantic languages, Mande languages, Guinea-Bissau, Portuguese, Upper Guinea Creole

### 1 Sociolinguistic situation

*The country* – Guinea-Bissau is a country situated in Western Africa. Its territory is relatively small (ca. 36,000 km<sup>2</sup>) and is bordered by Senegal to the north, Guinea-Conakry to the east and south, and the Atlantic Ocean to the west. Today, some 1,900,000 people live in Guinea-Bissau, over 500,000 of whom inhabiting Bissau, the country's capital.

*Linguistic landscape* – Between 20 to 30 languages share Guinea-Bissau's social space. They can be divided into five main groups: (i) Portuguese is the sole official language of the country, although it is spoken natively only by a tiny minority (probably less than 5%); (ii) Guinea-Bissau Creole, a member of the Upper Guinea Creole cluster (cf. below 4), is the main national lingua franca, fluently spoken in 2008 by 90.4% of the population (INE 2009, 36–39); (iii) various African local languages have been used for centuries throughout the country. They all belong to two branches of the Niger-Congo macrophylum: Mande (15% of the total population), represented mainly by Mandinka, the traditional language of the kingdom of Gabu, and many Atlantic languages, the most spoken of which are Fula (Fula-Sereer family, dominant in the eastern hinterland, ca. 25% of the total population), Balanta (22%), Mandjak (8%), Mankanya (3%), Papel (9%, all four belonging to the Bak family), and Biafada (Jaad family, 3%). The remaining Atlantic languages are spoken by small communities representing each less than 2% of the total population of the country: Baga Mboteni and Nalu (Naluic family), Bassari (Tenda family), Bijogo and Jola (Bak family), Kasanga, Kobiana and Nyun (Nyun-Buy family), Landoma (Mel family), and Sua (isolated); (iv) languages spoken by recent immigrant communities, such as (Lebanese) Arabic, Chinese, Wolof; (v) foreign languages (mostly taught at school), essentially French and English and (to a lesser degree) Spanish and Russian.

*Romance languages* – In the section above, four languages can be held (at least from a lexical point of view) as Romance languages: Portuguese and Spanish (Ibero-Ro-

mance), French (Gallo-Romance), and Guinea-Bissau Creole (a Portuguese-based Creole language). As a majority of children now go to school, more and more people have some command of Portuguese: 27.1% could speak it at the end of the last decade (cf. INE 2009, 36ss.). However, in daily life Guinea-Bissau Creole remains the standard for oral communication: in urban settings, at least in the public sphere (e.g., streets, markets), more than 90% of spoken interactions take place in this language (cf. Ichinose 2018, 155).

## 2 Linguistic history

*Dynamics of local African languages before and during the arrival of Portuguese* – Although most local languages found in Guinea-Bissau today were already present at the arrival of Portuguese, their respective demographic and cultural weights have considerably evolved through time. From a sociocultural viewpoint, an important dividing line separates the two big, now mostly Islamized, eastern communities, Mandinka and Fula, which were historically associated with strong political entities, from the remaining, mainly animist and more anciently established, Atlantic-speaking communities which, in the course of time, were either assimilated or pushed further west (i.e., towards the Ocean) by their powerful Mandinka and Fula neighbours. The Mandinka, who reached Guinea-Bissau in the Middle Ages due to the expansion of the Mande Empire of Mali, created a local kingdom, Kaabu (or Gabu, cf. Lopes 1999), which would engage later in active trade (including slave trade) with Portuguese. Kaabu was finally destroyed in 1867 by Muslim Fula, who then imposed and spread Islam on most of Eastern Guinea-Bissau (including the Mandinka-speaking areas). Mandinka (cf. below 4.3), which has been the main African vehicular south of the Gambia River since the arrival of the Portuguese in the area, has actually left a significant influence on Guinea-Bissau Creole (and other Upper Guinea Creoles).

*Arrival of the Portuguese and first development of Guinea-Bissau Creole* – It is generally considered that the first contacts between the Portuguese and West Africans took place after the Portuguese navigators doubled Cape Bojador in 1437, and that the first Portuguese to reach Guinea-Bissau was Nuno Tristão in 1446. From that date, trade relationships began to develop between the newcomers and the local communities. Quite early, some Africans travelled to Portugal (both as slaves and freemen) and many times returned to Africa on Portuguese ships where they served as interpreters, frequently called *línguas* '(lit.) tongues' or *chalonas* (< Mandinka *ko lo na* or *kullona* 'learned man', cf. Rougé 2004, 358; 1999, 62). In the meantime, some Portuguese, known as *lançados* '(lit.) exiles', remained on the mainland, frequently marrying African women and making their way into the local social structures and networks. These first exchanges probably led to the emergence of a Portuguese-based Pidgin, which would be used between Portuguese and West Africans, both in Africa and in Portugal (Kihm/Rougé 2013; Naro 1978; Teyssier 1959, 227–250). Following the settlement of the islands of Cabo Verde (1460), the Portuguese kings issued a decree guaranteeing a zone of commercial exclu-

sivity for the Portuguese Cabo Verdean merchants: this area, called the Captainship of Cabo Verde, encompassed a portion of the African shore extending from the mouth of the Senegal River to the present-day location of Freetown (Sierra Leone) and including all coastal areas of today's Guinea-Bissau. At the end of the sixteenth century, the Portuguese established a first permanent settlement in Guinea-Bissau, namely the trading post of Cacheu in the 1590s, which was quickly followed by Bissau, Fátima, Farim, Geba, and Ziguinchor (this last one now in Casamance, southern Senegal) during the first half of the seventeenth century (Carreira 1984, 19s.). These trading posts were generally peopled by a first nucleus of Christian Cabo Verdean settlers, whose dominant tongue would almost certainly already be a Portuguese-based creole, derived from the above-mentioned Pidgin: it is probably that way that a creole language began to be spoken natively in Guinea-Bissau. Until the turn of the twentieth century, Romance-speaking communities in Guinea-Bissau comprised the following components: some few hundred Portuguese administrators and soldiers, born in Portugal and speaking Portuguese (the only written language of the Portuguese administration); at least several thousands of local *kristons* '(Catholic) Christians' (< Pg. *crístãos*) – that is Cabo Verdean descendants or local Africans (in particular Nyuns, cf. Almada 1964 [1594]) who generally had adopted Christianity as their religion and Creole as their daily language and would mainly live in one of the Portuguese trading-posts. In other words, both Portuguese and Creole speakers only represented a small minority – probably around 1 or 2%, at any rate no more than 5% – of the country's total population. Although Creole would probably be used, even at that time, by a much higher number of people as a second language for trading purposes, it is safe to think that by 1900, less than 10% of Guinea-Bissauans would enjoy an active command of Creole, the only lexically Romance variety known outside the trading posts (Carreira 1984, 32–36).

*Colonial Portuguese empire at its fullest (1900–1973)* – Until the end of the nineteenth century, the political control exerted by the Portuguese had remained loose and mostly limited to the main trading posts, sea routes, and waterways. For instance, around 1800, the Portuguese governors of Bissau and Cacheu still used to pay the local kings a yearly rent for the occupation of these cities (Carreira 1984, 29ss.). Things changed mainly due to the fact that the Portuguese government increasingly felt that, due to the competition of other European colonial powers, it would lose its grip on Guinea-Bissau if it proved unable to fully occupy and rule it. In spite of stiff resistance from many local communities, Portuguese complete control of the whole territory of Guinea-Bissau was achieved in the mid-1930s (Enders 1995, 82, 85), which prompted the development of Portuguese administration and hence the expansion of the Portuguese language throughout the territory. However, in 1963, under the leadership of Amílcar Cabral, a growing number of Bissau-Guineans (and Cabo Verdeans) began an independence war that was to last until 1974 against the Portuguese Empire in Guinea-Bissau. In the space of a few years, the rebellion gained momentum to such a point that it managed to control more than half of the territory. While Portuguese was retained as an administrative, written language by the independence fighters, Guinea-Bissau Creole was selected as the

main language for oral propaganda and military operations. This and the massive population displacements linked with the war contributed to a quick increase of the number of Guinea-Bissau Creole speakers and to the diffusion of this language to ever wider parts of the country. From the second half of the twentieth century onwards, Guinea-Bissau Creole turned to be the main lingua franca in most parts of Guinea-Bissau.

*After independence* – Self-proclaimed in 1973 and officially recognized by Portugal in 1974, the independence of Guinea-Bissau did not cause significant changes regarding the official status of the languages of the country. To date, Portuguese remains the only official language.

### 3 External language policy

#### 3.1 Legislation

Although the Constitution (cf. C-GW) does not explicitly inform about it, Portuguese remains to date the default official language of the country (Leclerc 2016; Lopes da Silva/Jorge Sampa 2017, 233s.). Some legal texts refer to its prominent role, for example an appendix of the Civil Code reads that '[in cases of legal] arbitration, the process, procedures and discussions will be held in Portuguese'.<sup>1</sup> Elsewhere, the Civil Code also mentions the fact that, in the event of a public consultation within the scope of a land concession, 'a request should be broadcast by the national and local radio as well as in the two main mother tongues [in use] within the local community where the land is situated',<sup>2</sup> which implies that, at least in this case, the existence of languages other than Portuguese is taken into account by the lawmakers.

#### 3.2 Languages uses in different domains

*Languages used by public authorities* – Portuguese is the only language used in official documents and correspondence, on road signs, banknotes, and stamps. However, Guinea-Bissau Creole also has some visibility in the official or public sphere, in particular regarding health written advices, which seem to be systematically printed and made available both in Guinea-Bissau Creole and Portuguese in most medical units as well as in the streets.

*Languages used in education* – Portuguese is the only school medium in governmental schools. Most books published in Guinea-Bissau are written in Portuguese. In prac-

1 "O processo e procedimentos e os debates da arbitragem terão lugar em (português) [sic]" (Decree-Law 9, Chapter V, Appendix ['Anexo']).

2 "[...] o requerimento será difundido pela rádio nacional e local e nas duas línguas maternas dominantes na Comunidade Local onde se localizar a terra em questão" (Law 5, Chapter V, section 33).

tice, Guinea-Bissau Creole is also largely used in spoken interactions, in particular during breaks.

*Languages used in the media* – Print media as well as official websites are generally only available in Portuguese, while TV and radio news are regularly broadcast in that language. On the other hand, many locally produced TV/radio broadcasts (including news) resort to Guinea-Bissau Creole. Note that in such broadcasts, the speakers often codeswitch between Guinea-Bissau Creole and Portuguese even while supposed to be speaking Guinea-Bissau Creole. In social media (e.g., Facebook), Guinea-Bissau Creole is also widely used and clearly dominant in private exchanges such as SMS chats. There are also many advertising posters in Guinea-Bissau Creole, both for commercial and for political purposes such as elections.

*Languages used in literature* – Novels and book-length fiction published in Guinea-Bissau are usually written in Portuguese. Guinea-Bissau Creole is absolutely dominant in the domain of oral literature: it is in that language that traditional folktales and sayings are usually told and that a great majority of local songs are performed.

### 4 Linguistic characteristics

*Portuguese* – The official norm for Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau is standard European Portuguese. Portuguese is probably the home language of fewer than 5% of the country's population and is almost never heard in the streets. Therefore, it is quite difficult to characterize this variety. However, despite these limitations, a few features of Guinea-Bissau Portuguese can actually be observed, many of which are calques or influences from Guinea-Bissau Creole.

*Creole* – As Guinea-Bissau Creole is actually the main Romance-based spoken language in Guinea-Bissau, it will be described in more detail than Portuguese in this section. From a phylogenetic point of view, Guinea-Bissau Creole is an Upper Guinea Portuguese Creole and displays strong relationships with Cabo Verdean and, to a lesser extent, Papiamentu, an Iberian-based Creole language spoken in the ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao) in the Dutch Caribbean (cf. Jacobs 2012; Quint 2000). Note that these relationships are not only due to the shared linguistic material inherited from Portuguese but also to the existence of a common ancestor, namely an Upper Guinea Portuguese-based Pidgin or Proto-Creole (or Proto-Upper Guinea Portuguese Creole), which must have been spoken along the shores of the Captainship of Cabo Verde (cf. Quint/Moreira Tavares 2019, 124ss., 141s.; Quint 2000, 195–208). Guinea-Bissau Creole is one of the two members of the continental branch of Upper Guinea Portuguese Creole, the other one being Casamance Creole. Historically, Casamance Creole is an offshoot of Cacheu Creole (spoken in Guinea-Bissau), as the Portuguese factory of Ziguinchor was first settled by Cacheu *kristons* in the first half of the seventeenth century (Biagui 2018, 18). Today, although Casamance Creole and Guinea-Bissau Creole remain mutually intelligible, they also display significant differences (Biagui/Nunez/Quint forthcoming), due to:

first a specific Nyun adstrate in Ziguinchor and its surroundings, second the influence French and Wolof have been exerting on Casamance Creole since the inclusion of Ziguinchor in the French colonial empire –after it was sold by Portugal to France in 1886 (cf. Biagui 2018, 18)– and later in the Republic of Senegal, where Wolof is the main vehicular, third a stronger exposure to modern Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau Creole; and fourth a general dialectal levelling by the Bissau variety within the boundaries of Guinea-Bissau (cf. next section), which did not affect Casamance Creole as it is now spoken outside Guinea-Bissau.

*Traditional varieties of Guinea-Bissau Creole* – Until the twentieth century, Guinea-Bissau Creole was mostly spoken as first language in the historical Portuguese factories of Bissau, Cacheu, Farim, and Geba, all founded between 1590 and 1650 (cf. above 2). Accordingly, each of these places developed its own local variety. However, the twentieth-century expansion of Guinea-Bissau Creole throughout the country deeply affected the varietal landscape: the Bissau variety became the lingua franca in Guinea-Bissau and, within half a century, almost eradicated the remaining historical varieties. In 2020, at least three different varieties can still be observed in Guinea-Bissau: The Bissau variety is absolutely dominant, being spoken natively by at least 300,000 to 500,000 people and daily used by over 1,500,000 people living in Guinea-Bissau or originating from this country. The Cacheu and Geba varieties are spoken each by less than 10 elderly people (most of whom above 60 years old), all members of the tiny local *kriston* communities. Even among these people, the Bissau variety is today the main daily means of interaction and the few speakers left would best be described as heritage speakers, which means that Cacheu and Geba local varieties probably ceased to be actively used in these communities at least fifty years ago. Several factors seem to have contributed to their demise: firstly, the dominant status of Guinea-Bissau Creole and its steady expansion, secondly the relatively low linguistic distance between these creole varieties, which favoured dialectal levelling, and thirdly some specific historical circumstances which contributed to weakening the practice of Cacheu and Geba varieties: as a matter of fact, the Cacheu elders still remember that the old *kriston* community, settled near the river at a place named *Basemar* [base'mar] (< Pg. *baixa-mar* 'low tide/water'), was forcibly displaced for health reasons by the Portuguese authorities, apparently in the 1940s, which led to the scattering of the creole-speaking families, and hence to the subsequent progressive loss of Cacheu specific creole variety. The Geba community suffered mostly from its economic collapse when, by the turn of the twentieth century, the Portuguese colonial authorities chose the close-by and recently founded city of Bafatá as an administrative centre for the inner part of the country, which prompted many Geba *kristons* to leave their community looking for better job opportunities. Today, Geba *kristons* are but a small minority (between 100 and 200 people) in Geba itself, where the majority of inhabitants are Mandinka speakers, who practise Bissau (not Geba) Creole as a second language. This tiny *kriston* community is a mere shadow of its former self, when Geba was a thriving river port: in 1841–1842 (cf. Carreira 1984, 34), there were 3,000 *kristons* (Pg. *cristãos*) in Geba, accounting for almost one half (46%) of the total number (6,450) of

*kristons* in Guinea-Bissau at that time (note that the old port of Geba had a similar name –*Basamar* [basa'mar] in the local creole variant– as the ancient *kriston* neighbourhood of Cacheu). By 2012, there did not seem to be any speaker left of Farim variety (cf. Quint/Moreira Tavares 2019, 121). On linguistic grounds, Cacheu Creole clearly clusters with Casamance Creole, historically an offshoot of the former (cf. previous section). The two varieties share both phonetic and lexical features and make up together the northern branch of Upper Guinea continental creoles (cf. Quint/Moreira Tavares 2019, 135–139).

Table 1: Some shared features between Cacheu and Casamance Creoles

Meaning	Cacheu	Casamance	Bissau	Etymon
'to come'	<i>ben</i> [bɛ̃ŋ]	<i>beŋ</i> [bɛ̃ŋ]	<i>bin</i> [bĩŋ]	Pg. <i>vém</i> [vɛ̃] <sup>3</sup> 'he comes'
'big jar'	<i>kantrera</i>	<i>kantilera</i>		Pg. <i>cantareira</i>
			<i>puti</i>	Pg. <i>pote</i> [pɔ̃ti]
'to squat'	<i>jokoní</i>	<i>jokoní</i>		Wolof <i>jonkon</i>
			<i>jungutú</i>	Mandinka <i>jòŋkótó</i>

The linguistic originality of Geba Creole is harder to establish (Quint/Moreira Tavares 2019, 139ss.). From the few available evidence, Geba Creole seems to belong to the same grouping as the Bissau variety, namely the southern branch of Upper Guinea continental creoles. This goes contrary to what was said in previous works (e.g., Wilson 1962, vii), where Geba and close-by Bafatá are considered to make up an eastern branch of Guinea-Bissau Creole. Most data found by the present author in Geba in 2010 and 2019 among conservative local speakers are similar to the Bissau variety. As for Bafatá, the town is a recent foundation (much posterior to the first factories), and the local creole is the vehicular, Bissau-based variety spoken nowadays throughout the country. At any rate, the Geba variety has at least a few features of its own, such as the use of an asyllabic variant of the progressive marker, as in *bu ka n bai!* 'You are not going!' [bu ka 'mbaj] instead of *bu ka na bai!* [bu ka na 'baj] in other varieties.

*New varieties of Guinea-Bissau Creole* – As Guinea-Bissau Creole is nowadays spoken as a first or second language by a vast majority of Guinea-Bissau population, the inner-variation of Guinea-Bissau Creole is increasingly depending on two factors (Couto 1994, 51–57), the first of which being the contrast between native and non-native varieties. Actually, many people, in particular (but not only) in the rural areas, still acquire

3 Unless otherwise specified, the phonetic transcriptions of Portuguese are based on Renaissance (or Classical) Portuguese, spoken between 1450 and 1650. It is from this stage of the language that a majority of Guinea-Bissau Creole Portuguese-derived items originate. For more details about the pronunciation of Renaissance Portuguese, cf. Teyssier 1980.

a local African language in their family before being exposed to Guinea-Bissau Creole in schools –where Guinea-Bissau Creole is often dominant in spoken interactions with peers– or in urban settings. Such second language speakers obviously transfer various features of their first languages into the Guinea-Bissau Creole variety they practise. However, specific studies of these diverse second language varieties are still altogether missing. The second factor accounting for variation in today's Guinea-Bissau Creole is the degree of exposure to Portuguese, the official language of the country and the main written medium of local schools (cf. 3.2). As expected, people who have a higher degree of education or enjoy political or administrative responsibilities in the society tend to make use of more Portuguese words and structures while speaking Guinea-Bissau Creole. At any rate, the influence of contemporary (or modern) Portuguese is pervasive and can be observed even among people with low schooling (or no schooling at all). Daily practice of Guinea-Bissau Creole reveals in particular that the use of palatal fricatives (theoretically absent from traditional Guinea-Bissau Creole, cf. Table 2) is solidly entrenched in a lot of idiolects (urban as rural, cf. Couto 1994, 72; Scantamburlo 1999, 128s.; 2013, 246), for example *dixá* [di'ʃa] (< Pg. *deixar* [de'ʃar]) 'to let, to leave' (with [ʃ]) is nowadays more commonly heard than the basilectal (or traditional) form *disá* [di'sa], still dominant in Casamance Creole. It is also frequent for one and the same speaker to alternate, even in the same sentence, between traditional [sC] and Lusitanized [ʃC] realizations of /sC/ clusters, for example 'to be [somewhere]' can be indifferently pronounced *sta* [sta] (< Renaissance Pg. *estar* [is'tar]) or *xta* [ʃta] (< modern Pg. *estar* [i'ʃtar]). In other words, today's spoken Guinea-Bissau Creole –in particular in the city of Bissau, where more than a quarter of the whole country's population lives– is increasingly open to the linguistic influx of standard Portuguese as well as other international languages, mainly English and French. Guinea-Bissau rap texts provide good samples of this 'new Guinea-Bissau Creole':

"Ora k-i na pasá/ningin ka ta rizixtí si xarmi/ela i ka di prasa [...] /Bu fasi-m dudu/bu pui N ka panhá pé di nha self di nha self/ Mona-Liza fora di quadru./Kin ku dizenhá-u/dudu más di Pikasu".<sup>4</sup>

In the above excerpt, influences from modern Portuguese are attested at all levels of grammar: on the phonetic level, for example, we find the voiceless palatal fricative /ʃ/ preceding a consonant (only [sC] realizations are allowed in this case in more conservative varieties, cf. above discussion of *sta/xta*) and the voiced alveolar fricative /z/ (unattested in conservative varieties, cf. Table 2) in *rizixtí* 'to resist' [rizi'ʃti] (< Pg. *resistir* [ʁiziziti]). On the morphological level, we find, for example, the feminine pronoun *ela*

<sup>4</sup> 'When she passes by/no-one can resist her charm/she is not from the capital [...]/You drive [(lit.) made] me crazy/you turn me unaware of myself/[you are a] Mona-Lisa [who would have gotten] out of her frame./The one who created you [(lit.) drew you]/was more genial [(lit.) crazier] than Picasso' (from Zaino Jawad 2018 – I would like to thank here Braima Sam Mendes for his help in transcribing the Creole text of this song).

'she' (< Pg. *ela*), theoretically absent from Guinea-Bissau Creole grammar where there is no gender distinction for 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular pronouns (cf. Table 3). On the semantic level, we find, for example, the causative auxiliary *fasi* 'to make' (< Pg. *fazer*) used with *dudu* 'to be crazy' (< Pg. *doido*) while 'traditional' Guinea-Bissau Creole more frequently resorts to *pui* 'to put' (< Pg. *põe*/[archaic] *poer*) –also attested in the following sentence of the text– for analytical causative constructions. On the lexical level, we find, for example, *xarmi* 'charm' (< Pg. *charme* < Fr. *charme*). This text also contains the item *self*, a lexical borrowing from English.

An accurate overview of urban spoken Guinea-Bissau Creole would definitely require dedicated variationist studies in order to better describe what hundreds of thousands of Guinea-Bissau citizens actually speak as their main language in the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Given the complexity of dealing with present-day linguistic variation and the scarcity of available sources, unless otherwise mentioned, the following presentation of Guinea-Bissau Creole is based on a conservative or 'traditional' version of the Bissau variety.

#### 4.1 Pronunciation

*Portuguese* – Portuguese being mostly spoken as a second (or third) language in Guinea-Bissau, its phonology is quite often heavily influenced by Creole (and locally also by other languages), mostly concerning vowels and prosody. As expected, the higher the degree of education, the closer the actual Portuguese pronunciation is to European Portuguese.

*Creole* – In the most conservative varieties of Guinea-Bissau Creole (with limited influence from Portuguese), the vowel inventory includes /i/, /e/, /a/, /o/, /u/, and a central, unstressed schwa /ə/, whose occurrence is limited to unstressed syllables or particles, such as the relative marker /kə/ (also realized as [ki] or [ku], cf. below 4.2, *Nuclear and complex sentences*).

Regarding consonants (cf. Table 2), the major differences with modern Portuguese are firstly the presence of /c/, /j/, and /ŋ/, which can be traced back to both Renaissance Portuguese, as in *corá* 'to cry' [co'ra] (< Pg. *chorar* [tʃo'rar]), *jugu* 'game' (< Pg. *jogo* [dʒogu]), *luŋa* 'moon' [luŋa] (< Pg. *lũa* [lũ(ŋ)ɐ]), and the African substrate: *jakasi* 'to mix' [ʒaka'si] (< Wolof *jaxase*), *koci* 'to pound (grain)' [ko'ci] (< Mandinka *kóci*), *ŋoli* 'to look daggers at someone' [ŋoli] (< Mandinka *ŋùlu/ŋúndúndá*); secondly the absence of voiced fricatives, as in *baka* 'cow' [baka] (< Pg. *vaca* [vake]), *fasi* 'to do' [fa'si] (< Pg. *fazer* [fe'zer]); and thirdly the absence of palatal fricatives, as in *susu* 'dirty' [susu] (< Pg. *sujo* [suʒu]), *bas* 'down' [bas] (< Pg. *baixo* [bajʃu]).

Table 2: Phonemic chart of Guinea-Bissau Creole consonants (conservative varieties)

		Place of articulation			
		Labial	Dental	Palatal	Velar
Stops	Unvoiced	p	t	c	k
	Voiced	b	d	j <j>	g
Fricatives		f	s		
Nasals		m	n	ɲ <nh>	ŋ
Others		(w)	l/r <r>	j <y>	(w)

As regards non-segmental features, Guinea-Bissau Creole seems to be a stress language (Andrade/Gomes/Teixeira 1999; Chapouto 2014, 17s.). In most cases, the stress falls either on the last or the penultimate syllable of the word and, in the Romance part of the lexicon, the stressed syllable is usually the same as in the Portuguese etymon, for example *kasá* 'to marry' [ka'sa] (< Pg. *casar* [ke'zar]) vs. *kasa* 'house' ['kasa] (< Pg. *casa* ['kazɐ]). As shown by the pair *kasá* vs. *kasa*, stress can be distinctive in Guinea-Bissau Creole. Note that Portuguese proparoxytonic items often become paroxytonic in Guinea-Bissau Creole by omitting the non-final post-tonic vowel or syllable, for example Pg. *divida* ['divide] Ṡ-S-S > Cr. *dibra* 'debt' ['dibra] Ṡ-S, Pg. *fôlego* ['foligu] Ṡ-S-S > Cr. *folgu* 'breath' ['folgu] Ṡ-S, *lágrima* ['lagrimɐ] Ṡ-S-S > Cr. *larma* 'tear' ['larma] Ṡ-S.

## 4.2 Morphosyntax

*Portuguese* – In spoken Guinea-Bissau Portuguese (generally second language varieties), for example in TV news, gender and number agreement are sometimes un-systematic. While, for instance, the realization of the standard Portuguese noun phrase, such as in *estas duas casas bonitas* 'these two nice houses, (lit.) houses nice', exhibits gender (feminine) and number (plural) agreement in all determiners and modifiers of the noun *casas* 'houses', the corresponding noun phrase has a strong probability to lack either gender or number agreement (or both) for at least one of the determiners in many lects of Guinea-Bissau Portuguese, e.g., when referring to *casas* [f.pl.] 'houses', alongside the standard Portuguese form *bonitas* [f.pl.], the adjective 'nice' is realized by some speakers as *bonitos* [m.pl.] (number agreement, no gender agreement), *bonita* [f.sg.] (gender agreement, no plural agreement) or *bonito* [m.sg.] (neither gender nor number agreement). Such lack of agreement is most probably a calque from Guinea-Bissau Creole, in which determiners and qualifiers usually do not agree with the noun neither for number nor for gender (cf. below).

*Creole: Noun phrase* – Guinea-Bissau Creole has two numbers, singular and plural. Guinea-Bissau Creole nouns are inflected for plural with Portuguese-derived morphemes {-s} after vowel, {-is} after consonant): *baka* 'cow' (< Pg. *vaca*) > *bakas* 'cows', *minjer* 'woman' (< Pg. *mulher*) > *minjeris* 'women'. There is also an associative plural (of African origin), used exclusively with human referents and coded by prenominal {ba}: *ba Jon* 'John and his friends' (Doneux/Rougé 1988, 33). For nouns coding for animates, gender can be expressed in three different ways: (i) lexically, as for example in *rapás* (< Pg. *rapaz*) 'boy' vs. *bajuda* 'girl' (< Nyun (Djifanghor) *be-gid*), (ii) using the Portuguese-derived morpheme {-a}, for example *beju* 'elderly man' vs. *beja* 'elderly woman' or (iii) by means of the qualifiers *macu* 'male' (< Pg. *macho*) and *fémia* 'female' (< Pg. *fêmea*), for example *fiju macu* 'son, (lit.) child male' and *fiju fémia* 'daughter, (lit.) child female'. Noun derivation is largely attested. It is exclusively suffixal and resorts to Portuguese-derived material, for example *mininu* 'child' (< Pg. *menino*) > *mininesa* 'childhood'; *bunitu* 'beautiful' (< Pg. *bonito*) > *bunitasku* 'beauty'; *perá* 'to hope' (< Pg. *esperar*) > *peransa* 'hope'.

Guinea-Bissau Creole has no exact equivalents of Portuguese (or other Romance) articles and frequently resorts to bare nouns, whose degree of (in)definiteness can only be inferred from the general context, for example *omi* 'a/the man' (cf. Truppi 2015, 126–138). Determiners and qualifiers of the noun normally do not agree with the noun neither for number, for example *ki kabra* 'that goat' > *ki kabras* 'those goats' nor for gender, for example *omi bunitu* 'beautiful man', *minjer bunitu* 'beautiful woman' (cf. Portuguese *homen bonito* vs. *mulher bonita*). The main indefinite determiner is *un* 'a' (< Pg. *um*), but a bare noun can also have an indefinite reading. There are two demonstratives: the proximal *e* 'this' (pronoun *es* 'this one' < Pg. *esse*) and the distal *ki(l)* 'that' (pronoun *kil* [sg.] 'that one', *kilis* [pl.] 'those ones' < Pg. *aquele(s)*). The contemporary numeral system closely follows Portuguese, for example *dus* 'two' (< Pg. *dois*), *trezi* 'thirteen' (< Pg. *treze*), *sinkuenta* 'fifty' (< Pg. *cinquenta*). For the numbers between eleven and nineteen, there used to be a more analytical system, for example *des ku un* 'eleven, (lit.) ten and one', *des ku dus* 'twelve, (lit.) ten and two', *des ku tris* 'thirteen, (lit.) ten and three', etc., now largely replaced by forms borrowed from modern Portuguese. The eleven-to-nineteen system (and other archaic features) is still retained in closely related Casamance Creole (Biagui/Nunez/Quint forthcoming; Biagui 2018, 245–260; Biagui/Quint 2013, 43). All determiners precede the noun: *un kacur* 'a/one dog', *dus kacur* 'two dogs', *ki kacur* 'that dog'. Most qualifiers (= adjectives) follow the noun: *kasa branku* 'white house, (lit.) house white'. Predicative qualifiers behave syntactically as verbs (cf. below *Verb phrase*). The personal pronouns are Portuguese-derived but quite different from standard Portuguese.

Table 3: Main personal pronouns and possessives in Guinea-Bissau Creole

	Clitics		Free	Portuguese etymon	Possessives	
	Subject	Object			Clitic	Stressed
1 <sup>st</sup> sg.	<i>N</i>	<i>-m</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>me, mim</i>	<i>nha</i>	<i>di mi</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> sg.	<i>bu</i>	<i>-u, -bu</i>	<i>bo</i>	<i>vós</i>	<i>bu</i>	<i>di bo</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> sg.	<i>i</i>	<i>-l</i>	<i>yel</i>	<i>ele</i>	<i>si</i>	<i>di sil</i>
1 <sup>st</sup> pl.	<i>no</i>	<i>-nu</i>	<i>nos</i>	<i>nós</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>di nos</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> pl.	<i>bo</i>	<i>bos</i>	<i>bos</i>	<i>vós</i>	<i>bo</i>	<i>di bos</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> pl.	<i>e</i>	<i>elis</i>	<i>yelis</i>	<i>eles</i>	<i>se</i>	<i>di selis</i>

Subject pronouns precede the verb: *N bin* 'I came', *bu bin* 'you came'. Object pronouns follow the verb: *N ojá-bu* 'I saw you', *N oj-elis* (< *N ojá* + *elis*) 'I saw them'. Free pronouns are mainly used after prepositions: *ku bo* 'with you', *pa nos* 'for us'. They also provide the basic form to derive a specific series of topic pronouns, characterized by the prefix *a-*: *ami* [1<sup>st</sup> sg.], *abo* [2<sup>nd</sup> sg.], *anos* [1<sup>st</sup> pl.], *abos* [2<sup>nd</sup> pl.]; for 3<sup>rd</sup> persons, there is no prefix and the forms are the same as the corresponding free pronouns. Topic pronouns are most frequently used in front of a clitic subject pronoun in order to emphasize the identity of the subject: *ami N kunsí Jon* 'I know John, (lit.) as for me, I know John'; compare with French *moi je connais Jean*). Alongside the six persons presented above, Guinea-Bissau Creole also makes use of 2<sup>nd</sup> person formal pronouns based on the roots *nhu* /ɲu/ 'Sir, Mr.' (< Pg. *senhor*) and *nha* /ɲa/ 'Mrs., Madam' (< Pg. *senhora*, Kihm 1994, 151s.). The use of these forms is much more reduced than in Cabo Verdean (Quint 2003, 160s., 218–222). There are two series of possessives: clitic possessives are formally similar to subject clitics (exceptions: 1<sup>st</sup> sg. clitic possessive *nha* < Pg. *minha* '[f.] my', initial *s-* of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person clitic possessives *si* [sg.] and *se* [pl.] < Pg. *seu* [m.] 'her/his') and always precede the noun, as in *nha karu* 'my car', *no karu* 'our car'. Stressed possessives, in contrast, are frequently used as pronouns, as in *e karu pikininu*, *ma di selis más garandi* 'This car is small, but theirs is bigger'.

Genitive constructions follow the pattern 'possessum + *di* + possessor', for example *kabra di Jon* 'John's goat, (lit.) goat of John'.

Most oblique functions are expressed by means of prepositions, the most common of which are *di* 'of/from' (< Pg. *de*), *ku* 'with' (< Pg. *com*), *na* 'in/at/on' (< Pg. *na* < *em* 'in' + *a* 'the [f.]'), *sin* 'without' (< Pg. *sem*), *te* 'until' (< Pg. *até*), and *pa* 'for/by' (< Pg. *para*): *i fasi-l pa si fiju* 'she/he did it for her/his child'.

**Creole: Verb phrase** – The Creole verb is not inflected for person, for example *N kantá* 'I sang', *bu kantá* 'you [sg.] sang'. Aspect is expressed by preverbal particles: The future/progressive *na* (*N na kantá* 'I am singing/I will sing'), the general imperfective *ta* (*N ta kantá* 'I sing'), and the perfective zero (*N ∅ kantá* 'I sang'). Guinea-Bissau Creole

contrasts action verbs on the one hand which, when inflected for perfective, usually have a past reference, as in *N ∅ kantá* 'I sang', from stative verbs on the other hand, whose perfective usually has a present reference, as in *N ∅ sibi* 'I know'. Note that in Guinea-Bissau Creole, most predicative qualifiers behave as stative verbs: *Maria ∅ bunitu* 'Mary is beautiful'.

Two basic tenses are distinguished: present (zero marker), as in *N ta kantá* 'I (use to) sing', and past (postverbal *ba* < imperfect Portuguese suffix *-va*), as in *N ta kantaba* 'I used to sing'. When a past verb combines with an object pronoun, the latter is inserted between the verb and the tense marker: *N ta kantá-l ba* 'I used to sing it'. Guinea-Bissau Creole also has two voices, namely active, as in *Jon ojá Maria* 'John saw Mary', and passive, as in *Jon ojadu* 'John was seen'; the passive *-du* suffix is derived from Pg. masculine past participle ending *-do*. There is an equative copula *sedu* 'to be' (< Pg. *ser*), with two basic inflected forms: the present *i* 'am, is, are' (< Pg. *é* 'is') and the past *ieraba* 'was, were' (< Pg. *era* 'was' + imperfect suffix *-va*). Verb negation is expressed through the preverbal particle *ka* (< Pg. *nunca* 'never'): *i bin* 'he came' > *ka bin* 'he did not come'.

Verb derivation is well developed. It resorts both to prefixes such as in *mará* 'to tie' (< Pg. *amarrar*) > inersive *dismará* 'to untie' and suffixes, as in *pretu* 'to be black' (< Pg. *preto*) > inchoative *pret(i)si* 'to become black'. From a Romance point of view, the most original derivational suffix is probably the causative marker *-nt-/-nd-*: *kabá* 'to finish, to be finished (intr.)' (< Pg. *acabar*) > *kabantá* 'to finish [something] (tr.)'; *sintá* 'to sit down (intr.)' (< Pg. *sentar*) > *sintandá* 'to make [someone] sit (tr.)'; *camí* 'to get drunk (intr.)' > *camintí* 'to make [someone] drunk (tr.)'. The causative marker is derived from Mandinka *-ndi* (Biagui 2018, 213; Biagui/Nunez/Quint forthcoming), possibly with an influence of Portuguese lexical pairs such as *mamar* 'to suckle' > *amamentar* 'to nurse, to breastfeed' (i.e., 'to make [someone] suckle', Kihm 1991, 59; 1994, 251s.).

Reflexives and reciprocals are produced by means of analytical constructions involving the nouns *kabesa* 'head' and *kurpu* 'body' (reflexives), as in *i matá kabesa* 'she/he killed herself/himself, (lit.) she/he killed head' or in *i labá kurpu* 'she/he washed herself/himself, (lit.) she/he washed body'; and the fixed collocation *un utru* 'one another' (reciprocal), as in *e kirí un utru* 'they love each other'.

**Creole: Nuclear and complex sentences** – In nuclear sentences, the basic order is SVO: *Maria ojá Pidru* 'Mary saw Peter'. In double object constructions, the recipient precedes the patient (from Couto 1994, 105): *Jon da Maria libru* 'John gave Mary the book, John gave the book to Mary'. *Yes-no* questions are optionally marked by *nos*, without any other syntactic change (from Scantamburlo 2002, 434): *Nos Titu splorá bos?* 'Did Titus take advantage of you [pl.]?' (2 Corinthians 12:18). *Wh*-questions are generally introduced by one of the following question words, all Portuguese-derived: *kal* 'which' (< Pg. *qual*), *kantu* 'how many/much' (< Pg. *quanto*), *ké* 'what' (< Pg. *quê*), *kin* 'who' (< Pg. *quem*), *kumá* 'how' (< Renaissance Pg. *coma*), *kal temu/dia/anu/ora* '(trad.) when, (lit.) which time/day/year/hour' or *kuandu* 'when' (recently borrowed from Pg. *quando*), (*n*)*undé* or *ndé* 'where' (< Pg. *onde*). When fron-



ted, these question words are generally followed by the focus marker *ku* ‘that’: *Ké ku bo mistí?* ‘What do you [pl.] want?’. Adverbial clauses are most often introduced by *ora ku* ‘when’ (+ prospective or habitual context, cf. the song excerpt in *New varieties of Guinea-Bissau Creole* above), *anti(s) di* ‘before’, *dispús ku* ‘after’, *pa* ‘so that’ (purposive) or *ocá ku* ‘when’ (+ past context): *Ocá ku Maria cigá, i comá si mamé* ‘When Mary arrived, she called her mother’. Complement clauses follow the verb. Utterance and manipulative clauses are distinguished through the use of different complementizers, *kumá* (< Renaissance Pg. *coma* ‘as’ and/or Mandinka *kúma* ‘word, speech’, Kihm 1987) and *pa* (< Pg. *para* ‘for’) respectively: *Pidru falá Maria kumá i bai la* ‘Peter told Mary that he went there’, *Pidru falá Maria pa i bai la* ‘Peter told Mary to go there, (lit.) Peter told Mary that she goes there’. Relative clauses follow their antecedent and make use of a universal marker *ku/ki/kə* (< Pg. *que*): *Minjer ku oja-m comá Maria* ‘The woman who saw me is called Mary’, *Minjer ku N oja comá Maria* ‘The woman whom I saw is called Mary’. Topicalization is mainly characterized by left dislocation as illustrated above for the topic pronouns. Focus constructions follow the pattern (*i*) + X + *ku/ki/kə* (< Pg. *é* + X + *que*) where X is the focus: *I Pidru ku fasi-l* ‘It is Peter who did it, Peter did it’.

### 4.3 Lexicon

*Portuguese* – Both spoken and written Guinea-Bissau Portuguese resort to lexical items that are not attested (or at least not frequently) in standard European Portuguese (also see 5). Even such a formal text as the Civil Code (e.g., GW 2006, 655) makes ample use of the term *tabanca* ‘local community’ < Cr. *tabanka*, itself borrowed from *ka-banka* ‘fortification, palisade’, a word of the Atlantic language Temne spoken in Sierra Leone, which used to be one of the main vehiculars of the whole region and is one of the three main African substrates of Guinea-Bissau Creole (cf. Quint/Moreira Tavares 2019, 116, 125, 141; Quint 2008, 40–43; Rougé 1999, 61s.). Massa’s dictionary of Guinea-Bissau Portuguese (1996) also mentions borrowings or calques from Guinea-Bissau Creole, whose actual use remains to be ascertained, such as *chamir* ‘to get drunk’ (< Cr. *camí*, non-Portuguese origin) instead of Pg. *embriagar-se*; *combosse/cumboça* ‘co-wife’ (< Cr. *kumbosa*, itself from (anti-quoted) Pg. *comborça* ‘mistress’) instead of Pg. *coesposa*; *fanado* ‘young men’s traditional initiation (including circumcision)’ (< Cr. *fanadu*, itself from Pg. *fanar* ‘to amputate/to sever’); *mancarra* ‘peanut’ (< Cr. *mankara*, itself from Nyun) instead of Pg. *amendoim* (cf. Rougé 1988, 100; 2004, 333).

*Creole* – Like many Sub-Saharan languages, particularly those belonging to the Niger-Congo phylum, Guinea-Bissau Creole possesses a rich array of so-called ideophones (Couto 1995; Quint/Biagui 2019; forthcoming; Truppi/Costa 2019), that is adverbials which combine specifically with one or a few verbs or qualifiers, whose meaning they intensify or specify.

Table 4: Some common Guinea-Bissau Creole ideophones and their associated verbs or qualifiers

Verb/qualifier	Verb/qualifier + ideophone
<i>branku</i> ‘to be white’	<i>branku fandan</i> ‘to be white as snow, to be bright white’
<i>kai</i> ‘to fall’	<i>kai bup</i> ‘to fall heavily/suddenly’
<i>kalá</i> ‘to be silent’	<i>kalá yem</i> ‘to be completely silent’
<i>kinti</i> ‘to be hot’	<i>kinti wit</i> ‘to be very hot’
<i>kumé</i> ‘to eat’	<i>kumé buk</i> ‘to eat [sth.] all’
<i>limpu</i> ‘to be clean’	<i>limpu pus</i> ‘to be as clean as a whistle’
<i>pretu</i> ‘to be black’	<i>pretu nok</i> ‘to be jet/deep black’
<i>sai</i> ‘to get out’	<i>sai fat</i> ‘to come out suddenly’

Between 50 to 100 such ideophones have been identified so far in Guinea-Bissau Creole. The category of ideophones has no actual correspondent in Romance languages and is clearly an African feature of Guinea-Bissau Creole. At least 80% of Guinea-Bissau Creole’s current lexicon derives from Renaissance or modern Portuguese, for example Cr. *omi* < Pg. *homem*, Cr. *minjer* < Pg. *mulher* ‘woman’. This proportion is still higher in the core lexicon (> 95% of Swadesh 100-word list). However, there is also an important African component, consisting of two different layers (Quint/Moreira Tavares 2019, 124ss.): an African substrate on the one hand, shared by all Upper Guinea Portuguese Creoles and derived from the three main languages Mandinka (e.g., Cr. *jubi* ‘to look’ < *juubee*), Wolof (e.g., Cr. *lokoti* ‘to extract from a hole’ < *lóqati*) and Temne (e.g., Cr. *polon* ‘kapok tree’ < *an-polon*), which used to be –and still are– the most widespread vehiculars on the shores of the old Captainship of Cabo Verde (cf. above 2), and an African adstrate on the other hand, which depends on which local language is in contact with a given local variety of Guinea-Bissau Creole, for example Balanta and Papel in Bissau (Holm/Intumbo 2009; Intumbo 2007), Mandjak in Cacheu, or Mandinka in Geba.

## 5 Internal language policy

*Standardization: Portuguese* – There does not seem to be any officially defined norm for Guinea-Bissau Portuguese, and the Portuguese standard for the country is the European norm. Nevertheless, Brazilian Portuguese also exerts a significant influence on Guinea-Bissau Portuguese due to the numerous *telenovelas* or ‘TV series’ directly broadcast in this Portuguese variety throughout the Lusophone world.

*Standardization: Creole* – Although the actual written use of Guinea-Bissau Creole shows recurring tendencies (e.g., the use of the letter <k> to transcribe the phoneme /k/, contrasting with <c/qu> in Portuguese), it also displays a great amount of variation at

all levels (orthography, morphosyntax, and lexicon), largely due to the lack of formal teaching and the absence of an officially recognized standard.

*Description of linguistic characteristics: Portuguese* – There have been some attempts to describe the peculiarities of Guinea-Bissau Portuguese, the most significant one being Massa's (1996) bilingual Guinea-Bissau Portuguese/French dictionary: significantly, this book is exclusively based on written material (Massa 1996, xxv) and actually most non-standard Portuguese words mentioned in the dictionary are borrowings or calques from Guinea-Bissau Creole or African languages (cf. 4.3). Be that as it may, there is a growing body of written material (and in particular literature) directly produced in Portuguese by Bissau-Guineans (Calafate Ribeiro/Costa Semedo 2011), which should progressively lead to the emergence of a more stabilized local variety of Portuguese, at least in the domain of formal expression.

*Description of linguistic characteristics: Creole* – Guinea-Bissau Creole grammar and lexicon have been described in detail by a considerable number of linguists (e.g., Biasutti 1981; Bull 1975; Chapouto 2014; Couto 1994; Doneux/Rougé 1988; Intumbo/Inverno/Holm 2013; Kihm 1980; 1994; Mbodj 1979; Peck 1988; Rougé 1985; 1988; Scantamburlo 1981; 1999; 2002; 2013; Wilson 1962).

*Variety used in literature: Portuguese* – Educated Guinea-Bissauans tend to use Portuguese as the main medium of written literature. However, this Portuguese is often peppered with Creole words and idioms, as for example by Abdulai Sila, one of the most famous Guinea-Bissau writers, who has published a novel entitled *Mistida* (1997), a Creole noun associated with various meanings such as 'love, desire, duty' (cf. Salvadori 2009, 183).

*Variety used in literature: Creole* – Guinea-Bissau Creole is also used in literature, e.g., in comics (Júlio 1978; cf. also Kihm/Rougé 1988) and in film production (e.g., Gomes 1996). Whereas the available grammars and dictionaries tend to promote Creole orthographical standards contrasting with Portuguese, the written texts available in Guinea-Bissau Creole (literature but also advertisements) display much more interferences from Portuguese. For instance, in one and the same publication (Júlio 1978, 7), post-tonic [u] is alternatively written <u> as recommended by most Creole reference books (e.g., Cr. *diritu* [di'ritu] 'well' < Pg. *direito* [di'rejtu]) or <o> as in Portuguese (e.g., Cr. *tudo* ['tudu] 'all' < Pg. *tudo* ['tudu]). The Portuguese influence is also present in morphology, e.g., *garandis diseñaduris* 'great cartoonists' (in the *kombersa di kunsada* 'introduction, (lit.) speech of the beginning' of Júlio 1978), where the adjective *garandis* 'great' agrees in number (plural marker {-s}) with the head noun *diseñaduris* 'cartoonists', an unusual phenomenon in spoken Guinea-Bissau Creole but reminiscent of the agreement rules followed by Portuguese (cf. above 4.2).

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