

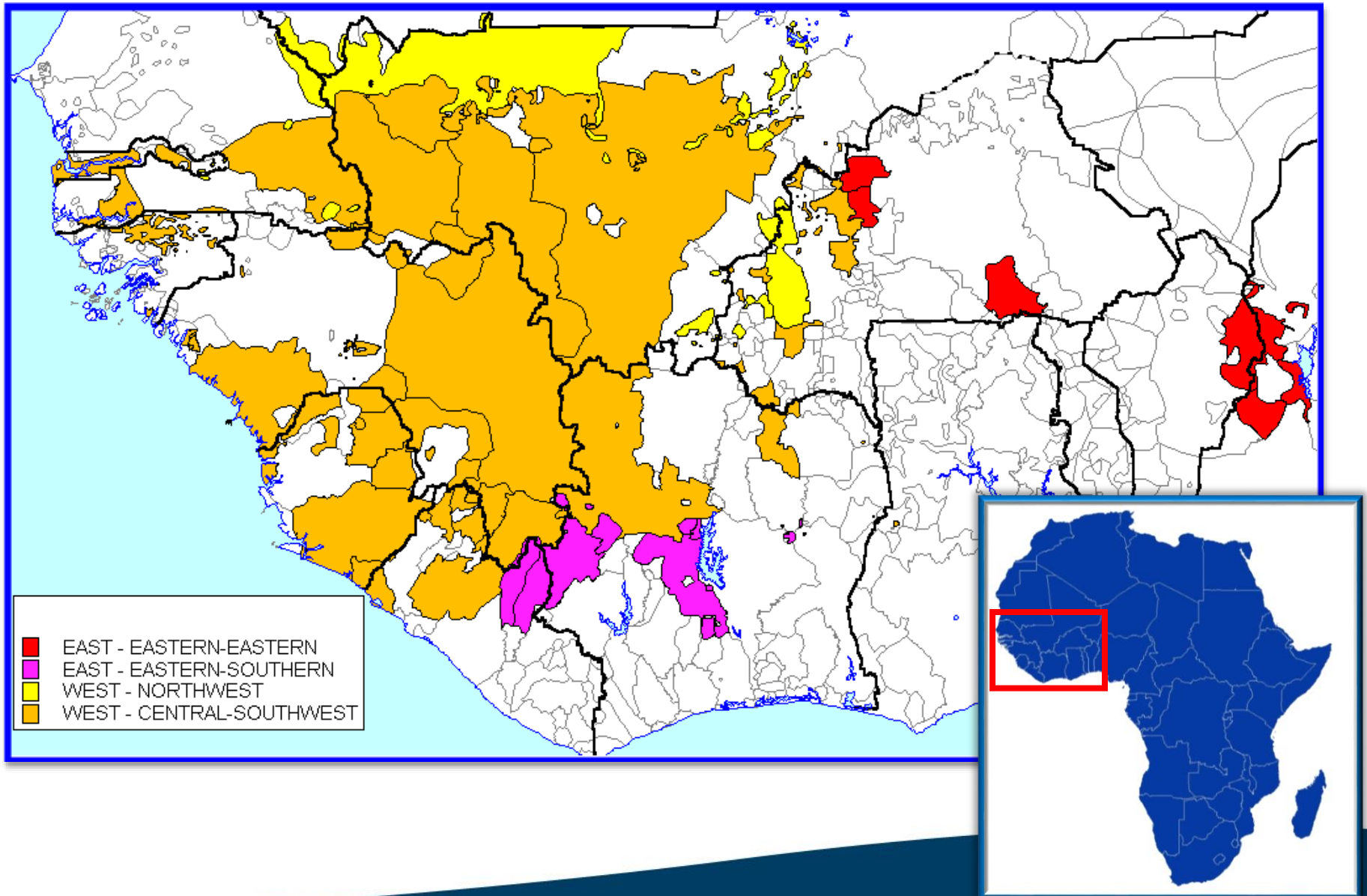


# Explaining the intransitive L tone in Greater Manding: a form with(out) a function

Dmitry Idiatov

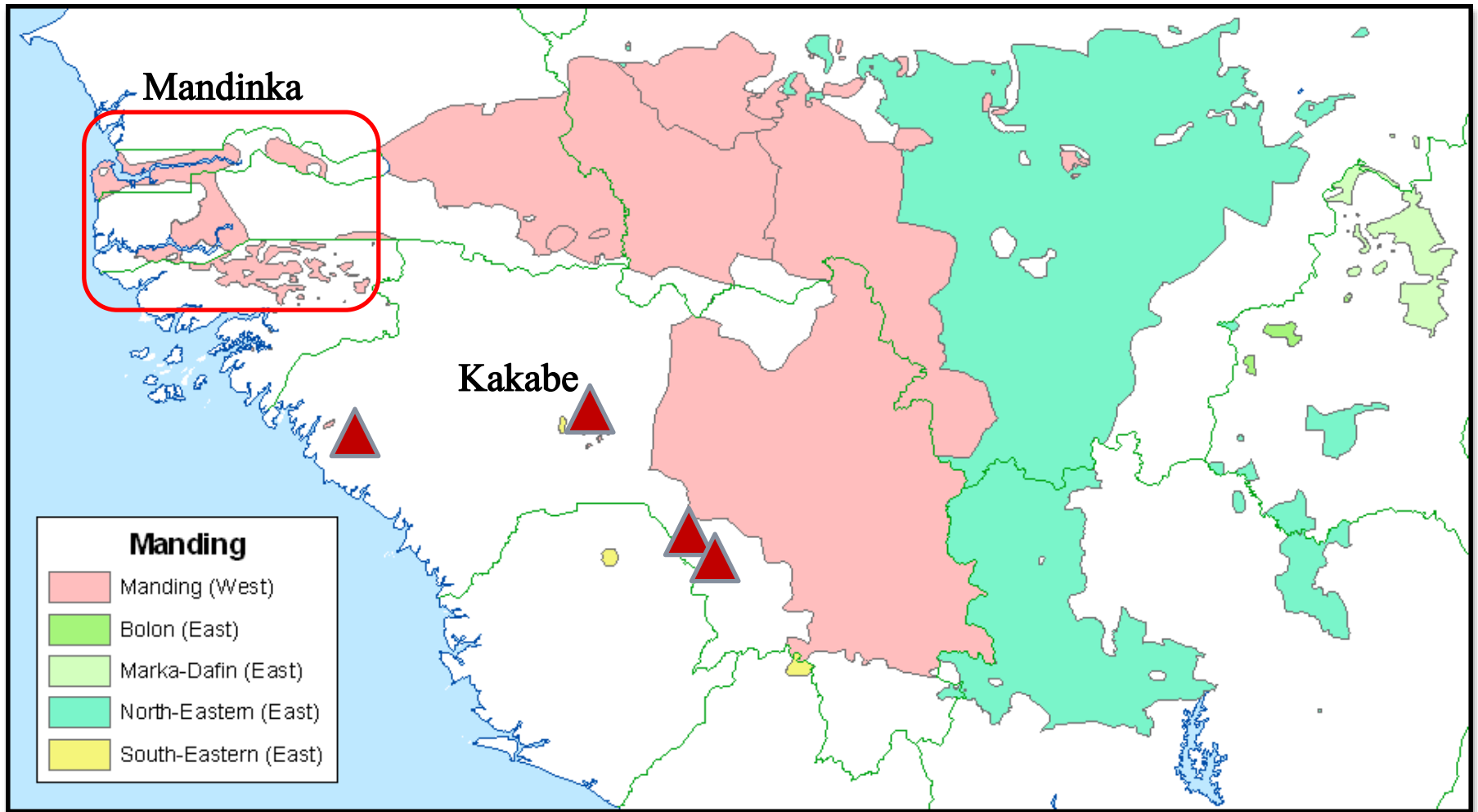
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# Mande languages

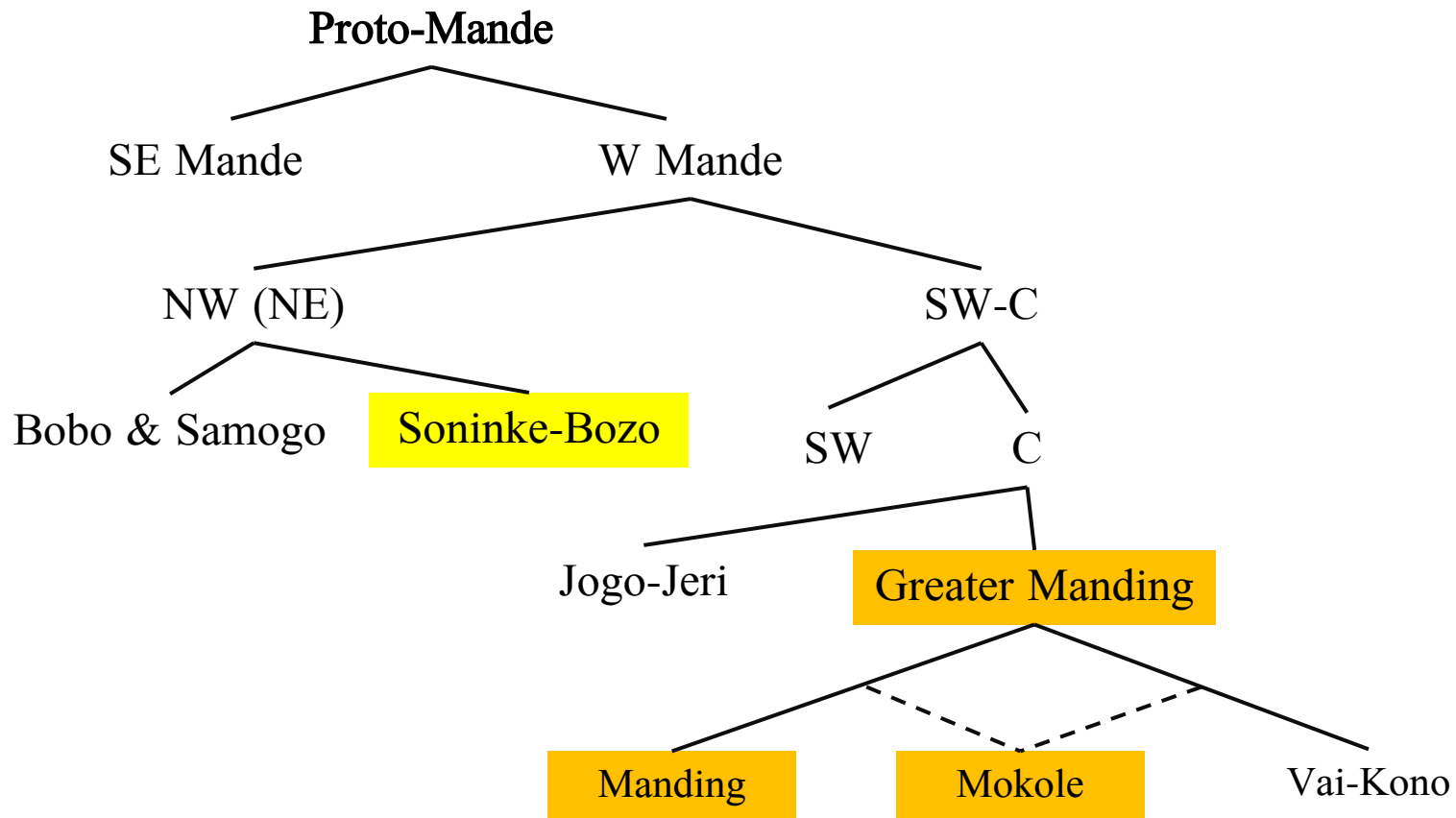


# Manding

# ▲ Mokole



# Manding & Mokole within Mande



# Basic phonology

- 2 tones: L vs H, L vs  $\emptyset$ , L vs  $\emptyset$  vs H
- downdrift, downstep, utterance-initial boundary L, different types of **prosodic boundaries**
- basic syllable structure: CV(N)
- **only a few V-initial morphemes**: pronouns, functional morphemes, borrowings

# Basic morphosyntax

- limited inflectional morphology
- suffixing
- **rigid** S (O) V X order
- in a **transitive** construction: **obligatory O**, with minimally a **dummy 3SG** pronoun *à* present
- TAMP tend to be expressed syncretically but can be distributed across as many as 3 sites within the clause:  
S **TAMP<sub>1</sub>** (aka **PM**  $\approx$  **AUX** ) (O) V-**TAMP<sub>2</sub>** X **TAMP<sub>3</sub>**

# Transitivity status

- obligatory O  $\Rightarrow$  transitivity status is **obvious**
- positive **PFV<sub>T</sub>** vs **PFV<sub>I</sub>** in Greater Manding and Soninke:

PFV<sub>TR</sub>: S **PFV** O V

vs PFV.NEG: S **PFV.NEG** (O) V

PFV<sub>ITR</sub>: S V-**PFV**

- Mande morphosyntax offers at least two **plausible sources** of the PFV<sub>TR</sub> vs PFV<sub>ITR</sub> distinction:
  - \*agentive postposition > PFV<sub>T</sub>, PFV<sub>I</sub> is the older PFV (Creissels 1997)
  - \*insubordinated PFV.PTCP > PFV<sub>I</sub>, PFV<sub>T</sub> is the older PFV

# Intransitive L in Mandinka (Creissels 2013)

PFV.NEG	
T	I
máŋ	máŋ <sup>L</sup>

COPLOC.NEG	
IPFV.NEG: _ + V-lá (INF)	
PROG.NEG: _ + V-kàŋ (PROG)	
T	I
té ~ tí	té <sup>L</sup> ~ tí <sup>L</sup>

- COPLOG.NEG **elsewhere** does **not** show the intransitive L:

RES:     \_ + V-rìŋ ~ V-ríŋ (PTCP.PFV) or V-rìŋ ~ V-ríŋ + \_

LOC:     \_ + X



# Intransitive L in Mandinka (Creissels 2013)

**T** (1) ń      mán      síláfándá      nààĩ  
1SG   PFV.NEG   present   bring  
'I did not bring a present' (Creissels 2013:71)

**I** (2) ń      mán      ↓sílán      fén      ná      jàn  
1SG   PFV.NEG   fear   thing   OBL   here  
'I am not afraid of anything here' (Creissels 2013:70)

# Intransitive L in Manding

« ... aucune des autres variétés de mandingue documentées jusqu'ici ne présente l'équivalent de la distinction tonale qui existe en mandinka à l'accompli négatif ainsi que dans l'usage de la copule négative en fonction de prédicatif d'inaccompli négatif. »

(Creissels 2013:60)

# Intransitive L in Kakabe (Vydrina 2013)

- Kakabe is a Mokole language
- Vydrina (2013) reports that the tone of the verb can be “facultativement remplacé par un ton bas” in intransitive constructions where Aux “est suivi directement par le verbe”
- **alternative** analysis in terms of **intransitive L**: Aux<sup>L</sup> V
- some **complications**:
  - the tone of **light Aux** (CV) is “**polar**” to the following tone
  - **light Aux** can be analyzed as  $\emptyset^L$  **irrespective of the transitivity** status of the predication (and one light Aux  $ka^L$  is PFVT)
  - that is, **only heavy Aux** show the alternation [T] Aux<sup>∅</sup> vs [I] Aux<sup>L</sup>

# Intransitive L in Kakabe

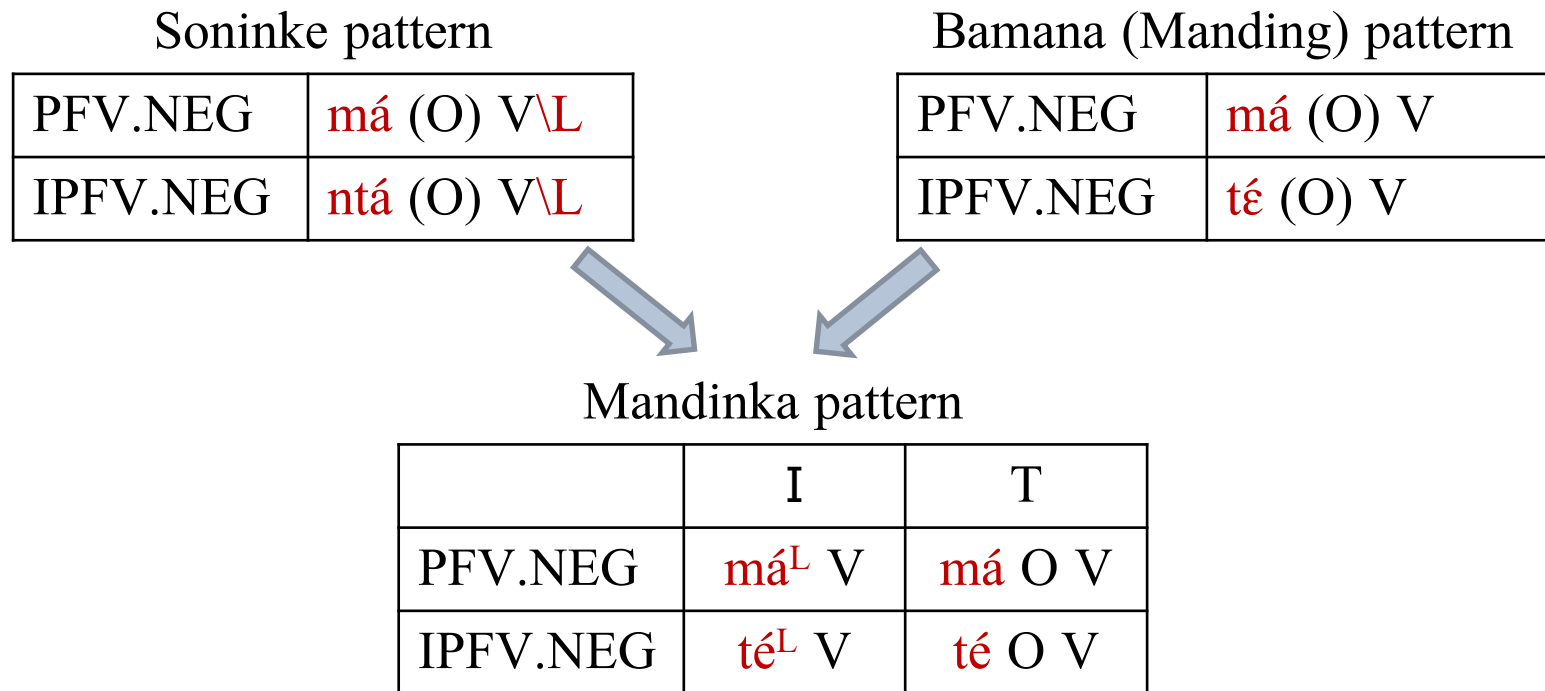
Heavy Aux			Light Aux	
T	I			
bélé	bélé <sup>L</sup>	PROG.NEG	bi <sup>L</sup>	PROG
bátí	bátí <sup>L</sup>	PRF	ti <sup>L</sup>	PRF (short)
báC	báC <sup>L</sup>	PRF (short)	ka <sup>L</sup>	PFVT
máá	máá <sup>L</sup>	PFV.NEG	ni <sup>L</sup>	OPT
tée	tée <sup>L</sup>	IPFV.NEG	si <sup>L</sup>	IPFV
kání	kání <sup>L</sup>	PROH		
mání	mání <sup>L</sup>	COND		

# Intransitive L puzzle

- Mande morphosyntax provides **no natural pathway** for the language-internal emergence of an intransitivity marker in this slot
- no other language outside of the Manding-Mokole group in the region has been reported to have a comparable marker, which **precludes any direct borrowing**
- in **Mandinka**, the intransitive L is conditioned not only by the transitivity status of the predication but also by its **linear context**, which is bidirectional: it requires both an AUX to its left and a V to its right
- in **Kakabe**, there is some troubling relation between the intransitive L, **tonal polarity** and **weight** of the AUX

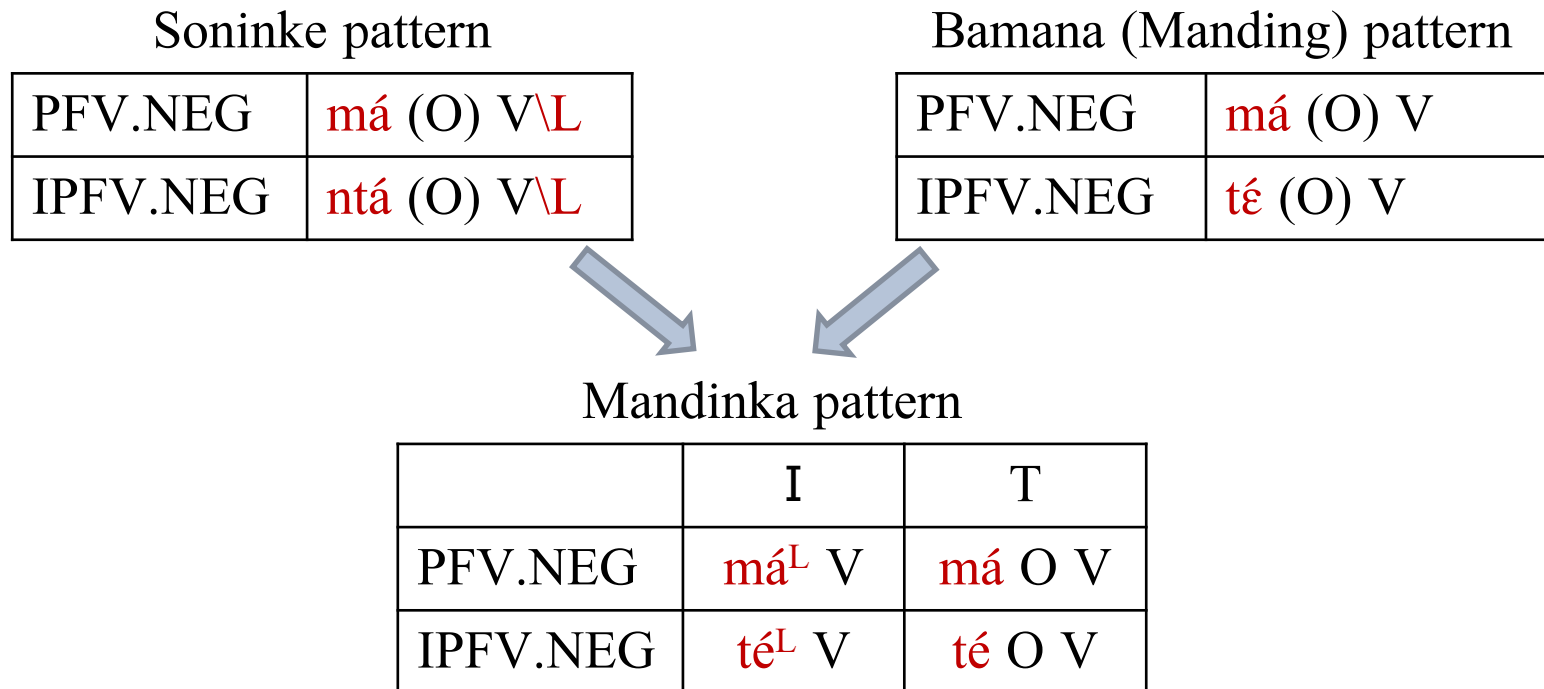
# Solution #1: language contact

- the floating L intransitive marker is a result of an imperfect transfer of the **L tone morphological operation** used in **Soninke** on verbs, irrespective of their transitivity, in combination with AUX **má** PFV.NEG and AUX **ntá** IPFV.NEG



# Solution #1: language contact

- the transfer was triggered by **formal and semantic similarity** between the relevant Soninke and Manding constructions
- reanalysis** of L as an intransitive marker: the relation between AUX and L on the verb in Soninke would arguably be most obvious to Manding speakers in the [AUX V] sequence, i.e. in intransitive constructions



# Solution #1: language contact



- in **Soninke**, a **language-internal** explanation is possible for the L tone on the verb the two constructions
- historically, [Soninke → Mandinka] transfer is **sociolinguistically** plausible
- the solution #1 matches well with the distribution of the intransitive L in Mandinka

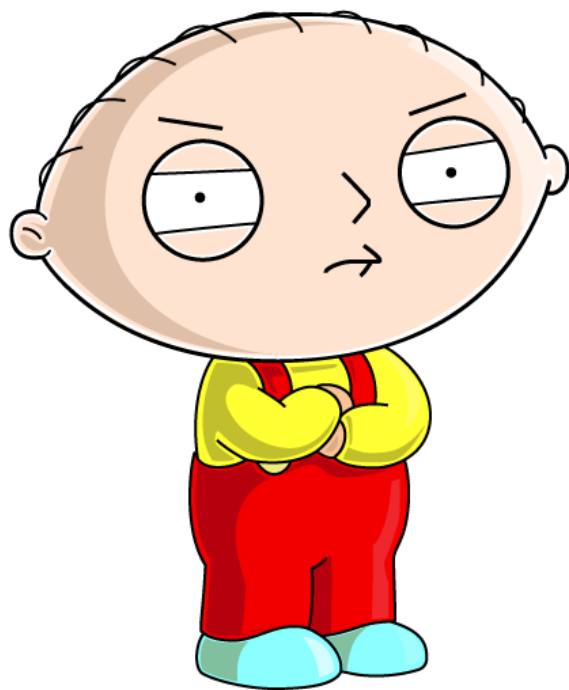


# Solution #1: language contact



- **why** would the L tone be **borrowed** into Mandinka and Kakabe?
- **why** would it be **borrowed as a floating L** rather than as a replacive L?
- the **range of AUXs** with intransitive L in Kakabe is very big...
- given the geography, [Soninke → Kakabe] transfer is less evident ⇒ suggesting [Soninke → **\*Proto Greater Manding**]
- the relation between the **transitivity** status and the presence of a **floating L**, **tonal polarity** and **weight** of AUX in **Kakabe**
- a floating **L with AUX** (or a L on AUX) that is **not conditioned by transitivity** sporadically occurs elsewhere in Manding

Something's not quite right here...



## **Solution #2: reframe the problem**

- that a floating L accompanies AUX in an intransitive predication but is absent in the corresponding transitive predication does not necessarily mean that this L functions as an intransitive marker
- actually, it has **no function**:
  - a given AUX has two allomorphs, one with and one without a floating L, depending on what follows
  - the floating L is a part of the **lexical tone of the AUX** and the way it is realised (or deleted) depends on the type of boundary and the tone that follows it
- This completely changes the perspective on what the **possible source** of the “intransitive” L may be

## Solution #2: L is lexical

- historically, the floating L is **from a non-floating lexical L** of the AUX (\*L, \*LH, \*HL...)
- provided this floating L is there (unlike in Standard Bamana), various outcomes are possible:
  - it links to the right if followed by a H-initial verb, otherwise it is deleted (Mandinka)
  - it is deleted when followed by L, otherwise it links to the left when the preceding vowel has lost its tonal specification and can copy to the right when followed by a H-initial verb (Kakabe)
  - it is deleted when followed by L, it can link to the left when the preceding vowel has lost its tonal specification and otherwise it is deleted (Maninka of Kita)
  - it links to the right if followed by H, otherwise it may be deleted or link to the left (some Bamana varieties?)
  - ...

## Solution #2: supporting evidence

- for all the relevant AUXs, a **reconstruction with a lexical L** is possible (with a hedge about PFV.NEG)
- **functional morphemes**, such as AUX, especially the light ones, tend to **lose their tonal specification** (become realized as H)
- normally, **only L** can **float**
- there is independent evidence for the relevance of **prosodic boundaries** (such as V || X, Aux || O, Aux || (O) V) in Greater Manding
- **polar tone on AUX** (i.e.,  $\emptyset^L$ ) has been reported also for those Manding languages where the tone of the verb is not lowered

## Solution #2: why intransitive constructions?

- better: why <sup>L</sup> of the AUX tends to be deleted in **transitive** constructions?
- **frequency effects**: only in transitive constructions, AUX can be, and frequently is, followed by **à 3SG**
- compare, the frequent tendency in Manding for a split of the original AUX °*maN* PFV.NEG into *ma* PFV.NEG (which can be **both I&T**) vs. *maN* as QUAL.NEG (which can be **only I**)
- prosodically, the **Aux || O** border appears to be largely similar to the **V || X** border (recall Mandinka COP *té<sup>L</sup>* immediately followed by a verb vs COP *té* followed by X)