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## ■ Clause chaining in Bambara

### Abstract

Bambara (Manding < West Mande < Mande < Niger-Congo) has a specialized clause chaining (cosubordinative) construction where the first clause has a verb full-fledged for TAM and polarity, and verbs of subsequent clauses are in infinitive; non-initial clauses are not embedded into the initial one and cannot be therefore regarded as subordinate. Characteristics of the Bambara clause chaining are analyzed: scope of operators (illocutionary force, negation), TAM characteristics, same- and different-subjectness. From the evidence of peripheral Manding varieties, a hypothesis concerning the origin of infinitive from an archaic preposition is advanced.

**Keywords:** clause chaining, cosubordination, infinitive, Bambara, Manding

### 1. Introduction

Clause chaining, as a clause linking type distinct from both coordination and subordination, for the first time was described by Olson (Olson 1981), then by Foley & Van Valin (Foley & Van Valin Jr. 1984). Another term for this linking type is “cosubordination”. Its main characteristics are:

- in a sequence of clauses, one of them (either initial or final, depending on language) is morphologically full-fledged (its verb is inflected as a finite), and the others are morphologically marked as dependent: most often, their verbs appear in forms which cannot be used in independent clauses (converbs, infinitives, participles, medial verbs);
- the scope of the inflectional category or operator (mainly TAM) marked normally on the “quasi-head” clause, is the entire clause chain, i.e. both “quasi-head” and “quasi-dependent” clauses;
- the clauses whose verbs lack full-fledged inflection (and therefore appear as “morphologically dependent”) are not embedded into the “quasi-head” clause, but rather co-ranked with it.

Most European languages have no clause chaining; clauses expressing sequential events are simply coordinated.

Depending on the position of the “quasi-head” clause in the clause chain, two strategies can be realized:

- 1) the first verb appears in a finite form (the first clause is “quasi-head”), the verbs of the subsequent clauses are specially marked (posterior clause chaining). This

strategy is widely spread in African languages, and rather rare elsewhere (Longacre 2007: 417);

- 2) the last verb appears in a finite form (the last clause is “quasi-head”), the preceding verbs are specially marked (anterior clause chaining). This type is widespread in Asia, New Guinea, in Caucasus, in Ethiosemitic languages.

It is often mentioned that “anterior chaining is typologically associated with OV basic order, and posterior chaining is associated with VO order” (Haspelmath 1995: 23), see also (Longacre 2007: 417).

In a more recent paper, Foley (2010: 40) re-analyzes, on the syntactic ground, the cosubordination as a variety of coordination: “in such structures the verbal inflectional I features of the verb of the last clause (i.e., the full-fledged clause – *IV*) typically have scope over the preceding medial or dependent clauses. Verbs in medial clauses are commonly stripped down inflectionally in comparison to final verbs, as a reflection of this scope dependency. But, in fact, the inflectional I categories of the verb of the final clause do not belong to it, but rather to the structure as a whole”. Certainly, Foley is right with respect to the syntactic level: from the very beginning, it was evident that cosubordination was close to coordination syntactically, and resembled subordination morphologically. It seems expedient to maintain the term “cosubordination” exactly to highlight the ambiguous nature of this construction.

An important direction of study of clause linking (and, in particular, cosubordination) is the scope of operators. As shown in Bickel (2010), the scope of different operators (illocutory force, negation, tense) may vary considerably both among languages and within one language. It means that cosubordination is a complex and variable phenomenon, and its characteristics in each language should be studied in detail.

In this paper, the clause chaining construction<sup>1</sup> in Bambara will be analyzed. In section 2, general information about Bambara and, in particular, about Bambara infinitive, is provided. In section 3, a general characteristics of the Bambara clause chaining construction is given. In sections 4, 5, and 6, the main characteristics of the clause chaining construction are analyzed in more detail. In section 7, a hypothesis concerning the diachronic origin of the Bambara infinitive is advanced.

## 2. Introductory information about Bambara

### 2.1. Some generalities

Bambara (Manding < Western Mande < Mande) is spoken mainly in Mali by some 4 million L1 speakers and by further 10 to 12 million L2 speakers. By default, by “Bambara” is meant the so-called Standard Bambara, a variety based on the dialect of Bamako (which is influenced by closely related Maninka).

Bambara is a tonal language (two level tones whose attribution is regulated by a set of rules, see among others (Vydrin 2016; Vydrin 2019: 31–36).<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “clause chaining” and “cosubordinative construction” will be used in this paper as more or less synonymous.

<sup>2</sup> In the Bambara examples, tone marking and glossing follows the principles accepted for the Bambara Reference Corpus (Vydrin et al. 2011).

As all Manding languages, Bambara is characterized by a rigid word order. In the verbal clause, it is as follows: S Aux (O) V X, where S stands for subject; Aux is a non-verbal auxiliary word encoding the TAM and polarity meanings;<sup>3</sup> O is direct object (obligatory for a transitive verbal construction; the absence of O makes a construction intransitive); V is a verbal predicate; X is an oblique, i.e. an adverbial or postpositional phrase.

- (1a) *Mùso` bε jéε` mìnε kò` lá.*  
 woman\ART IPFV fish\ART catch brook\ART in  
 ‘The/a woman catches fish in a brook’.

Lability is highly typical for Bambara verbs. Very productive is P-lability, both decausative and passive (1b), the latter being absolutely regular; A-lability is rather marginal (Vydrin 2019: 201–214).

- (1b) *Jéε` bε mìnε kò` lá (mùso` fε).*  
 fish\ART IPFV catch brook\ART in woman\ART by  
 ‘Fish is caught in a brook (by the/a woman)’.

## 2.2. Infinitive

Infinitive plays a central role in the Bambara clause chaining construction and needs therefore a more detailed presentation. Infinitive constructions have been subject of several studies (Dumestre 2003: 384–396; Dombrowsky-Hahn 2012; Vydrin 2014; Vydrin 2019: 409–430); see also Creissels (2009: 73–74) about infinitive in Kita Maninka (which does not differ from the Bambara infinitive). Here follow some basic data on their functions and peculiarities.

Infinitive in Bambara is an analytical construction, its marker is an auxiliary word *kà*, which occupies the same slot as auxiliaries (“predicative markers”) in finite verbal constructions. As it is typical of infinitives cross-linguistically, in the Bambara infinitive construction the subject cannot be formally expressed, the zero subject being normally co-referent with the subject or the direct object of the matrix verb (see section 6 about more complicated cases). As for the other arguments and obliques, they are presented in the infinitive construction exactly as with a finite verb.

An infinitive construction cannot be used in the function of a subject or direct object; on the other hand, it can appear in the position of topic and be coreferent with a subject (2) or object (3) pronoun.

- (2) *[Kà` dúnan-w fòroba-εn]ᵣ òᵢ kón-nen dòn.*  
 INF foreigner-PL collectively-chase that prohibit-PTCP.RES ID  
 ‘The mass expulsion of non-nationals shall be prohibited’ (lit. ‘To chase foreigners collectively, this is prohibited’) [Afiriki ka hadamaden].

<sup>3</sup> In the Mandeist linguistic tradition, these auxiliaries are usually referred to as “predicative markers”. This term will be also used in the present paper, as a synonym of “auxiliary”.

- (3) [Kà jéǵe` món]<sub>p</sub> án tɛ ò<sub>i</sub> ké.  
 INF fish\ART fish 1PL IPFV.NEG that do  
 ‘Fishing, we do not do it’.

An infinitive construction coreferent to the direct object (expressed by a pronoun) of the matrix verb is not necessarily topicalized, it may also follow the matrix verb (4).

- (4) ... ù bɛ à<sub>i</sub> fɔ [kà jí goni` dɔ́nin sìǵi<sub>i</sub>  
 3PL IPFV 3SG say INF water hot\ART a.little sit  
 í dá` kónɔ]...  
 2SG mouth\ART inside  
 ‘... they say to pour some hot water into your mouth...’ [Avenement de Da].

The first most prototypical function of the Bambara infinitive is that of a predicate of an argument clause or an adverbial clause.<sup>4</sup>

Matrix verbs with a valency on infinitive can be subdivided in Bambara into three groups: modal, aspectual, and manner verbs.

Modal verbs can be intransitive or reflexive (*bàn* ‘refuse’, *dése* ‘fail’, *jjà* ‘try, strive’, *jùne* ‘forget’, *sé* ‘be able’, *sòn* ‘agree’, *túgu* ‘do on purpose’, and some others), in which case the zero subject of the infinitive is necessarily coreferent to the subject of the matrix verb (5a), or transitive (*dème* ‘help’, *yàmaruya* ‘allow’, *bàli* ‘hinder’, and some others), the zero subject of infinitive being coreferent with the direct object of the matrix verb (6).

- (5a) à ka kóori<sub>i</sub> bɛ sé ø<sub>i</sub> kà móbili` fá.  
 3SG POSS cotton\ART IPFV reach INF car\ART fill  
 ‘His cotton can fill a car’ [Baara kalan ka nyésin].

- (6) Ñká ò tɛ án<sub>i</sub> bàli ø<sub>i</sub> kà à jéjini.  
 but that IPFV.NEG 1PL hinder INF 3SG solve  
 ‘But this does not prevent us from solving it’ [Balimamusoden].

No pause can be inserted between the matrix verb and the infinitive marker;<sup>5</sup> if the matrix verb is negated, the scope of negation includes the infinitive too (5b).

- (5b) à ka kóori` tɛ sé kà móbili` fá.  
 3SG POSS cotton\ART IPFV.NEG reach INF car\ART fill  
 ‘His cotton cannot fill a car’.

<sup>4</sup> The second function, that of the predicate of a non-initial clause in a cosubordinative construction, is the main topic of this paper; it will be considered in the subsequent sections.

<sup>5</sup> According to Dumestre (2003: 390), in constructions with modal and aspectual verbs, the matrix verb “cannot be separated from *kà* by any element or any suspensive pause”; cf. the same opinion of Dombrowsky-Hahn (2012: 54). Contrary to this opinion, my informants allow insertion of adverbs after the matrix verb, and numerous examples of such insertions can be found in the Bambara Reference Corpus, e.g.: *án bɛ sé túgun kà dɔ́ fàra jíw háke` kán* ‘we can add some water again’ [Kibaru 140].

For these reasons, a construction of a modal verb with an infinitive can be probably regarded as monoclausal.

Aspect verbs (*kàn* ‘do earlier’, *dèli* ‘do at least once’, *fàma* ‘fail to do since long time’, *sòli* ‘do early in the morning’, *tìlen* ‘do during the daytime’, etc.) are similar with the modal verbs in many respects, but there is at least one important difference: when negated, the scope of negation does not extend to the infinitive construction (7b).

(7a) *nìn dón, Waawere sòli-la kà bó n' à ka npálan` yé...*  
 this day Waawere do.early-PFV.INTR INF exit and 3SG POSS bag PP  
 ‘That day Waawere left early in the morning with his bag...’ [Jekabaara 142].

(7b) *Á ma sòli kà bó à ka bùgu` kónɔ.*  
 3SG PFV.NEG do.early INF exit 3SG POSS hut\ART in  
 ‘He did not leave his hut early’ (i.e., he left it, but it was not early) [Kolonkise 10].

“Manner verbs” described by Dombrowsky-Hahn (2012) express rate (*bòli* ‘run’, *táama* ‘walk’, *sùulusáala* ‘go very slowly’), intensity (*gírín* ‘do suddenly, sharply’, *bála* ‘do sharply’), or other aspects (*móntɔ* ‘bend’, *ɣúnuma* ‘crawl’) of a motion. In fact, the same verbs (or most of these verbs) can appear as modifiers not only for motion verbs, but for other semantic types of verbs as well.

(8) *Nègeso dílanna` gírín-na kà à jìninka.*  
 bicycle repairer\ART rush-PFV.INTR INF 3SG ask  
 ‘Repairer of bikes asked him promptly’ [Jekabaara 21].

As shown in (Dombrowsky-Hahn 2012: 57–58), the scope of negation of manner verbs varies: it may extend to the manner verb only, or to the second verb (the infinitive), or to both.

If an infinitive does appear in the function of the predicate of an adverbial clause, it can be introduced without conjunction, in which case it expresses the meaning of purpose (9).

(9) ... *à ma mùso sòrɔ kà à fúru Ségukɔrɔ yàn...*  
 3SG PFV.NEG woman find INF 3SG marry Segukoro here  
 ‘... he has not found a woman to marry here, in Segukoro’ [Chroniques amoureuses].

However, most often a purpose infinitive is introduced by a conjunction *wálasa* ‘in order to’ (10). There are also some other conjunctions capable to introduce infinitive clauses: *sáni* ‘before; instead of’, *fó* ‘until’, *kó* ‘that’, *jànkó ~ sànkó* ‘the more so’.

(10) *Án ye táama jan in ké wálasa kà í yé.*  
 1PL PFV.TR walk long this do in.order.to INF 2SG see  
 ‘We have overtaken this long journey to see you’ [Sunjata ka maana].

### 3. Main characteristics of the Bambara clause chaining construction

In Standard Bambara, there is no specialized construction or form for the “dependent” clauses of the clause chaining, this function is assumed by the infinitive construction. It is the second main function of the Bambara infinitive which may be regarded as secondary with respect to the prototypical infinitive function represented in 2.2; however, it predominates quantitatively. In certain genres of Bambara texts, up to 80% of all the occurrences of infinitive fall on the cosubordinative constructions. As it was mentioned in the introductory section, the use of prototypically non-finite forms in quasi-dependent clauses is typical for clause chaining, therefore, Bambara represents no anomaly from the typological viewpoint.

Bambara is a posterior clause chaining language. The first clause is full-fledged; this clause is obligatory (i.e., in Bambara, no clause chaining construction is possible without an initial clause with a full-fledged finite verbal construction).

Most often, the infinitive clauses are introduced without any conjunction, as in (11).

- (11) ... *ù nà-na kà mùru kura` jini, kà síralan kura`*  
 3SG come-PFV.INTR INF knife new-ART search INF broom new-ART  
*jini, kà filen kama` jini.*  
 search INF calabash new-ART search  
 ‘They came, they looked for a new knife, (they looked for) a new broom, (they looked for) a new calabash’ [Bamakò sigicogoya].

However, such clauses can be also introduced by the coordinative conjunctions *ni* ‘and’ (12, 13) or *aní* ‘and’, *wàlà* ‘or’, *wàlimà* ‘or’ (14), *kélen* ‘or’. If a chain contains more than two clauses, a coordinative conjunction can introduce each non-initial clause (12) or only one of them (13).

- (12) *Né yèrê dòn-na, ni kà nà yèlen à kàn, ni k’*  
 1SG.EMPH self enter-PFV.INTR and INF come rise 3SG on and INF  
*à jini.*  
 3SG search  
 ‘I came in myself, climbed on it and searched for it’ [Chroniques amoureuses].
- (13) *Bàsékù ye dùga`-w ké nê yé ni kà wúli*  
 Baseku PFV.TR blessing\ART-PL do 1SG.EMPH PP and INF rise  
*kà nà nê bilasira.*  
 INF come 1SG.EMPH see.off  
 ‘Baseku blessed me, he rose and saw me off’ [Chroniques amoureuses].

- (14) ... *à tòn bε bée ké fɛn-tigi yé, wàlimà kà bée ké fàantan yé.*  
 3SG PST IPFV all do thing-owner PP or INF all do poor PP  
 ‘... he would make everybody rich or he would do everybody poor’ [Kibaru 536].

Even if the use of coordinative conjunctions for clause chaining is relatively rare,<sup>6</sup> its possibility is just another argument in favor of the “syntactically coordinative” nature of the cosubordinative construction in Bambara, contrasting with its “morphologically subordinateness”.

#### 4. Tense/aspect and clause chaining

The clause chaining construction in Bambara (and in other Manding languages) is most often referred to as “consecutive” or “sequential” (Creissels 2006: vol. 2, pp. 186–189; Dumestre 2003: 385–386; Vydrin 2014; Vydrin 2019: 422–424). These terms based on the grammatical semantics of this construction are generally justified, because in the great majority of cases it is used for consecutive punctive actions or events. The verb of the initial clause of the construction is prototypically marked for the perfective aspect (11-14), which is specialized in punctive actions; in this case the sequentative semantics of the clause chaining construction is doubtless.

Less frequently, but by no means exceptionally, the verb of the initial clause may appear in practically all other TAM constructions existing in Bambara: imperfective (15), progressive (16), future (17), subjunctive (18, 19), conditional (20). Even in those cases, it can be still said that the actions expressed by the verbs of the clause chain are usually sequential.

- (15) ... *sísàn sùngurun` dɔ-w, ɔ bε dòn móbili` lá kà tága*  
 now girl\ART some-PL that IPFV enter car\ART in INF go  
*jàmana wére lá kà dɔn` ké yèn...*  
 country other in INF dance\ART do there  
 ‘Nowadays, some girls take cars, go to other countries and dance there...’ [Dɔnkε-sunguru].

- (16) *Á tága-ra à sɔɔ sògo-w bé kà jógɔn fàga kà jógɔn tóbi.*  
 3SG go-PFV.INTR 3SG FIND animal-PL prog RECP kill INF RECP cook  
 ‘She went on and met animals who were killing and cooking each other’ [Contes bambara 1979].

<sup>6</sup> In the disambiguated subcorpus of the Bambara Reference Corpus (about 1.112.000 tokens, the state of June 1, 2019), the number of infinitive clauses is more than 28.600. If we assume that the clauses in clause chaining constructions constitute between 60 and 80% of the total number of infinitives, they score somewhere between 17.200 and 22.900. Of this number, the number of infinitive constructions introduced by *ni* equals 671; by *àní*, 261, and by *wàlimà*, 78, i.e. some 4 to 6%.



- (17) *Ò bènà í kùn` dí, kà dá-si` dí.*  
 that FUT 2SG head\ART shave INF mouth-hair\ART shave  
 ‘He will shave your head, he will shave your mustache’ [Maningances].
- (18) *Áw dén` bólo` ka cì, k’ ù tànga j̀̀ninsàn` mà.*  
 2PL.EMPH child\ART hand\ART SBJV break INF 3PL protect smallpox ADR  
 ‘Your child should be vaccinated and protected against smallpox’ [Bolociw].
- (19) *Ní pónpe kala` jí-bɔ-da` m̀n géren-na, án k̀nâ*  
 if pump stick\ART water-exit-mouth\ART REL block-PFV.INTR 1PL PROH  
*ò dòn án dá k’ à f̀ye.*  
 that enter 1PL mouth INF 3SG blow  
 ‘If the watering orifice of the pump gets blocked, let us not put it into the mouth and blow it out’ [Kibaru 41].
- (20) *Jí` mánà lánɔɔ kà sé háke` dó mà, í be*  
 water\ART COND soil INF reach measure\ART some ADR 2SG IPFV  
*bàna-kise-w s̀rɔ à lá ...*  
 illness-grain-PL find 3SG in  
 ‘If water soils to certain extent, you will find microbes in it...’ [Kibaru 547].

However, the sequential semantics of clause chaining constructions is rather a strong tendency than a strict rule. When the initial clause contains a TAM construction other than perfective, actions designated by the verbs of the subsequent clauses may be simultaneous,<sup>7</sup> as in (21-23), otherwise, the first verb may express the mode of action designated by the second verb (24).

- (21) *Cèkɔɔba fila ninnu, ù bé kà kúma` lámɛn ni kà nàamù` lámìnɛ.*  
 old.man two these 3PL PROG speech\ART listen and INF yes\ART keep  
 ‘These two old men are listening to the speech and keep up the conversation’ [Maningances].
- (22) *Mɔɔgɔ k̀nâ búbaga` d̀gɔya kà í tó nt̀nkun` s̀anfê.*  
 human PROH termite\ART humiliate INF REFL remain termite.hill\ART above  
 ‘One does not insult termites while standing on the top of a termite hill’ [Sagesse bambara].

<sup>7</sup> Contrary to what is said by Creissels (2009: 210) about the analogous construction in Kita Maninka, a Manding variety very close to Bambara. It is true though that the simultaneous meaning of the clause chaining construction in Bambara is not very frequent and subject to considerable lexical limitations.

- (23) *Cíkela` mánà ògúkolo` sène kà jine ò wáleya ninnú kó,*  
 farmer\ART COND land\ART cultivate INF forget that action these behind  
*à méen ò méen à nà jigi Ála lá gánsan.*  
 3SG continue DISTR continue 3SG CERT hope God in simply  
 ‘If a farmer tills the land while forgetting about these actions, however long it may last, he will have to simply rely on God’ [Kibaru 546].

- (24) *Bàra` bé kà kòlonkolo kà nà.*  
 gourd\ART PROG roll INF come  
 ‘The gourd is coming rolling’ [Cíkela ni bara].

These examples, although not very frequent, prove that the consecutive meaning is not inherent in the clause chaining construction (even if a strong correlation is evident).

For this reason, I prefer the terms «clause chaining» and «cosubordination» for the construction in question. The terms «consecutive» or «sequential» fit well to characterize the predominant semantics of this construction, but less so as labels for the construction itself.

## 5. Scope of operators for the clause chaining construction

### 5.1. Illocutionary force: interrogation and imperative

A standard test for cosubordination is the scope of illocutionary operators: “a clause that is cosubordinate to a main clause obligatorily falls under the scope of illocutionary operators in the main clause, <...> apart from coordination, where the scope of such markers does not necessarily extend over both clauses, and also from subordination, where it is impossible to have conjunct scope» (Bickel 2010: 52).

In Bambara, general question is normally expressed by a particle *wà* whose position is at the end of a sentence. In a clause chaining construction, this particle is always put to the very end, and its scope covers all the clauses of the chain (25, 26; the limits of the scope are indicated by square brackets). Contrary to the other (TAM, negation) operators, the interrogative particle is localized outside the main clause, but this fact can hardly be regarded as invalidating the cosubordinating nature of the Bambara construction, cf. a similar situation in Barai language analyzed in (Foley & Van Valin Jr. 1984: 246).

- (25) *Ní màà-w nà-na só kà i ni à tó yèn,*  
 if human-PL come-PFV.INTR house INF 2SG and 3SG remain there  
*[è ti i sigi sá kà à kònɔ wà?]*  
 2SG.EMPH IPFV.NEG REFL sit finally INF 3SG wait Q  
 ‘If people come home and leave you there with him, won’t you sit down and wait for him?’ [Maningances].

- (26) [*Án ma bɔ́ án ka dùgu` lá kà sé é mà*  
 1PL PFV.NEG exit 1PL POSS land\ART in INF arrive 2SG.EMPH ADR  
*yàn wà?*  
 here Q?  
 ‘Haven’t we left our village and arrived at your place?’ [Contes bambara 1974].

The imperative in Bambara has a zero Aux for a singular subject, and for a plural subject the Aux is *yé*. As any other TAM marker, its scope covers the entire clause chaining construction.

- (27) *Á yé bɔ̀gɔ` nɔ̀ni, [á y` à tà k` à dí ní mà].*  
 2PL IMP mud\ART dilute 2PL imp 3SG take INF 3SG give 1SG ADR  
 ‘Dilute the mud, take it and give it to me’ [Cɛmandali Babilen].
- (28) *Á yé dúmuni` ké, kà mìnni` ké!*  
 2PL IMP eating\ART do INF drinking\ART do  
 ‘Eat and drink!’ [Kurane].

## 5.2. Scope of negation

Let us first overview the interaction of negation with constructions containing infinitives.

As mentioned in section 2, in Bambara, negation in a finite verbal clause is expressed by a predicative marker, jointly with TAM characteristics. In an infinitive construction, the predicative marker slot is occupied by the the infinitive marker *kà*; the only possibility to negate the action expressed by an infinitive is through negation of the matrix/head verb. An infinitive construction may be included or not included into the scope of negation of the matrix/head verb, depending on the type of syntactic relations between both verbal constructions.

It was already said in section 2 that if an infinitive depends on a modal matrix verb, the scope of negation includes both the matrix verb and the infinitive (29).

- (29) *Màa`-w ma sé kà kò` tìgɛ.*  
 human\ART-PL PFV.NEG arrive INF river\ART cut  
 ‘The people failed to cross the river’ [Jɛkabaara 171].

Dombrowsky-Hahn (2012: 55–56) interprets this fact in favor of the monoclausal character of the construction “modal verb + infinitive”, which seems reasonable. However, following Dumestre (2003), she does not distinguish between the groups of matrix verbs: “modal”, “aspectual” and “manner” verbs. As mentioned in section 2, in constructions of the aspectual verbs with infinitives, the scope of negation covers only the matrix verb, and not the infinitive (7b, 30). The impermeability of the matrix verb for negation seems to be a serious factor against the monoclausal character of this construction.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> On the problem of monoclausality vs. multiclausality of Bambara constructions, see 5.3.

- (30) *Ní í ma kɔ̀n k' ò tɔ̀n-na-don-wari in sàra,*  
 if 2SG PFV.NEG precede INF that association-in-enter-money that pay  
*í tɔ̀gɔ̀ te sében.*  
 2SG name IPFV.NEG write  
 ‘If you don’t pay this entrance fee in advance, you name won’t be included (in the list)’ [Kibaru 541] (i.e.: even if you pay the fee, but not in advance).

When an infinitive appears as a predicate of an adverbial clause of purpose, the scope of the negation expressed in the matrix clause includes both the matrix and the infinitive clauses. In reality, these constructions are similar to those with modal verbs, but they allow more easily pauses and adverbials after the matrix verbs, and there are therefore more reasons to regard them as biclausal.

- (31) *Á ma fɛ̀n sɔ̀rɔ̀ kà fɔ̀.*  
 3SG PFV.NEG thing find INF say  
 ‘He has found nothing to say’ [An ka yeɛ].
- (32) ... *à kó ní í ma fɛ̀ere ké kà ná ni filanin`-w yé*  
 3SG say if 2SG PFV.NEG trick do INF come with twin\ART-PL PP  
*só` kɔ̀nɔ̀, à kó jí` te ná Dugufinnin.*  
 house inside 3SG say water\ART IPFV.NEG come Dugufinnin  
 ‘He said: if you do not find a way to bring the twins to the house, water won’t come to Dugufinnin’ [Contes bambara 1974].

**Table 1.** Scope of negation in constructions with infinitives

Type of construction	Scope of negation
Modal verb + infinitive	entire construction
Aspectual verb + infinitive	matrix verb
Manner verb + infinitive	matrix verb or infinitive or both
Matrix verb + purpose infinitive	both clauses

Concerning the Bambara clause chaining constructions, one can find categorical judgments in special literature: “Such clauses cannot be negated; if they are, they are finite clauses and cannot be considered consecutive clauses anymore” (Dombrowsky-Hahn 2012: 56).

However, for my informants, negation is quite compatible with clause chaining; such examples are by no means exceptional in natural texts. A systematic examination of the occurrences of negative cosubordination<sup>9</sup> shows that they can be divided into two groups:

<sup>9</sup> I have made a search for the perfective negative marker *ma* followed by the infinitive marker *kà* (maximum 5 words to the right), then about 33% of set (about 320 examples, out of 964) have been sorted manually. In the obtained sample, about 8% represent clause chaining constructions.

- those (less numerous) with negation scope on the second verb (infinitive) (33, 34). In such cases we certainly have negation rising, which is cross-linguistically typical of subordinated clauses;
- those (much more frequent) where negation extends over the entire clause chain (35, 36).

The difference between these two types can be explained as follows. In the negation-rising clause chains, the actions of both clauses appear as simultaneous (ex. 33: God creates the fingers at the same time as he makes them equal; ex. 34: at the moment of Simbalan's death it grew clear that he left no children), while in the sentences of the second type (the negation scope covers both clauses) the actions are sequential. This explanation proves correct for the other examples of my sample as well.

When the infinitive clause is introduced by an alternative conjunction, the scope of negation necessarily extends on both clauses (37).

Among the natural examples of my sample, I have found no occurrences where negation scope would cover only the first clause.

- (33) *Ála ma bólokɔni`-w dá kà ù kénye.*  
 God PFV.NEG finger\ART-PL create INF 3PL equalize  
 'God has not made fingers equal' (= God has created fingers, he hasn't made them equal) [Sagesse bambara].
- (34) *Sinbalan ma sà kà dén tó.*  
 Sinbalan PFV.NEG die INF child leave  
 'Sinbalan died and left no children' (= he died, he has left no children) [Geste de Ségou].
- (35) *Háli bì, à ma kénye kà nà só fɔlɔ.*  
 even today 3SG PFV.NEG recover INF come house yet  
 'Until now, he has not yet recovered and hasn't returned home' [Chroniques amou-reuses].
- (36) *Màa sí ma kúma n fɛ, kà nà n jò Dikɔ*  
 human nobody PFV.NEG speak 1SG by INF come 1SG stand Diko  
*ka biro` dá` lá...*  
 POSS office\ART mouth\ART in  
 'Nobody spoke to me, nobody came to bring me to the door of Diko's office...' [Maningances].
- (37) *̀nka nê ma à t̄ɲetigiya wàlimà k' à nkàlontigiya.*  
 but 1SG.EMPH PFV.NEG 3SG confirm or INF 3SG disprove  
 'But I have neither confirmed nor disproved it' [Faba janjo].

So, in consecutive clause chains (which are the most current), negation behaves in the same way as the other operators tested above: its scope extends to the entire clause chain. Evidently, negation is attributed to the cosubordinate nexus, and each clause takes this specification there. Less frequent simultaneous clause chains behave, in this respect, like cross-linguistic subordinative sentences and require a negation rising.

### 5.3. The problem of mono- and pluriclausality

The problem of scope of negation has incidence on the highly controversial question of mono- and pluriclausality. It seems that the mainstream tendency today is to consider “the criterion of lack of independent negation as a cross-linguistically applicable test for clausehood” (Bohnenmeyer et al. 2007: 501). Haspelmath (2016: 299–301) argues strongly in favour of the «single negatability» as a universal criterion for monoclausality, and this approach grows popular among linguists.

According to this criterion, the consecutive constructions in Bambara should be regarded as monoclausal, in contradiction to other factors, such as the absence of a single intonative contour and possibility to have separate event-locational modifiers, as in (37).

In fact, Haspelmath assumes that the heuristic value of the term «monoclausality» is contestable:

Since clause status is not (yet) widely associated by linguists with single negatability, it would perhaps be more transparent if ‘monoclausal’ <...> were replaced by ‘singly negatable’. However, the term ‘monoclausal’ is less cumbersome, and it would be good if more linguists became aware that it actually has little meaning in a cross-linguistic context unless we apply the same definition in all languages (Haspelmath 2016: 301).

The Bambara data (in particular, the clause chaining constructions) is evidence for the separation of the single negatability from monoclausality. It is certainly just a question of labels: terms are conventional, and if specialists agree, they can use any term for any phenomenon. And still, it seems preferable to avoid conventions that bring us to too counterintuitive decisions, such as classification of Bambara clause chaining constructions with monoclausal ones.

## 6. Same- and different-subjectness

In Bambara clause chaining constructions, both same-subjectness and different-subjectness are allowed, but they are not distinguished by any morphological marker.

By default, all the clauses of a chain have the same subject, which is expressed only once, in the first clause (38).

- (38) *Dùgumɔɔɔ̀, ye dúmuni dúman` tóbi, ø, kà súrukuba` fàna n' ò yé.*  
 villager-ART PFV.TR food good\ART cook INF hyena\ART feed and it PP  
 ‘The villagers cooked good food and fed the Hyena with it’ [Dunumba kumata].

Different-subjectness is much less frequent, but it is by no means exceptional (Dumestre 2003: 386). In such constructions, types of correspondence of the zero subject of the infinitive may vary.

Quite often, the verb of the full-fledged clause is in a passive construction,<sup>10</sup> and the zero subject of the infinitive corresponds to the demoted (or eliminated) ex-subject of the main verb (39).

- (39) *Ní dénmisen-w<sub>i</sub> kò-ra ø<sub>?</sub> kà fini` dòn ù<sub>i</sub> lá...*  
 when child-PL wash-PFV.INTR INF clothes enter 3PL at  
 ‘When children are washed and clothed...’ [Fasokan 2011\_9].

- (40) *Né bólokò-la ø<sub>?</sub> kà nê tó sà̀n tân ní fila lá.*  
 1SG.EMPH circumcise-PRV.INTR INF 1SG.EMPH leave year ten and two at  
 ‘I was circumcized when I was 12 years old’ (lit.: ‘I was circumcized, to leave me in 12 years’) [entretien sida 1994.04.09].

In other cases, no participant (even non-mentioned!) of the situation designated by the head verb can be regarded as the referent of the zero subject. So, in (41), the subject of the head verb is *Màli sòrodasi sàba ní`* ‘souls of three soldiers of Mali’. It is certainly not the referent of the zero subject of the infinitive. It is evident that the zero subject refers to the jihadists, but they are not mentioned overtly in the sentence. In (42), the situation is even more complicated: normally, verb *sà`* ‘die’ in Bambara is intransitive, but in the infinitive clause it appears as transitive, and the NP *à bá`* ‘his mother’ that should be, logically, its subject, appears as its direct object.

- (41) *Màli sòrodasi sàba ní` tó-ra à lá,*  
 Mali soldier three soul-ART remain-PFV.INTR 3SG at  
 ø<sub>?</sub> *kà náani jógìn.*  
 INF four wound

‘Three Malian soldiers were killed there and four were wounded’ (litt.: ‘Souls of 3 Malian soldiers remained in it...’) [Kibaru 496].

- (42) *Músà fã` sà-ra ø<sub>?</sub> kà à bá` sà.*  
 Musa father-ART die-PFV.INTR INF 3SG mother-ART die  
 ‘Musa’s father died, and his mother died too’.

In synchrony, a “pseudo-causative consecutive infinitive” interpretation of this phenomenon advanced by Creissels (2009: 211) can be accepted: intransitive constructions should

<sup>10</sup> As already said in section 2.1, in Bambara, the passive lability is absolutely regular: any formally transitive verb can be used in an intransitive construction, its ex-direct object being promoted to the syntactic function of subject, and its ex-subject being demoted to the status of an agentive complement (with a postposition *fè*) or eliminated from the surface level.

be postulated as initial (*{mògɔ}* *náani jógin-na* ‘four people got wounded’, *à bá` sà-ra* ‘his mother died’). In an infinitive construction, there is no slot for a subject; however, their subjects, being not co-referent with the subjects of the head verbs, cannot be simply omitted. This controversy is solved through an operation of “pseudo-causativation”: an indefinite causer (unexpressed at the superficial level) is introduced, and the ex-subject is demoted to the position of the direct object.

It should be specified that “pseudo-causative” constructions appear not only in clause chaining; they can be also introduced by subordinating conjunctions (43).

- (43) *Nê be tó í bá` ka kàlifa` kónɔ sánni kà*  
 1SG IPFV remain 2SG mother\ART POSS protection\ART in before INF  
*sàya` sé ñ mà.*  
 death\ART arrive 1SG ADR  
 ‘I will stay under your mother’s protection till my death’ (litt.: ... before the death reaches me’) [Bamanan nzirin].

## 7. A diachronic interpretation

Infinitive markers of the *kà* type (tone may vary) exist in all Manding varieties and in the Mokole language group. However, *kà* is not used as clause chaining marker everywhere; in particular, this function of *kà* is not attested in Mandinka.<sup>11</sup> This fact can testify for its relatively recent emergence, most probably, from the infinitive of purpose (Creissels 2009: 209). However, we can also try to search for the origin of the infinitive marker *kà*.

### 7.1. Odjenne Dyula evidence

Evidence from Odjenne Dyula (Braconnier 1991; Braconnier 1992) gives some clues for the etymology of *kà* as a clause chaining marker (and, probably, as an infinitive marker). In this variety, the non-initial clause of a different-subject consecutive construction may have the following structure: *ká S yè* (O) V (44).<sup>12</sup> In this construction, the predicative marker is *yè*, and the element *ká* is interpreted by Braconnier as a conjunction.

- (44) *Mósò-í náà dèn’ gbísí-rà ká cé-’-í yè gbísí fàná.*  
 woman-PL PFV child-ART beat-INF2 CONJ man-ART-PL SEQ beat too  
 ‘Women beat the child, and the men beat the child too’.

<sup>11</sup> On the other hand, *kà* is used for clause-chaining in Kakabe (Vydrin 2017: 146), a language of the Mokole group of Western Mande. It seems probable that this use of the infinitive marker could be explained by the influence of Maninka, a Manding language widely spoken by the Kakabe people as a L2.

<sup>12</sup> In Odjenne Dyula, tones are regularly inverted with respect to Bambara (and other Central Manding varieties). Therefore, *ká* regularly corresponds to *kà* in Bambara, and *yè* corresponds to *yé*.



In the same-subject constructions, the subject is omitted, and the sequence *ká yè* merges into *káà*:

- (45) *Áí mà kè káà ná.*  
 3PL PFV.NEG do CONJ.SEQ come  
 ‘They didn’t come’.

There are also cases where *ká* appears without *yè*; nevertheless, Braconnier considers it as a conjunction (*complémenteur*) in all the contexts.

## 7.2. A specialized consecutive marker *diyé* in Sikasso Bambara

In the Sikasso (Southern Mali) dialect of Bambara,<sup>13</sup> there is a specialized consecutive marker *diyé*, in competition with *kà*. It can appear both in same-subject constructions, in which case it is preceded by no subject NP (46), and in different-subject ones, when the subject is overtly expressed (47).

- (46) *Sònsannin` ka dònsoke` dó yé ò yé,*  
 hare\ART POSS hunter\ART one PFV.TR that see  
*diyé kólokari` fàga, diyé tága ò gòlo dí sònsannin` mà.*  
 SEQ wild.cat\ART kill SEQ go that skin give hare\ART to  
 ‘One of Hare’s hunters saw this, he killed a wild cat, he went and gave its skin to the Hare’ [Contes Bambara 1974].
- (47) *Ò nà-na ò ké kà né kò n diyé sùnɔgɔ.*  
 that come\PFV.INTR that do INF 1SG.EMPH wash 1SG SEQ sleep  
 ‘She did it, she washed me, and I fell asleep’ [Contes Bambara 1974].

Although the origin of the initial element *di-* of the consecutive marker is obscure, the etymological identity of its final element *-yé* with the predicative marker *yè* in Odjenne Dyula seems highly probable. The existence of these markers in more than one Manding varieties may testify for the presence of a consecutive marker *\*yé* in Proto-Manding, replaced by *KA* in the majority of Manding varieties.

## 7.3. Origin of *kà*

The Ojenne Dyula evidence presented by Braconnier proves convincingly that in this Manding variety, the element *ká* in the consecutive construction is a conjunction, in the

<sup>13</sup> Manding variety spoken in Sikasso and around this city is traditionally referred to as Dyula. However, in modern Mali, it is more often associated with Bambara. In any case, it belongs to the Manding dialect continuum that comprises Malian Bambara and Ivorian Dyula, where it would be difficult to trace a limit between the languages. To my knowledge, there is no grammatical description of the Sikasso Manding variety; the data discussed here are taken from texts of popular tales.

According to Aby Sangaré (p.c.), a similar consecutive marker exists in Dyula of Côte d’Ivoire.

course of transformation into a consecutive predicative marker through fusion with the original consecutive marker *yè*.

It cannot be excluded that this process concerns not only Ojenne Dyula, in other words, it may be a general evolution path for the entire Manding group. A hypothesis can be advanced that the infinitive marker *KA* in Manding (in all the contexts where the infinitive can appear) may be a conjunction by origin (and in Ojenne Dyula, we observe the final stage of its transformation into predicative marker).

If we assume the hypothesis of the conjunctive origin of the infinitive marker in Bambara, the weird different-subjectness (discussed in section 6) finds its explanation. What is now a direct object in “pseudo-causative infinitive constructions” was originally a true subject; it was converted into an object after grammaticalization of the conjunction into the infinitive predicative marker.

In Mande languages, it is very typical of the markers of non-finite verbal forms to go back to adpositions. As far as the predominant type of adpositions is represented by postpositions, the markers of the non-finite forms are usually suffixes (for example, the “second infinitive” suffix *-la* in many Manding languages going back to the postposition *lá*). However, in most Mande languages, there are also (not numerous) prepositions, which can also fulfil the conjunction function (Vydrin 2019: 169–173). Reflexes of a preposition/conjunction that could be the origin of the infinitive marker in Bambara are attested in Southwestern Mande languages: *gà* in Looma, as a preposition, expresses the instrumental, comitative, equative meanings; as a conjunction, it can introduce completive and purpose clauses; *à* in Kpelle (both a preposition and a conjunction), *à* in Mende and Loko (preposition), *ngàa* in Bandi (preposition).

One can also mention postpositions with instrumental, sociative, equative (and some other) meanings in South Mande languages: Dan *ká*, Mano *ká*, Goo *ká ~ kǎ*, Tura *gǎ ~ ǎ*. In Kla-Dan this postposition has grammaticalized into an infinitive suffix *-ká* (Makeeva 2017: 633, 650), therefore, this grammaticalization path (instrumental/comitative/equative adposition > infinitive marker) proves to be not unusual for Mande. It would be tempting to surmise a material cognacy between these South Mande postpositions and the Southwestern Mande prepositions, however, such a swap (from postposition to preposition, or vice-versa) would be unprecedented in Mande family, and should be therefore regarded as improbable (unless some serious pro arguments are found).

## 8. Conclusions

The clause chaining construction in Bambara displays some typologically unusual characteristics which deserve special mentioning.

Let us consider the following quotation from Longacre (2007: 417).

While medial-final chaining has a dominating final verb of fully inflected structure as opposed to medial verbs of defective structure, initial-consecutive structures have a dominating initial verb of one structure followed by consecutive verbs which are of different structure. Medial-final chaining is found in OV languages where it patterns as a further feature of head-final structures, while initial-consecutive chaining is found in VO languages (VSO and SVO) where it patterns as a further feature of head-initial structures.

Firstly, Bambara (and other Manding languages) contradicts the rule (taken by Longacre for granted) of a strong correlation between the VO basic order and the “initial-consecutive” type of clause chaining: the basic word order all over Mande family is SOV, nevertheless, the first verb is dominating, and the subsequent verbs are attributed a defective (infinitive) structure.<sup>14</sup>

Secondly, it is assumed by Longacre that the clause chaining constructions with a dominating initial verb are consecutive, and this opinion is shared by other linguists. As it was shown in section 4 (and also 5.2), it is not quite exact for Bambara: true, the consecutive meaning is the most current for clause chaining constructions, but it is not the only option available. A full-fledged verb can be indexed not only for the perfective aspect (prototypical for the consecutive meaning), but also for any other aspect and mode, and the actions of the subsequent verbs may be simultaneous with the action of the initial verb. Therefore, Longacre’s term “initial-consecutive chaining” is not applicable to Bambara (or applicable with reservations).

Bambara clause chaining construction behaves predictably with respect to the scope of traditional operators, such as illocutionary force and imperative: both extend their scope over the entire construction. The situation with the negation is more complicated. First, contrary to the existing opinion, clause chaining construction is compatible with negation. Secondly, there is a differentiation with respect to the scope of negation depending on the semantics of the clause chaining construction: in consecutive clause chains, the scope of negation covers the entire construction, while in simultaneous ones, negation (although indexed in the initial clause) has a scope on the non-initial clause (which represents a case of negation rising, more common for subordinative sentences).

Yet another peculiarity of the Bambara clause chaining construction is their differentiation by the feature of same-/different-subjectness. The different-subject infinitive clauses have no morphological marking, but they are characterized by a peculiar syntax. This syntax can be probably explained diachronically by the origin of the infinitive marker in a subordinate conjunction.

## Glosses

1, 2, 3	1st, 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3rd person	INTR	intransitive
ADR	adresative postposition	IPFV	imperfective marker
ART	tonal article (low floating tone)	NEG	negative
CERT	assertive future marker	PFV	perfective
COND	conditional marker	PL	plural
CONJ	conjunction	POSS	possessive marker
DISTR	distributive conjunction	PP	multifunctional postposition (comitative, instrumental, equative, etc. meanings)
EMPH	emphatic pronoun	PROG	progressive marker
FUT	future marker	PROH	negative subjunctive
ID	identification copula	PST	restrospective operator
IMP	imperative	PTCP	participle
INF	infinitive marker		

<sup>14</sup> It should be noted however that, when speaking of correlation between the medial-final chaining and the OV word order, Longacre meant languages with the clause-final position of the verb (i.e., adverbials preceding the verb), while in Mande there is a basic word order S Aux O V X, where adverbials (disignated by X) follow the verb.

Q	particle of general question	SBJV	subjunctive marker
RECP	reciprocal pronoun	SEQ	sequentative marker
REFL	reflexive pronoun	SG	singular
REL	relative determiner/pronoun	TR	transitive
RES	resultative		

## Abbreviations

Aux	– auxiliary, predicative marker	TAM	– tense, aspect, mood
O	– direct object	V	– verb, verbal predicate
S	– subject	X	– oblique

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