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NON-FINITE CONSTRUCTIONS IN WOLOF

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Abstract: In this article, I study the concept of finiteness in Wolof. I propose a list of criteria for defining what a prototypical finite form is in this language. I am interested in the three constructions most distant from this prototype: the infinitive, the subjunctive-consecutive and the imperative. The subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive have few characteristics of the prototype. The instantiations of these constructions can thus be considered as non-(fully)-finite forms. The imperative also has relatively few characteristics of the prototype. However, the characteristics that move the imperative away from prototypical finite forms are not the same as those noted for the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive. The imperative is therefore a specific predicative construction in this respect.

Key words: Wolof, finiteness, infinitive, subjunctive, imperative

CONSTRUCTIONS NON FINIES EN WOLOF

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Résumé : Dans cet article, j'étudie la notion de finitude en wolof. Je propose une liste de critères permettant de définir ce qu'est une forme finie prototypique dans cette langue. Je m'intéresse aux trois constructions les plus éloignées de ce prototype : l'infinitif, le subjonctif-consécutif et l'impératif. Le subjonctif-consécutif et l'infinitif présentent peu de caractéristiques de l'étalon. Les instantiations de ces constructions peuvent ainsi être considérées comme des formes non (complètement) finies. L'impératif présente également assez peu de caractéristiques de l'étalon. Néanmoins, les caractéristiques qui éloignent l'impératif des formes finies prototypiques ne sont pas les mêmes que celles relevées pour le subjonctif-consécutif et l'infinitif. L'impératif constitue donc une construction prédicative spécifique sur ce point.

Mots-clés : Wolof, finitude, infinitif, subjonctif, impératif

1. Introduction

Wolof belongs to the northern branch of the Atlantic languages, Niger-Congo family. It is principally spoken in Senegal, Gambia and Southern Mauritania. It is the main vehicular language in Senegal (Hammarström et al. 2022).

In Wolof, the question of non-finite constructions has hardly ever been addressed. There are essentially two sources that deal with this question: Church (1981), in his analysis of complex predicates, hypothesizes an infinitive marker; and Voisin (2006) analyzes the Wolof infinitive construction. However, while the infinitive is relatively well described, no research has been done on finiteness in Wolof, or on the relationship between the infinitive and other constructions.

In this paper, I explore the notion of finiteness in Wolof, by proposing a list of criteria which define what a prototypical finite form is in this language. I am particularly interested in the three constructions most distant from this prototype, namely the infinitive, the subjunctive-consecutive and, to a lesser extent, the imperative. I show that it is possible to group together the subjunctive-consecutive and infinitive constructions, due to common characteristics. In order to account for the similarities between the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive, I propose to analyze these constructions as non-(fully)-finite constructions.¹

The data used for this study is mainly drawn from a corpus relying on various types of texts (folktales, poems, novels, sayings, translations), as well as examples taken from publications that explicitly mention the sources of their data and the methodology adopted for the collection and/or selection thereof. For more details about this corpus, see Guérin (2016: 37–39).

I begin by presenting the notion of finiteness, as well as the list of criteria retained for Wolof. I then study, by relying on these criteria,

¹ I borrow the labels “non-finite form” and “not-fully-finite form” from Carlson (1992: 83).

the three constructions furthest from the prototype: subjunctive-consecutive, infinitive and imperative.

2. Finiteness and integration

2.1. The notion of “finiteness”

Using the term “not-fully-finite construction” to refer to the subjunctive can seem questionable. Indeed, the label “subjunctive” is used to designate forms that are generally considered to be finite, especially in Indo-European languages (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1999: 146). Nevertheless, my analysis is in line with the traditional definition of the notion of finiteness. According to this definition, a finite verbal form carries inflectional markers (person, number, tense, aspect, mood) and can constitute the predicate of an independent clause. Conversely, a non-finite verbal form has more limited or even non-existent inflection, and cannot constitute the predicate of an independent clause (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1999: 146). In addition, combination with the subject is sometimes considered a crucial criterion. “While finite verb forms typically take subjects, nonfinite verb forms (at least, in a number of languages) either cannot combine with overt subjects at all or take them in another form than in independent sentences.” (Koptjevskaja-Tamm 1999: 146–147).

This classical approach is problematic. According to this approach, finiteness is a property of the verb. This position limits the relevance of the notion of finiteness to languages which have both a rich verbal morphology and a syntactic constraint according to which the subject argument of an independent verbal form must necessarily manifest itself, either in the form of a nominal constituent, or in the form of a pronominal affix (Creissels 2006: 218). Moreover, this approach presents finiteness as a binary feature; a form is either finite or non-finite. This position induces groupings of forms with quite different properties. For example, infinitive, gerund, and participle are all three considered as non-finite forms. But above all, this position does not really take into account borderline cases. For example, the subjunctive

in a language like French is compatible with inflectional morphology and combines with a subject, but it is mainly used in dependent clauses. Its use in independent clauses is limited to hortative utterances, and requires the presence of the conjunction *que* (ex. *Qu'il parte!* 'Let him go!'). The imperative in a language such as French is used exclusively in independent clauses, but it has limited inflectional morphology, and is not combined with an explicit subject. Traditionally, subjunctive and imperative forms are considered as finite forms, but they exhibit several characteristics proper to non-finite forms.

Givón (1990: 852–891) proposes another approach for the notion of finiteness. According to him, finiteness is a property of the clause (and not of the verb). Finiteness is not a binary feature, but rather a complex (multifactorial) and scalar phenomenon. Thus, finiteness is based on several distinct features (person, TAM, etc.), and the forms considered can be located on a scale of finiteness. Finally, finiteness is the expression of the degree of integration of the clause. Thus, the less finite a form is, the more integrated (or dependent) the clause from which it comes is.

Works on finiteness are not limited to the traditional grammar approach or Givón's (1990) approach. In recent years, a debate has arisen in the literature regarding the notion of finiteness, and other approaches have been proposed, sometimes in reaction to Givón's approach (Nikolaeva (ed.) 2007). Thus, Bisang (2007) proposes an opposite approach, describing finiteness as a discrete and binary notion. According to Queixalós (2011: 106–107), finiteness is discrete but, being multifactorial, it cannot be binary. A form is more or less finite depending on its degree of remoteness from a prototypical finite form, which serves as a prototype for a given language. Moreover, according to Cristofaro (2007: 107–109), entities under finiteness have so many variations from one language to another that "finiteness and non-finiteness are not cross-linguistically relevant categories".

Giving an account of all these approaches goes well beyond the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it appears that the approach initially proposed by Givón (1990), and enriched by various later works such

as Queixalós (2011), allows for a relatively simple account of the formal similarities of subjunctive-consecutive and infinitive constructions in Wolof.

2.2. Finiteness in Wolof

According to the approach advocated by Givón (1990) and Queixalós (2011), determining the finiteness of a form in a given language requires the identification of a prototype, i.e. a finite prototypical form.

For Wolof, Zribi-Hertz & Diagne (2003: 206–208) propose the perfect construction. Indeed, perfect clauses are compatible with markers of aspect (imperfective auxiliary verb *di*), tense (past suffix *-oon*), negation (suffix *-ul*),² and person.

- (1) *Lekk-oon na-a ceeb.*
 eat-PST PRF-S1SG rice
 ‘I had eaten rice.’

Moreover, perfect clauses are “simple” (assertive modality, no topicalization or focalization) and “complete” (able to constitute an utterance on their own) (Zribi-Hertz & Diagne 2003: 208). In addition, Zribi-Hertz & Diagne analyze the *na* marker as a finiteness marker.³

By taking up and broadening the criteria proposed by Zribi-Hertz & Diagne (2003) and by Queixalós (2011: 106–107), we can consider that the prototypical finite clause in Wolof has the following characteristics:

- It has a verbal predicate; it contains a verb.
- It can be an independent sentence.
- It is declarative.

² In fact, the negative perfect is a specific construction, characterized by the negation suffix *-u(l)* combined with a person marker, and without the perfect marker *na* (Guérin 2016: 82–84).

³ This last point is questionable, especially as the authors analyze *na* (PRF) and *na* (OPT) as the same marker of finiteness. However, this paper offers several criteria for identifying a prototype in Wolof.

- The argument structure of its verb is saturated.
- It contains a predicative marker.⁴
- It contains a subject marker, combined with the predicative marker, which can be analyzed as an agreement marker.
- It is compatible with the imperfective auxiliary verb *di*.
- Its verb can take the past suffix *-oon*.
- It is compatible with the negation suffix *-ul*.

According to these criteria, the prototype in Wolof is the verb focus construction. Indeed, it is the only construction that unambiguously meets all the criteria.

(2) *Da-ma* *d-ul-oon* *lekk* *ceeb*.
 VFOC-S1SG IPFV-NEG-PST eat rice
 ‘I was not eating rice.’

The perfect is very close to the prototype. The only exception is its negative form, which does not contain a predicative marker as such.⁵

Most of the other basic constructions of the verb system are extraction constructions. Among these constructions, the focalization constructions are relatively close to the prototype, and are therefore rather finite. In particular, they are compatible with all TAM markers (with the notable exception of the negation for the presentative). Nevertheless, they are distinguished from prototypical finite forms by their capacity to form non-verbal predicates, and by the form of their pronominal subject. These properties are related to the fact that they are constructions marking information structure. The relative construction is further from the prototype, as it cannot constitute an independent declarative sentence. Nevertheless, all the other criteria bring it closer to other extraction constructions. In particular, it is compatible with all

⁴ Non-verbal auxiliary bearing TAM information.

⁵ The future is derived from the perfect, so it is also very close to the prototype. The only exception concerns the negation marker, expressed by the predicative marker (*du*) and not on the verb.

TAM markers. In addition, the relativizer has several properties that bring it closer to predicative markers.⁶

3. Subjunctive-consecutive construction

I use the label “subjunctive-consecutive” proposed by Guérin (2016: 112–115) to designate this construction, although this is not traditional in the descriptions of Wolof.⁷ Nevertheless, it makes it possible to take into account all the properties of this construction. It is characterized by the absence of a specific marker (as opposed to other predicative constructions). In the literature, verb forms without any predicative marker are generally analyzed as all being instantiations of a single construction called “minimal” or “narrative”. Following Guérin (2016: 106–112), I consider that the “minimal” construction actually covers at least two different constructions: subjunctive-consecutive and relative.⁸

A clause in subjunctive-consecutive contains no predicative element other than the verb; a clause of this type is minimally made up of the verb and its arguments. Furthermore, the pronominal subject of a clause in subjunctive-consecutive is not an agreement marker, or even a pronominal affix, but a free subject pronoun; its person paradigm corresponds to the paradigm of free subject pronouns: *ma*, *nga*, *mu*, *nu*, *ngeen*, *ñu*. The subjunctive-consecutive has a syntactic structure S s V o O, that is to say a structure S V O with lexical arguments and s V o with pronominal arguments.

The subjunctive-consecutive is used in narrative (or sequential) clauses (3a), consecutive clauses (3b), exclamative clauses (3c), injunctive clauses (3d), clauses introduced by an adverb (3e),

⁶ For a detailed analysis of these constructions, see Guérin (2016: 369–391).

⁷ With the exception of Kobès (1869: 114) and Torrence (2013: 30) who use the term “subjunctive” to denote some of the uses of the “minimal” construction.

⁸ The relative construction is an extraction construction, so I will not analyze it here.

complement clauses without a complementizer (3f)⁹ and purpose clauses (3g).

- (3) a. (...) [*mu gis =ko*], *ne =ko*...
 s3SG see =o3SG say =o3SG
 ‘(then) he saw him, told him...’ (Church 1981: 53)
- b. *Soowam =dafa lamb, [mu maye =ko]*.
 milk:her =VFOC.s3SG be_ unsold s3SG give =o3SG
 ‘Her milk remained unsold, so she gave it away.’ (Church 1981: 53)
- c. *Ma def =ko !*
 s1SG do =o3SG
 ‘I will do it (no need to repeat)!’ (Church 1981: 53)
- d. *Mu def =ko !*
 s3SG do =o3SG
 ‘Let him do it!’ (Church 1981: 53)
- e. *Léegi [ma gis =ko]*.
 soon s1SG see =o3SG
 ‘Soon I will see him.’ (Church 1981: 53)
- f. *Dañu bëgg [mu àtte =leen]*.
 VFOC:S3PL want s3SG separate =o3PL
 ‘They want him to separate them.’ (Voisin 2010: 146)
- g. *Danga war = a muddaarante ngir [mu jaay*
 VFOC:S2SG have_to=VD negotiate to s3SG sell
 =*la =ko]*.
 =o2SG =o3SG
 ‘You have to negotiate with him to sell it to you.’ (Diouf 2003: 229)

Moreover, it is not compatible with the negation suffix *-ul*; clauses of this kind must be lexically negated by adding the verb *bañ* ‘to refuse’ or *ñàkk* ‘to lack’ (4a–b).

⁹ Complement clauses introduced by the complementizer *ne* can occur in almost any other predicative construction.

- (4) a. *Bëgg* = *naa* [Ayda *bañ/ñàkk* = *ko* *togg*].
 want =PRF:S1SG Aida refuse/lack =O3SG cook
 ‘I want Aida to not cook it.’ (Torrence 2013: 35)
- b. **Bëgg* = *naa* [Ayda *togg-ul* = *ko*].
 want =PRF:S1SG Aida cook-NEG =O3SG

The subjunctive-consecutive has only some characteristics of finite clauses: it has a verbal predicate, the argument structure of its verb is saturated, it is compatible with the auxiliary imperfective verb *di*, and its verb can take the past suffix *-oon*. All other criteria tend to move the subjunctive-consecutive away from the prototype.

The subjunctive-consecutive is fundamentally a dependent construction (Robert 2010: 491); a clause in subjunctive-consecutive can always be analyzed as a dependent clause (Robert 1996; 2010: 490–492). In some of its uses, the clause has a syntactic dependency (subordinate clauses (3e–g)). Other clauses, although syntactically autonomous, necessarily have a pragmatic dependency (exclamative, injunctive clauses (3c–d)). Finally, the narrative (or sequential) and consecutive clauses (3a–b) have a discursive dependency: in this use, the subjunctive-consecutive never starts a story, it develops a narration from a prior anchoring in the past marked by another clause (Robert 1995: 377). In stories, a clause in subjunctive-consecutive “cannot appear in the first position” (Robert 2010: 490).

It is therefore a dependent construction exhibiting several characteristics that clearly distinguish it from prototypical finite forms. I therefore propose to consider the subjunctive-consecutive as a construction that is not fully finite.

In fact, this situation is not unique to Wolof. Many languages, especially African languages, have a construction with uses similar to Wolof subjunctive-consecutive (Carlson 1992). Moreover, in several languages, as in Wolof, this construction does not have any formal marker expressing subjunctive-consecutive. This is particularly the case in several Gur languages such as Cebaara (Senufo) and Moore (Oti-Volta) (Carlson 1992: 65–69). This is also the case with the “injunctive”

construction in Vedic Sanskrit (Kiparsky 2005), and the subjunctive in Hausa (Caron 1980; Newman 2000: 591–593).

4. Infinitive construction

Nineteenth-century grammarians generally considered the bare stem of a verb to be an infinitive form (Dard 1826: 39; Kobès 1869: 256–257). On the other hand Church (1981: 37) hypothesizes that the verbal dependent marker *a* is an infinitive marker. Only Voisin (2006) proposes a detailed analysis of the infinitive.

Two infinitives can be identified in Wolof: the *a*-infinitive and the bare infinitive (Voisin 2006). The *a*-infinitive is characterized by a verbal dependency marker =*a* immediately before the verb (5a–b). This infinitive is used exclusively to form complex predicates (Voisin 2006). It occupies the function of complement of a verb.

- (5) a. *Dama bëgg=a jubbanti tànkú siis =bi.*
 VFOC:1SG want=VD straighten leg:GEN chair =the.SG
 ‘I want to straighten the chair leg.’ (Diouf 2003: 175)
- b. *Xaw =nga =ma =a xañ sama lam =yi.*
 almost_do =PRF:2SG =O1SG =VD deprive my bracelet the.PL
 ‘You almost deprive me of my bracelets.’ (Diouf 2003: 380)

Complex predicates involving an *a*-infinitive are raising constructions. The argument structure of these constructions depends only on that of the infinitive verb (V_2), while the arguments syntactically depend on the main verb (V_1). In other words, there is an imposition of the valency of V_2 on V_1 . The *a*-infinitive is not a predicative construction, it is a component of a complex construction where the object valency of the main verb is saturated by an infinitive clause with a verbal dependency marker =*a* immediately before the infinitive verb. Thus, the morphosyntactic structure of the *a*-infinitive cannot be analyzed independently of the complex construction in which it

is inserted. I will therefore not deal with this construction in detail here.¹⁰

The bare infinitive consists of the bare verbal stem. It has a strictly nominal function, i.e. it occupies a syntactic position that can always be occupied by a noun phrase. It can occupy the syntactic position and the function of the subject of a verb (6a-b), and the syntactic positions and the functions of subject and object of the verb *gën* ‘to be better’ in comparative constructions (7a–b) (Voisin 2006), as well as the syntactic position and function of the complement of a goal preposition (8a–b). The infinitive is therefore a dependent construction; an infinitive clause is used exclusively as an argument of a verb or a preposition. In addition, the infinitive does not have any predicative marker: an infinitive clause does not contain any predicative element other than the verb.

- (6) a. [*Naan sàngara*] = *dafa araam ci jullit*.
 drink alcohol =VFOC.S3SG be_prohibited PREP Muslim
 ‘Drinking alcohol is illegal for a Muslim.’ (Diouf 2003: 510)
- b. [*Tàpparka =gi*] = *dafa diis ci yow*.
 washing_paddle =the =VFOC.S3SG be_heavy PREP PRO2SG
 ‘The washing paddle is heavy for you.’ (Diouf 2003: 333)
- (7) a. [*Wor sa ñaamaan*] = *a gën [wor sa léttkat]*.
 betray your circumciser =SFOC be_better betray your
 hairdresser
 ‘It is better to betray your circumciser than to betray your hairdresser.’ (Diouf 2003: 271)
- b. [*Pëndub tànk*] = *a gën [pëndub taat]*.
 dust:GEN foot =SFOC be_better dust:GEN buttocks
 ‘Dust on feet is better than dust on buttocks.’ (Diouf 2003: 278)

¹⁰ For more details on this construction, cf. Voisin (2006).

- (8) a. *Dañu =ko def ngir [baaxental suñu*
 VFOC:S1PL =O3SG do to commemorate our
moom-sa-réew].
 independence
 ‘We did it to commemorate our independence.’ (Diouf 2003: 58)
- b. *Dafa=y sàkku ndimmal ngir [jumaa =ji].*
 VFOC:S3SG=IPFV collect help to mosque =the
 ‘He’s collecting money for the mosque.’ (Diouf 2003: 243)

For the bare infinitive, the lexical object (6a), (7a), (8a) and pronominal object (9a-b-c) follow the verb. This construction therefore has a V o O structure, that is to say a structure identical to that of the subjunctive-consecutive, but without a subject argument (Fal 1999: 75).

- (9) a. [*Wax =ko =ko] tiis =na =ma.*
 speak =O3SG =O3SG bother =PRF.S3SG =O1SG
 ‘It bothers me to tell him.’ (Diouf 2003: 504)
- b. *Taal bu Yàlla taal,*
 hearth REL God light
sànni =ci matt =a gën [fey =ko].
 throw there wood =SFOC be_better put_out =O3SG
 ‘A fire that God has lit, it is better to throw wood into it than to put it out.’ (Diouf 2003: 214)
- c. *Dinaa =la telefone ngir [wóoral =ko].*
 FUT:S1SG =O2SG phone to confirm =O3SG
 ‘I’ll phone you to confirm it.’ (Diouf 2003: 372)

On the other hand, verbs in the bare infinitive can take the past tense suffix *-oon* (10a), but they are incompatible with the negation suffix *-ul*; clauses of this kind must be lexically negated by adding the verb *bañ* ‘to refuse’ or *ñàkk* ‘to lack’ (10b–c).

- (10) a. [*Wax-oon =la ne дума ñów*] *tiis-oon*
 speak-PST =O2SG that FUT;NEG:S1SG come bother-PST
 = *na =ma.*
 =PRF.S3SG =O1SG
 ‘Telling you that I won’t come bothered me.’ (Diouf 2003: 486)
- b. *Bañ=a fonk sa làkk ngecceel =la.*
 refuse=VD respect your language complex =CFOC
 ‘Not valuing your language is an inferiority complex.’ (Diouf 2003: 251)
- c. **Fonk-ul sa làkk ngecceel =la.*
 respect-NEG your language complex =CFOC

Like the subjunctive-consecutive, the infinitive has few characteristics of finite clauses: it has a verbal predicate, it is compatible with the imperfective auxiliary verb *di*, and its verb can carry the past suffix. All other criteria tend to move it away from the prototype. Unlike the subjunctive-consecutive, the argument structure of the verb of an infinitive clause is not saturated, since the verb of this kind of clause does not have a subject argument. The saturation of the argument structure is the only point that distinguishes the infinitive from the subjunctive-consecutive. For all the other criteria that I have listed, these two constructions work the same way. Moreover, these are the only two constructions without any specific marker, and in which the pronominal object follows the lexical verb.

The infinitive is therefore a dependent construction exhibiting almost none of the characteristics of prototypical finite forms. This is the most distant construction from the prototype. I therefore propose to consider the infinitive as a “non-finite construction”. Moreover, the form and the meaning of this construction are similar to those of the subjunctive-consecutive, to the extent that the infinitive can be described as a subjunctive-consecutive without subject argument or, conversely, the subjunctive-consecutive described as an infinitive with a subject argument.

This link between the infinitive and the subjunctive is not specific to Wolof. For example, in English, both in the subjunctive (11a) and in the infinitive (11b–c), the verb occurs in the bare form (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 90).

- (11) a. *It is essential [that he take great care].*
 b. *I advise you [to take great care].*
 c. *You must [take great care].*
 (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 51)

5. Imperative construction

The structure of the imperative is characterized by the presence of a suffix *-(a)l* in the singular or *-leen* in the plural. The imperative is only conjugated in the second person singular and plural. This construction has a syntactic structure V O with lexical arguments and V o with pronominal arguments. As in most languages, the imperative is used to express direct order (12a), permission (12b) or advice (12c).

- (12) a. *Wàcc-leen* *maraj* = *bi* !
 go_down-IMP.S2PL wall =the
 ‘Get off the wall!’ (Diouf 2003: 213)
- b. *Agsi-l* !
 arrive-IMP.S2SG
 ‘Come in (please)!’ (Diouf & Yaguello 1991: 18)
- c. *Moytu-leen* ! *Bocci* = *na* *paaka*.
 be_careful-IMP.S2PL draw =PRF.S3SG knife
 ‘Pay attention! He drew a knife.’ (Diouf 2003: 220)

In many languages, the imperative is a borderline case regarding finiteness (Givón 1990: 808–811). For example, in French, the imperative is traditionally considered as a finite construction; however, it has limited inflectional morphology, and does not combine with an explicit subject. In some languages, the imperative has formal affinities with

the subjunctive and/or the infinitive. For example, in English, in imperative clauses, the verb occurs in a bare form, as in the subjunctive or the infinitive (Huddleston & Pullum 2002: 89–90). A comparable situation is found in other languages such as Ingush (East Caucasian) (Auwera et al. 2013).

In Wolof, the imperative has relatively few characteristics of the prototype: it contains a verbal predicate and it is compatible with the auxiliary imperfective verb *di*. Thus, one might be tempted to relate this construction to the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive. However, the characteristics that move the imperative away from prototypical finite forms are not the same as those I have noted for the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive.

The imperative clauses constitute syntactically autonomous sentences. However, they are not declarative. Moreover, this construction is incompatible with the negation suffix *-ul*, but unlike the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive, it is not lexically negated by adding the verb *bañ* ‘to refuse’. Its negative is formed with the prohibitive marker *bu(l)*, probably resulting from grammaticalization of the verb *ba* ‘to leave’ in the imperative (Guérin, forthcoming). Unlike the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive, it is incompatible with the past suffix *-oon*. In addition, it does not contain any predicative marker, but its verb has an inflectional suffix, expressing both the imperative and the person. Strictly speaking, the argument structure of its verb is saturated. However, its person paradigm is limited to the second person (singular and plural). The subject marker can therefore hardly be analyzed as an agreement marker. Thus, the imperative has little affinity with the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive.

6. Conclusion

The relevance of a cross-linguistically category “finiteness” in linguistic typology is debatable (Cristofaro 2007: 107–109). However, this notion is relevant for the study of Wolof. The approach to the notion of finiteness proposed by Givón (1990), and enriched by various later works

such as Queixalós (2011), allows the formal similarities of the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive in Wolof to be accounted for in a relatively simple way.

According to this approach, determining the finiteness of a form in a given language requires the identification of a prototype. This prototype must match a finite prototypical form. In Wolof, this prototype matches the verb focus construction. Thus, the instantiations of this construction can be considered as prototypical finite forms. Following the terminology proposed by Zribi-Hertz & Diagne (2003), this is a construction with saturated (or finite) inflection.

The subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive have few characteristics of the prototype. These are dependent constructions, without any predicative markers, and are incompatible with the negative suffix *-ul*. Thus, the instantiations of these constructions can be considered as non-(fully)-finite forms. Following the terminology proposed by Zribi-Hertz & Diagne (2003), these are non-inflected (or inflection-deficient) clauses. In the terminology used by Cristofaro (2003: 54–60), these are deranked verb forms.

The imperative has relatively few characteristics of the prototype. However, the characteristics that move the imperative away from prototypical finite forms are not the same as those I have noted for the subjunctive-consecutive and the infinitive. The imperative therefore constitutes a separate predicative construction. In synchrony, it is not linked to any other predicative construction.

Abbreviations

# – person	O – object	REL – relative
CFOC – complement focus	OPT – optative	S – subject
FUT – future	PL – plural	SFOC – subject focus
GEN – genitive	PREP – preposition	SG – singular
IMP – imperative	PRF – perfect	VD – verbal dependency
IPFV – imperfective	PRO – strong pronoun	VFOC – verb focus
NEG – negative	PST – past	

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