

Verbal Inflectional Morphology and Focus Marking in Mombo (Dogon, Mali)

Kirill Prokhorov
bolshoypro@gmail.com

1. Introduction

1.1 Mombo Language

Classification: one of somewhat 20 Dogon Languages (<Niger-Congo (?))
Location: West of the 'Dogon Country' (Fr. *pays Dogon*), Eastern Mali
Number of speakers: 20000-30000, approx. 20-22 villages
Data: field-work trips to Mali in 2008-2010

1.2 Mombo verbal inflectional morphology

- Complex interaction of TAM marking, cross-reference ('agreement') with the subject, focalization

2. Basic typological profile

2.1 Tonology and tonal morphology

- There are two tonal primitives H(igh) and L(ow). These two combine into stem-wide tone contours: {H} {HL} {LH} {L} glossed as .L, .H etc
- Change of the tone contour used as grammatical marking device
+encoding basic syntactic relations in the noun phrase (no example)
+verbal inflectional morphology (see 2.3 for examples)

2.2 Word order and case-marking

- strictly verb-final language, SOV in neutral declarative
 - adverbials either precede or follow the subject, but never occur between the object and the verb (in neutral sentences) :
- (1) *Séydù débù-ndá mángórò témé*
Seydou house-LOC mango eat.PFV
'Seydou ate mangoes at home'.
- (2) ^{OK} *débù-ndá Séydù mángórò témé*
'Seydou ate mangoes at home'.
- (3) *Séydù mángórò débù-ndá témé*
*'Seydou ate mangoes at home'. (cf (26))
- pre-clausal topic position (one of the topic markers obligatory follows NP's, a pause in pronunciation)
- (4) *mótô:ⁿ bá: (*) Ámárù wó: swé*
motorcycle TOP/DEF A. TF buy.PFV.H
'(As for) the motorcycle [topic], AMADOU bought (it) '.
- object clitic =*wⁿ*
- transitive clauses: differentially marks P (obligatory used with personal pronouns inter alia)
- (5) *dà:ná yàrà táyé*
hunter lion shoot.PFV
'(A) hunter shot (a) lion'
- (6) *dà:ná è=*wⁿ* táyé*
hunter 3S=OBJ shoot.PFV
'(A) Hunter shot it /him/her'

ditransitive clauses: obligatory marks R, while T is unmarked

- (7) \acute{e} : $m\grave{i}=w^n$ \acute{a} - $n\acute{i}nd\grave{e}$
 3S 1S=OBJ 2S-give.PFV
 'You gave it to me'

+ used as a locative marker on non-core arguments/ non-arguments

- (8) $s\grave{i}$: $t\grave{o}mb\grave{o}$ $g\acute{a}nd\acute{a}=w^n$ $\acute{a}nd\acute{o}$ $n\acute{e}$: $b\acute{a}$;
 grain.L white.L land=OBJ go.VN 1S.POSS TOP
 '(Well, as for) My trip to the land of white people,...'

- locative marker =*nda* ; competes with =*w^n*, difference is not clear yet (no example)
- instrumental-comitative marker =*ndo* (no-example)

2.3 Verbal morphology

(9) Aspectual categories:

I. Perfective	
I.1 (Simple) Perfective	stem-final V ablaut
I.2 Experiential perfective ('Have you ever V?')	suffixation
I.3 Recent perfective ('I have just V')	analytic. construction
II. Imperfective	
II.1 Imperfective (proper)	analytic. construction
II.2 Prospective	inflection

>Modality: Potential 'X can/may V'

>Polarity: Positive (unmarked) Vs Negative (suffixation)

(10) Inflectional series

Feature	Series 1	Series 2	Series 2	Series 4
Marking	unmarked	{H} contour	Suffixation	CV-reduplication
Pronominal Subject	cross-reference	no cross-reference	cross-reference	cross-reference

(11) Paradigm of *m\acute{i}:nd\grave{e}* 'swallow'

	Positive	Negative
I. Perfective		
1.Simple Perfective		
Series 1	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\grave{e}</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{e}-l\acute{i}</i>
Series 2	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{e}</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{e}-l\grave{i}</i>
Series 3	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{e}-n\acute{e}</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{e}-l\acute{y}\acute{e}-n\grave{a}</i>
Series 4	<i>m\grave{i}-m\acute{i}:nd\grave{e}</i>	<i>m\grave{i}-m\acute{i}:nd\acute{e}-l\acute{i}</i>
2.Experiential Perfective		
Series 1	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}:ⁿy\acute{e}</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}nd\grave{i}</i>
Series 2	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}:ⁿy\acute{e}</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}:nd\acute{i}</i>
Series 3	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}:ⁿ-y\acute{a}-n\grave{a}</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}nd-y\acute{a}-n\grave{a}</i>
Series 4	<i>m\grave{i}-m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}:ⁿy\acute{e}</i>	<i>m\grave{i}-m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}-t\acute{e}nd\acute{i}</i>
3.Recent Perfective		
Series 1	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{a}:</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{a}-nd\acute{a}</i>
Series 2	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{a}:</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{a}-nd\acute{a}-ga</i>
Series 3	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{i}-y\acute{a}</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{a}-nd-y\acute{a}:</i>
Series 4	<i>m\grave{i}-m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a} s\acute{a}:</i>	<i>m\grave{i}-m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{a}-nd\acute{a}</i>
II. Imperfective		
1.Imperfective (proper)		
Series 1	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: b\acute{o}:</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: \acute{o}l\grave{i}</i>
Series 2	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: s\acute{a}:</i>	<i>m\acute{i}:nd\acute{a}: \acute{o}l\grave{i}-g\acute{a}</i>

Series 3	<i>mí:ndá: bí-yá-nà</i>	<i>mí:ndá: ól-yá-nà</i>
Series 4	<i>mì:-míndá: sá:</i>	<i>mì:-míndá sándá</i>

2. Prospective

Series 1	<i>mí:nd-àmbò</i>	<i>mí:ndá:-lì</i>
Series 2	<i>mí:nd-àmbò</i>	<i>mí:ndá:-lì-gà</i>
Series 3	<i>mì:ndà-kónó</i>	<i>mí:ndá:-l-yá-nà</i>
Series 4	<i>mì-mí:nd-àmbò</i>	<i>mì-mí:ndá:lì</i>

III. Potential

Series 1	<i>mí:ndó-mámbó</i>	<i>mí:ndó-má-ndá</i>
Series 2	<i>mí:ndó-má</i>	<i>mí:ndó-mándá-gà</i>
Series 3	<i>mí:ndó-m-yánà</i>	<i>mí:ndó-mánd-yánà</i>
Series 4	<i>mí:ndó-mámbó</i>	<i>mí:ndó-má-ndá</i>

+ Imperative, Imperative-PL and Hortative in Positive and Negative; these forms have only one series (no example)

- **Series 1:** unmarked 'declarative' form, certain types of non-subject focus and non-subject relatives

TAM morphology:

+ a (bare) stem without suffixes with category-specified final vowel and tonal contour:

(12)	gloss	PFV.3S	IMP
	'swallow'	<i>mì:ndé</i>	<i>mì:ndá</i>

+ suffixation:

(13)	gloss	EXP
	'swallow'	<i>mí:ndá-té:ⁿyè</i>

Pronominal subject marking:

Pattern 1:

- prefixation (except for the 3P)
- 3S forms don't have overt personal affixes
- 3P is expressed by a suffix
- tonal change

(14)	PFV 'swallow'	EXP 'see'
1S	<i>ì-mì:ndé</i>	<i>ì-màlà-té:ⁿyè</i>
2S	<i>a-mì:ndé</i>	<i>à-màlà-té:ⁿyè</i>
3S	<i>mí:ndé</i>	<i>má-lá-té:ⁿyè</i>
1P	<i>ì-mí:ndé</i>	<i>ì-má-lá-té:ⁿyè</i>
2P	<i>é-mí:ndé</i>	<i>é-má-lá-té:ⁿyè</i>
3P	<i>mínd-yè</i>	<i>mà-lá-té:ⁿy-á y</i>

Pattern 2 (only in the prospective): TAM/Polarity/Pronominal subject inflections

(15)	PROSP 'go, leave'	PROSP.NEG 'go, leave'
1S	<i>ándá-wⁿ</i>	<i>ándá:-nì (<* V n-lì)</i>
2S	<i>ándá:-w</i>	<i>ándá:-lì</i>
3S	<i>ándá-mbò (<* V-N bo)</i>	<i>ándá:-lì</i>
1P	<i>ándá:-mbò (<* V-N m-bo)</i>	<i>ándá:-nì (<* V n-lì)</i>
2P	<i>ándá-èbò (<* V-N e-bo)</i>	<i>ándá: é-yóli (=IPFV.NEG)</i>
3P	<i>ándá-mbyà (<* V-N b-yà)</i>	<i>anda-lyá: (<* V n-lì)</i>

Cf. *bó:* 'be', *ólì* 'be.NEG'

- Series 1: subject focus, subject relatives
- + derived by applying a {H} tone contour to a stem inflected for TAM

+ no cross-reference with the subject

(16)	gloss	PFV.3S ¹	PFV ²
	'swallow'	<i>mí::ndě</i>	<i>mí::ndě</i>
	'slaughter'	<i>sémé</i>	<i>sémé</i>

+DEF/TOP *bá:* which normally follows the verb in relatives realizes as [bà:] after PFV.3S¹ forms and as [bá:] after PFV² no matter what the final tone of the verb is

- **Series 3:** non-subject focus, non-subject relatives, clause-chaining

+ suffixation

+ subject making by prefixation (except for the 3S)

+ suffixation in 3S

(17)	PROSP ¹	PROSP ³	PFV ¹	PFV ³
1S	<i>sémà-wⁿ</i>	<i>ń-sémó-gò</i>	<i>ń-sémè</i>	<i>ń-sémè</i>
2S	<i>sémá:-w</i>	<i>á-sémó-gò</i>	<i>á-sémè</i>	<i>á-sémè</i>
3S	<i>sém-àmbò</i>	<i>sèmò-kónó</i> (<* -gɔ-nɔ (?))	<i>sémé</i>	<i>sémé-ńé</i>
1P	<i>sémà:-mbò</i>	<i>ń`-sémó-gò</i>	<i>ń-sémé</i>	<i>ń-sémé</i>
2P	<i>sémà-èbò</i>	<i>é-sémó-gò</i>	<i>é-sémé</i>	<i>é-sémé</i>
3P	<i>sémà-mbyà</i>	<i>ké-sémó-gò</i>	<i>sém-yè</i>	<i>sém-yè</i>

- **Series 4:** SoA focus

+ formed by a CV-reduplication of the first syllable

+ pronominal subject marking as in Series 1

(18)	<i>sémé</i> 'slaughter'
	1S <i>sè-ń-sémè</i>
	2S ...
	...

NB: reduplicated syllable occurs before the person/number prefix, see 3.1 for further discussion

3. Focalization

3.1 Term focus

- There two types of constructions used to mark the term focus.

Construction 1: the focalized constituent appears in the immediately preverbal position:

(19)	<i>yàrà</i>	<i>ámárù</i>	<i>táyé²</i>
	lion	Amadou	shoot.PFV.H
	'Amadou [focus] shot the lion'		

(20)	<i>Ámárù yàrà</i>	<i>yá:gù</i>	<i>táyé¹/táyé-ńé³</i>
	Amadou	lion	yesterday shot.PFV1/ shoot-.3S3
	'Amadou shot the lion <u>yesterday</u> [focus]'		
	*Amadou shot the <u>lion</u> [focus] yesterday'		

Construction 2: the focalized constituent is followed by the focus clitic *wó:*. A NP+ *wó:* complex can occur in situ or immediately before the verb:

(21)	<i>mí:</i>	<i>wó:</i>	<i>yá:rà</i>	<i>mályé:²</i>
	1S	TF	lion	see. PFV.H
	{Who saw the lion?}'I [focus] saw the lion'			

(22)	<i>yá:rà</i>	<i>mí:</i>	<i>wó:</i>	<i>mályé:²</i>
	lion	1S	TF	see. PFV.H
	{Who saw the lion?}'I [focus] saw the lion'			

- There is an issue as to what this distinction corresponds to on the information-structural level? In my text collection Construction 1 is used for focalization in an overwhelming majority of the cases.
- The forms of the series 1-3 are used to distinguish between different term focus types:

(23)

Subject focus	Series 2	<i>examples (19,21,22)</i>
Non-subject focus		
Object focus	Series 3	(24-26)
Adverbial focus	Series1/ Series 3	(20)

(24) Non-subject focus: P

Ámárù Sá:rù-wⁿ mályé-né³
 PN PN-OBJsee.PFV-3SG
 '{Who did Amadou see? Amadou saw SEYDOU}'

(25) Non-subject focus: T

Ámárù Sá:rù-wⁿ bú:rù ndé-né³
 PN PN-OBJ money give.PFV -3SG
 '(What did Amadou gave to Seydou?)'Amadou gave the money to SEYDOU'.

(26) Nom-subject focus: R

Ámárù bú:rù Sá:rù-wⁿ ndé-né³
 PN money PN-OBJ give.PFV-3SG
 '{Who did Amadou gave the money to?}'Amadou gave the money to SEYDOU'.

3.2 Predicate-centered Focus

- SoA focus by reduplication of the first syllable of the verb
- (27) Predicate centered focus: State-of-affaires focus
- ǎy, émé sò-ń-swê:4!*
 no milk redupl-1SG-buy.PFV
 {'Did you take (the) milk from our neighbor?'} No, I BOUGHT (the) milk.
- This construction most probably originated as a verb doubling construction. Cf. expression of the SoA focus in Bunoge, a language closely related to Mombo
- (28) Bunoge: SoA
- tàbé-tábè*
 give.PFV.LH-give.PFV
 <did he give it to him or did he take it from him? > He GAVE it.
- Truth-value focus is expressed by clause-final particle *dé* contrastive only. Borrowed from Bambara (either TF *dè* or operator focus *dê*); the verb occur in the unmarked form.
- (29) *mályé:¹ dé*
 see.PFV PF
 {Seydou did not see the sheep (right?)} '(No), he DID see it'
- (30) **mályé:¹ dé*
 see.PFV PF
 {'Did he the sheep?'}(Yes), he DID see it.

Recall table 11: *sá*: 'have' replaces *bó*: 'be' in Subject and SoA focus

- Recent Perfective: Series 1= Series 2 (SF) =Series 2 in Imperfective
- Recent Perfective Series 4 = Imperfective Series 4 (SoA focus)
- Potential Series 1 = Series 4 (SoA Focus):

Glosses and Abbreviations:

DEF	Definite
EXP	Experiential perfect
H	High-tone contour
HL	Falling tone-contour
IPFV	Imperfective
L	Low-tone contour
LH	Rising tone contour
NEG	Negative
OBJ	Object
P	Plural; patient-like argument of a transitive verb
PF	Predicate-centred focus
PFV	Perfective
PN	Proper name
POSS	Possessive
POT	Potential
R	Recipient-like argument of a ditransitive
S	Singular
SoA	State of affaires
T	theme-like argument of a transitive verb
TF	Term focus
TOP	Topic marker
V	Verb or vowel
VN	Verbal Noun

