Atypical objects in Soninke (West Mande)

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Atypical objects are defined as phrases that do not represent participants in the event denoted by the verb and nevertheless are encoded like typical patients. Soninke (West-Mande) has cross-linguistically uncommon types of atypical objects expressing duration, interval/distance, or quantitative specification. Their identification as syntactic objects is facilitated by the fact that Soninke has a particularly clear-cut distinction between transitive and intransitive constructions. They can be equally found with otherwise strictly intransitive verbs or with transitive verbs, in which case they occupy the slot normally reserved to the patientive argument.

KEY WORDS: Soninke, Mande, transitivity, object

1. Introduction

Soninke (*sòonìnkànqánnè*), spoken by approximately 2 million speakers living mainly in Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, and The Gambia, belongs to the Soninke-Bozo sub-branch of the western branch of the Mande language family.

In Soninke, as in other languages, the syntactic notion of object can be introduced with reference to the coding of the patient in the basic transitive construction. As in other languages, the basic transitive construction extends to many verbs that are not, semantically speaking, prototypical transitive verbs and the participants encoded as the two core terms of a transitive construction are not necessarily a typical agent and a typical patient. For example, in the construction of *ŋàrí* 'see' (1b), the perceiver and the stimulus are encoded exactly like the agent and the patient of a typical transitive verb such as *kárá* 'break' (1b). By contrast, (1c) illustrates an 'extended intransitive' construction in which one of the arguments is encoded like an oblique (i.e. is represented by an adpositional phrase whose postverbal position, labeled X, contrasts with the immediate preverbal position typical for objects).[1]

(1)	a.	*Lémínè-n*	*dà*	*qóllèn*	*kárá.*
		child-D	TR	calabash-D	break
		S		O	V
		'The child broke the calabash'.			

b. *Lémínè-n* *dà* *sámáqqè-n* *ŋàrí.*
child-D TR snake-D see
S O V
'The child saw the snake'.

c. *Ń* *mùngú* *dò* *ké* *lémíné* *tòxó-n* *ŋà.*
1SG forget with DEM child name-D^{LH} POST
S V X
'I have forgotten the name of this child'.

The position between the subject and the verb, which in Soninke morphosyntax unambiguously characterizes objects, may however be occupied by *atypical objects*, i.e. noun phrases that do not represent a participant and nevertheless are encoded in the same way as typical patients, for example phrases that provide information about the duration of an activity, as in (2b), to be compared with (2a), in which the same position is occupied by a typical object.

(2) a. *Hàatú* *dà* *kónpè-n* *céllà.*
Fatou TR room-D sweep
S O V
'Fatou swept the room'.

b. *Hàatú* *dà* *kòotá-n* *mùumâ-n* *céllà.*
Fatou TR day-D whole-D^{LH} sweep
S O V
'Fatou spent the whole day sweeping'.

Cross-linguistically, the most commonly identified and discussed types of atypical objects are cognate objects (like *life* in *live an interesting life*) and nouns constituting the non-verbal element of light-verb compounds (like *care* in *take care of*). Some languages are known for making a particularly wide use of constructions involving one of these two types of atypical objects. Soninke is not among them: cognate object constructions and light-verb constructions are not unknown in Soninke, but they are not particularly frequent, and Soninke is quite unremarkable in this respect. By contrast, as illustrated by (2), Soninke attests less common (and less commonly discussed) types of atypical objects, in particular (but not only), phrases expressing duration but found in a position that can unambiguously be identified as that typically occupied by phrases referring to patients in clauses headed by prototypical transitive verbs.

A salient feature of Soninke which is particularly relevant to the topic of this article is an organization of verbal predication that excludes any ambiguity in the identification of the positions occupied by noun phrases (subject, object, or oblique). I am not in a position to comment about how widespread the kind of atypical objects discussed in this arti-

cle is cross-linguistically, but in any case, this particularity of Soninke makes it particularly well suited for the analysis of atypical objects.

After providing the necessary information about the basics of Soninke morphosyntax (Sections 2 to 5) and the expression of duration in Soninke (Section 6), this paper is devoted to a description of atypical objects expressing duration of an activity (Sections 7 to 10), atypical objects expressing interval or distance with manner of movement verbs (Section 11), and atypical objects expressing quantitative specification of an activity (Section 12). Section 13 discusses the behavioral properties of atypical objects. Section 14 summarizes the main conclusions.

2. Transitive and intransitive clauses

In Soninke, as in the other Mande languages, verbal predication is characterized by a rigid constituent order that can be schematized as [S PM (O) V (X)]. The subject (S) is the only nominal term of the construction whose presence is an absolute requirement in independent assertive or interrogative clauses. Predicative markers (PM) are grammatical words occupying a fixed position immediately after the subject. They express grammaticalized TAM distinctions and polarity (positive *vs* negative) and also participate in transitivity marking – see below. There is no indexation of the core syntactic terms S and O and core term flagging is limited to an enclitic *-n* that attaches exclusively to interrogative phrases or focalized noun phrases in subject function.

Examples (3) and (4) illustrate intransitive and transitive verbal predication with the following two predicative markers: *má* 'completive, negative' and *wá* 'incompletive positive'.[2] With *wá* and its negative counterpart *ntá*, the verb is in a suffixed form I call 'gerundive', otherwise it occurs in its bare lexical form.

(3) a.

Ké	*yúgó*	*má*	*qàrà.*
DEM	man	CPL.NEG	study^{L}
S		PM	V

'This man did not study'.

b.

À	*wá*	*táaxú-nú*	*dàagó-n*	*kànmá.*
1SG	ICPL	sit-GER	mat-D	on
S	PM	V	X	

'He is sitting on the mat'.

(4) a.

Lémúnù-n	*má*	*qálìsí*	*kìtà.*
child.PL-D	CPL.NEG	money	get^{L}
S	PM	O	V

'The children haven't got money'.

b.	*À*	*wá*	*dòròkê-n*	*qóbó-nó*	*yàxàré-n*	*dà.*
	1SG	ICPL	dress-D	buy-GER	woman-D	for
	S	PM	O	V	X	

'He will buy a dress for the woman'.

The full list of the predicative markers is given in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1. The predicative markers combining with the bare form of the verb.

	INTRANSITIVE	TRANSITIVE
completive positive	*Ø*	*dà*
completive negative	*ma*	
instructive positive	*ná*	
instructive negative	*ntá*	
subjunctive positive	*nà*	*nà*
subjunctive negative	*nàn máxà*	
imperative positive	*Ø*	*Ø / dà*
imperative negative	*máxà*	

Table 2. The predicative markers combining with the gerundive.

	INTRANSITIVE	TRANSITIVE
incompletive positive	*wá*	
incompletive positive in focalization context	*Ø*	*nà*
incompletive negative	*ntá*	
past incompletive positive	*`ñí*	
past incompletive negative	*má ñì*	
Ostensive	*háyí*	

Predicative constructions with two or more terms encoded in the same way as the patient of typical monotransitive verbs (so-called 'multiple object constructions') are not possible and, in the construction of semantically trivalent verbs like *kínì* 'give' in (5), one of the arguments (here, the recipient) is an 'oblique argument' that nothing distinguishes from adjuncts: like adjuncts, oblique arguments are encoded as adpostpositional phrases that follow the verb.

(5)	*Múusá*	*dà*	*qálìsî-n*	*kínì*	*Dénbà*	*yí.*
	Moussa	TR	money-D	give	Demba	POSTP
	S	PM	O	V	X	

'Moussa gave the money to Demba'.

Oblique arguments are found with some semantically bivalent verbs too. [3] In Soninke, not all bivalent verbs can be constructed transitively: some of them, like *mùngú* 'forget' in (6), select an 'extended intransitive' coding frame with one of the two arguments encoded as the subject and the other one encoded as an oblique.

(6) a. *Ń* *Ø* *mùngú* *dò* *ké* *lémíné* *tòxó-n* *ŋà.*
1SG forget with DEM child name-D[LH] POSTP
S PM V X
'I have forgotten the name of this child'.

b. **Ń* *dà* *ké* *lémíné* *tòxó-n* *mùngú.*
1SG TR DEM child name-D[LH] forget
S PM O V

A salient feature of Soninke is the particularly clear-cut distinction between transitive and intransitive predications, due to the following three phenomena:

– in the completive positive and in the imperative plural, a morpheme *dà* analyzable as a transitivity marker is obligatorily found in transitive constructions, but does not occur in the corresponding intransitive constructions (7); [4]
– the subjunctive positive is marked by *nà* in transitive constructions and *nàn* in intransitive constructions (8); [5]
– in clauses including a focalized term, the incompletive marker has two variants depending on the transitivity of the construction: *Ø* in intransitive constructions and *nà* (homonymous with the subjunctive positive marker) in transitive constructions (9).

(7) a. *Ń* *gìdá* *dàgá* *Hàráncì.*
1SG elder_brother[LH] go France
'My elder brother went to France'.

b. *Yàxàré-n* *dà* *tíyè-n* *qóbó* *sáxà-n* *ŋá.*
woman-D TR meat-D buy market-D POST
'The woman bought meat at the market'.

c. *Qà* *dà* *lémínè-n* *dèemá!*
2PL.IMPER TR child-D help
'Help$_{pl}$ the child!'

(8) a. *Lémúnù-n* *nàn* *táaxú* *yíttè-n* *ŋùré.*
child.PL-D SUBJ.INTR sit tree-D under
'The children should sit under the tree'.

b. *Lémúnù-n* *nà* *tíyè-n* *ñígá.* [6]
child.PL-D SUBJ.INTR meat-D eat
'The children should eat meat'.

(9) a. *À* *wá* *sállì-ní.*
3SG ICPL pray-GER
'He is praying'.

b. *À* *Ø* *sállì-ní* *yà.*
3SG ICPL pray-GER FOC
'He is PRAYING'.

c. *À* *wá* *hàrê-n* *gáagà-ná.*
3SG ICPL donkey-D sell-GER
'He is selling the donkey'.

d. *À* *nà* *hàrê-n* *gáagà-ná* *yà.*
3SG ICPL donkey-D sell-GER foc
'He is SELLING the donkey'.

A crucial point in the analysis of the predicative constructions of Soninke is that the position occupied by the predicative markers rules out an analysis according to which clauses such as (10b), with a bivalent verb preceded by a single noun phrase representing the patient-like participant, might have a transitive construction with a null subject. In such clauses, the predicative markers occur after the unique noun phrase preceding the verb, not before it, as it should be the case if this noun phrase occupied the object position in a transitive construction with a null subject.

(10) a. *Múusá* *wá* *ké* *dáagó* *bàyì-ní.*
Moussa ICPL DEM mat lay_out-GER
'Moussa will lay out this mat'.

b. *Ké* *dáagó* *wá* *bàyì-ní.*
DEM mat ICPL lay_out-GER
'This mat will be laid out'.

c. **Ø* *Wá* *ké* *dáagó* *bàyì-ní.*
ICPL DEM mat lay_out-GER

The analysis of clauses such as (10b) as intransitive clauses with the patient in subject function is confirmed by the absence of the transitivity marker *dà* in the completive positive and the choice of the intransitive variant of the predicative markers that have distinct forms in transitive and intransitive clauses. In other words, Soninke has morphologically unmarked passive constructions. We will return to this question in Section 4.4.

3. Morphologically coded valency alternations

3.1. The detransitivizing suffix –i

Most verbs that have a transitive stem ending with *a*, *o*, or *u* also have an intransitive stem that can be analyzed as derived from the transitive stem by the addition of a tonally neutral detransitivizing marker whose underlying form is /i/. However, this detransitivizing marker surfaces as a distinct segment (*-yi*) with monosyllabic stems

only (for example *tù-yí* 'be known' < *`tú* 'know'). With non-monosyllabic stems, its presence is manifested by the following changes in the last vowel of the stem (and sometimes also in the preceding vowel):

a + *i* → *e*	as in *ñàmé* 'finish (intr.)' < *ñàmá* 'finish (tr.)'
o + *i* → *e*	as in *sòxé* 'be cultivated' < *sòxó* 'cultivate'
u + *i* → *i*	as in *kátí* 'be hit' < *kátú* 'hit'

By contrast, most transitive stems ending with *e* or *i* can be used intransitively in the same form. One can therefore argue that the impossibility of forming distinct detransitivized forms of non-monosyllabic verbs ending with *e* or *i* by means of this suffix follows from the fact that the phonological process manifesting its presence applies vacuously to such stems (*e* + *i* → *i*, *i* + *i* → *i*).

Functionally, *-i* may express various detransitivizing operations, but it is not equally productive in all its possible uses. Agent demotion is by far its most productive use. Two semantic subtypes can be recognized. In the anticausative subtype, the agent is suppressed from argument structure and the event is presented as occurring spontaneously, or at least without the involvement of a voluntary agent, as in (11b). In the passive subtype, the agent is semantically maintained, but it is not expressed, as in (12b).

(11) a. *Lémínè-n* *dà* *qóllè-n* *kárá.*
child-D TR calabash-D break
'The child broke the calabash'.

b. *Qóllè-n* *káré.*
calabash-D break.DETR
'The calabash broke'.

(12) a. *Yàxàré-n* *dà* *yìllé-n* *gòró.*
woman-D TR millet-D pound
'The woman pounded the millet'.

b. *Yìllé-n* *gòré.*
millet-D pound.DETR
'The millet was pounded'.

The distinction between these two readings of the forms derived by means of the suffix *-i* (agent-backgrounding *vs* agent-suppressing) is conditioned by the semantic distinction between processes likely to occur for a variety of reasons not always easy to identify (such as 'break') and processes that require the intervention of an agent (such as 'become pounded'). With transitive verbs referring to processes that can be conceived without the intervention of an agent, the detransitivized form is spontaneously interpreted by speakers as anticausa-

tive. It is compatible with *tí dú yì* 'by itself', or with an oblique phrase headed by the postposition *màxá* 'at X's place', interpreted in this context as 'through the fault of X'. With such verbs, the functional equivalent of the passive constructions found in other languages is rather a transitive construction in which *ì* 'they' in subject function is interpreted as non-specific. By contrast, with transitive verbs referring to processes that can only be caused by the intervention of a voluntary agent, such as 'pound', speakers do not accept the addition of *tí dú yì* 'by itself' and the detransitivized form can only have a passive reading, although the agent cannot be expressed as an oblique phrase. [7]

With a few verbs among those that can combine with the detransitivizing marker *-i* in deagentive function, the same form also has a reflexive or autocausative use, as illustrated by *bóorè* 'undress oneself' < *bóorà* 'undress (tr.)' in (13). [8]

(13) a. *Yúgò-n* *dà* *í* *rèmmê-n* *bóorà.*
man-D TR REFL son-D^{LH} undress
'The man undressed his son'.

b. *Yúgò-n* *bóorè.*
man-D undress.DETR
'The man undressed'.

The detransitivizing marker *-i* may also have a depatientive function,[9] for which it is in competition with the dedicated antipassive suffix *-ndì*. There is a clear asymmetry between the deagentive and depatientive uses of *-i*: many of the intransitive verbs derived by means of *-i* can only be used in deagentive function, but none can be used exclusively in depatientive function. As illustrated by *yígé* < *yígá* 'eat' – example (14) – the intransitive verbs derived by means of *-i* that can be used in depatientive function also have a deagentive (anticausative or passive) use.

(14) a. *Lémúnù-n* *dà* *tíyè-n* *ñígá.*
child.PL-D TR meat-D eat
'The children ate the meat'.

b. *Lémúnù-n* *ñígé.*
child.PL-D eat.DETR
'The children ate'.

c. *Tíyè-n* *ñígé.*
meat-D eat.DETR
'The meat was eaten'.

3.2. The antipassive suffix -ndì ~ -ndí

This suffix has dissyllabic allomorphs with monosyllabic stems

(for example *kà-yìndí* < *`ká* 'insult'). With non-monosyllabic stems, it may surface as *-ndì* or *-ndí* (depending on the tone pattern of the stem) and triggers no segmental modification of the stem.

The antipassive suffix is exclusively used in depatientive function, as in (15), and it is very productive. The transitive verbs that can be used intransitively in their underived form with a subject representing the agent are quite marginal, the transitive verbs with which the detransitivizing marker *-i* can be used in depatientive function are not very numerous either, and all transitive verbs that do not belong to one of these two subsets are compatible with the antipassive marker *–ndì* / *-ndí*.

(15) a. *Sámáqqè-n* *dà* *lémínè-n* *qíñí.*
snake-D TR child-D bite
'The snake bit the child'.

b. *Sámáqqè-n* *qíñí-ndì.*
snake-D bite-ANTIP
'The snake bit (someone)'.

The use of this derivation is the strategy most commonly used by Soninke speakers to leave unspecified the object argument of transitive verbs. Contrary to the situation observed in many languages with productive antipassive derivations (Cooreman 1994), there is no constraint restricting the use of the antipassive form of transitive verbs to stereotyped activities or habitual events. In Soninke, antipassive verb forms can refer to specific events (i.e. events occurring at a specific location and at a specific time), provided no specific patient is mentioned. Most of the time, the participant that would be encoded as the object of the transitive construction is not mentioned at all, but constructions in which it is expressed as an oblique are also possible.

3.3. The causative suffix -ndí

The causative suffix *-ndí* has dissyllabic allomorphs with monosyllabic stems (for example *tù-yìndí* 'inform' < *`tú* 'know'). With non-monosyllabic stems, it is invariably realized as *-ndí* and most of the time triggers no segmental modification of the stem. This means that, depending on the tone pattern of the stem, causative and antipassive forms are either distinguished by tone only, or homophonous. For example, with dissyllabic H H stems, there is a tonal distinction between causative (H H H) and antipassive (H H L) forms, whereas there is no formal distinction between causative and antipassive forms of L H stems, both with the same L L H pattern. For a possible historical explanation of this quasi-homonymy, see Creissels (2014b).

As illustrated by (16), causativization by means of the causative suffix *-ndí* is fully productive with verbs used intransitively in their non-derived form.

(16) a. *Lémínè-n* *cáxú.*
child-D lie_down
'The child went to bed'.

b. *Yàxàré-n* *dà* *lémínè-n* *cáxú-ndí.*
woman-D TR child-D lie_down-CAUS
'The woman put the child to bed'.

Morphological causativization of transitive verbs, illustrated in (17) by *yígá* 'eat', is possible for a restricted number of transitive verbs only. When transitive verbs are causativized, the object of the causative verb may represent the causee, but the initial object may also be maintained as the object of the causative verb.

(17) a. *Lémínè-n* *dà* *tíyè-n* *ñígá.*
child-D TR meat-D eat
'The child ate meat'.

b. *Hàatú* *dà* *lémínè-n* *ñígá-ndí.*
Fatou TR child-D eat-CAUS
'Fatou made the child eat'.

c. *Hàatú* *dà* *tíyè-n* *ñígá-ndí* *lémínè-n* *ŋá.*
Fatou TR meat-D eat-CAUS child-D POSTP
'Fatou made the child eat meat'.

4. Valency classes

4.1. Strictly transitive and stricly intransitive verbs

Soninke has strictly intransitive verbs (for example *bíré* 'live' or *bònó* 'become spoilt'), which in their underived form cannot be used transitively with a participant encoded as the object, and strictly transitive verbs (for example *yígá* 'eat' or *séllà* 'sweep'), which in their underived form can only be used transitively with an overtly expressed object. As illustrated by (18), strictly transitive verbs must undergo morphological derivation before being used in intransitive constructions, whatever the semantic nature of the intransitive construction.[10]

(18) a. *Hàatú* *dà* *kónpè-n* *céllà.*
Fatou TR room-D sweep
'Fatou swept the room'.

b. *Hàatú* *séllá-ndì.*
Fatou sweep-ANTIP
'Fatou did the sweeping'.

c. *Kónpè-n* *céllè.*
room-D sweep.DETR
'The room was swept'.

4.2. A-labile verbs

Among potentially transitive verbs, A-labile verbs can be used intransitively with a subject representing the same agent-like participant as the subject of the transitive construction, but must undergo a detransitivizing derivation in order to be used intransitively with a subject representing the same patient-like participant as the object of the transitive construction. This behavior, illustrated in (19) by *sòxó* 'cultivate', is extremely rare among Soninke verbs.[11]

(19) a. *Múusá* *dà* *té-n* *còxó.*
Moussa TR field-D cultivate
'Moussa has cultivated the field'.

b. *Múusá* *sòxó.*
Moussa cultivate
'Moussa has cultivated'.

c. *Té-n* *còxé.*
field-D cultivate.DETR
'The field has been cultivated'.

4.3. P-labile verbs

Among potentially transitive verbs, P-labile verbs can be used intransitively with a subject representing the same patient-like participant as the object of the same verb used transitively, but must undergo a detransitivizing derivation in order to be used intransitively with a subject corresponding to the subject of the transitive construction. In all cases, the marked intransitive form of P-labile verbs is derived by means of the antipassive suffix *-ndì/ndí*. This behavior, very common among Soninke verbs, can be illustrated by *ŋàrí* 'see' (20).

(20) a. *Dénbà* *dà* *Hàatú* *ŋàrí* *sáxà-n* *ŋá.*
Demba TR Fatou see market-D POSTP
'Demba saw Fatou at the market'.

b. *Hàatú* *ŋàrí* *sáxà-n* *ŋá.*
Fatou see market-D POSTP
'Fatou was seen at the market'.

c. *Hìnkìntê-n* *ntá* *ŋàrì-ndì-nì.*
blind-D ICPL.NEG see-ANTIP-GER^{L}
'The blind do not see'.

Semantically, two varieties of P-lability can be distinguished: causative/anticausative lability, if the subject of the intransitive construction represents a participant undergoing the same process as the object of the transitive construction, but not necessarily as the result of the action of an agent (as in English *The child broke the glass* / *The glass broke*), and active/passive lability, if the intransitive construction implies the participation of an unexpressed agent. Active/passive lability, illustrated by (20b) above, is rare cross-linguistically, but Mande languages constitute an exception to this generalization and among Mande languages, active/passive lability is particularly productive in Manding (Cobbinah & Lüpke 2009).

The comments about the anticausative and passive readings of intransitive verbs derived by means of *-i* (see Section 3.1 above) also apply to the two possible readings of P-labile verbs in their intransitive uses.

In Soninke, it is striking that the vast majority of P-labile verbs end with *i* or *e* and, conversely, it seems that all the verbs that end with *i* or *e* and can be used transitively are P-labile, which raises the question whether this is really P-lability, or perhaps rather superficial homonymy between transitive stems and derived intransitive stems in which the detransitivizing suffix *-i* is made 'invisible' by its fusion with a stem-final *e* or *i* (see Section 3.1 above).

4.4. Reflexive lability

Yánqí 'wash' is to the best of my knowledge the only Soninke verb that can be used intransitively in its underived form, not only with a passive or anticausative reading, but also with a reflexive reading.

4.5. A/P-labile verbs

A/P-labile verbs have three possible types of uses in their underived form: they can be used transitively with a participant encoded as the object, intransitively with a subject corresponding semantically to the subject of the transitive construction, and intransitively with a subject corresponding to the object. This behavior, illustrated in (21) by *mìní* 'drink', is extremely rare among Soninke verbs.

(21) a. *Lémínè-n* *dà* *qátì-n* *mìní* *bà?*
child-D TR milk-D drink Q
'Did the child drink the milk?'

b. *Lémínè-n* *mìní* *bà?*
child-D drink Q
'Did the child drink?'

c. *Qátì-n* *mìní* *bà?*
milk-D drink Q
'Was the milk drunk?'

5. Incorporation

In Soninke, incorporation can be defined as a morphological operation that creates compound verbal lexemes by attaching the non-autonomous form of a nominal lexeme to the left of a verbal lexeme.[12] Incorporated nouns precede the verbal lexeme with which they form a morphophonologically compact construction and the distinction between incorporated nouns and nouns occupying a syntactic position immediately to the left of the verb is ensured by the following two particularities of nominal and verbal morphology in Soninke:

(a) most nouns have a non-autonomous form distinct from their free form, and this non-autonomous form is used whenever nouns occur as non-final formatives within compound or derived lexemes. For example, the non-autonomous form of *sélìnŋé* 'chicken' (plural *sélìnŋú*) is *sélín-*;

(b) in some conditions (for example, in combination with some negative markers) the inherent tonal melody of the verb is replaced by an entirely low melody, and this tonal change affects incorporated nouns as part of a compound verb stem, but not nouns occupying a syntactic position immediately to the left of the verb (22).

(22) a. *Ì* *wá* *sélìnŋû-n* *gáagà-ná.*
3PL ICPL chicken.PL-D sell-GER
'They are selling the chickens'.

b. *Ì* *ntá* *sélìnŋú-n* *gàagà-nà.*
3PL ICPL.NEG chicken.PL-D sell-GER^{L}
'They are not selling the chickens'.

c. *Ì* *wá* *sélín-gáagè-né.*
3PL ICPL chicken-sell.DETR-GER
'They sell chickens'.

d. *Ì* *ntá* *sèlìn-gàagè-nè.*
3PL ICPL.NEG chicken-sell.DETR-GER^{L}
'They don't sell chickens'.

In addition to the neutralization of the singular *vs* plural distinction, a general characteristic of incorporation is that it excludes the presence of the various types of adnominals that may modify non-incorporated nouns.

Three functional subtypes of incorporation can be distinguished in Soninke: possessive incorporation, object incorporation, and oblique incorporation:

– in possessive incorporation, the construction with an incorporated noun can be paraphrased by a construction in which this noun is the head of a noun phrase in subject function, with a genitival modifier corresponding to the subject of the compound verb (23);

– in object incorporation, the construction with an incorporated noun can be paraphrased by a construction in which this noun is the head of a noun phrase in object function (24);

– in oblique incorporation, the construction with an incorporated noun can be paraphrased by a construction in which this noun is the head of a noun phrase in oblique function (25).

(23) a. *Múusá* *bùttê-n* *bí.*
Moussa liver-D^{LH} burn
'Moussa got furious'.
lit. 'Moussa's liver burnt.'

b. *Múusá* *búttí-n-bí.*
Moussa liver-EP-burn [13]
'Moussa got furious'.
lit. 'Moussa liver-burnt.'

(24) a. *Yàxàrú-n* *dà* *kónpè-n* *céllà.*
woman.PL-D TR room-D sweep
'The women swept the room'.

b. *Yàxàrû-n* *kónpó-séllè.*
woman.PL-D room-sweep.DETR
'The women did room sweeping'.

(25) a. *À* *yàxí* *qóò* *qùsô.*
3SG get_married like girl.D
'He got married like a girl (i.e. very early)'.

b. *À* *qùsù-n-ñàxí.*
3SG girl-EP-get_married [14]
'He got married like a girl (i.e. very early)'.
lit. 'He got girl-married'.

Possessive incorporation and oblique incorporation do not modify the transitivity properties of verbs and consequently will not concern

us in the remainder of this paper: with respect to atypical objects, complex verbs formed by possessive incorporation or oblique incorporation behave like simplex verbs. By contrast, object incorporation detransitivizes transitive verbs. Syntactically, all the mechanisms sensitive to transitivity unambiguously show that object incorporation yields intransitive compound verbs and this is consistent with the detransitivization marking observed in object incorporation: in the case of verbs ending with *a*, *o*, or *u*, object incorporation must be accompanied by the suffixation of *-i* – examples (22) and (24) above, and (26).

Semantically, object incorporation implies a non-specific reading of the object, but is not limited to the coding of habitual events.

(26) a. *À* *wá* *yìràamû-n* *gáagà-ná.*
3SG ICPL cloth.PL-D sell-GER
'(S)he sells (the) clothes'.

b. *À* *wá* *yìràn-gáagè-né.*
3SG ICPL cloth-sell.DETR-GER
'(S)he sells clothes.'
or 'She does cloth selling'.

6. General remarks on the expression of duration

This section deals with the expression of duration by other means than coding the duration phrase as the object of a verb denoting an activity.

6.1. Duration adjuncts

In Soninke, duration can always be expressed by oblique phrases, with a distinction between telic and atelic duration. As illustrated by (27), atelic duration is expressed by unflagged NPs, whereas the expression of telic duration involves the complex postposition *nòxón dì* lit. 'in the inside of'.

(27) a. *Ó* *légé* *wùró-n* *mùumâ.*
1PL dance night-D whole.D^{LH}
'We danced the whole night'.

b. *À* *dà* *í* *kòtòllê-n* *gúrúsú* *bìtó* *sìkkì* *nòxó-n* *dì.*
3SG TR REFL cotton-D^{LH} gin day.PL three^{L} inside-D^{IH} in
'She ginned her cotton in three days'.

However, this distinction does not seem to be very strict and (28) shows that, with verbs whose lexical meaning favors a telic reading, unflagged duration phrases are possible.

(28) *Ń* *kìsìmá* *gà* *ná* *án* *tà-n* *màasà,*
1SG grandfather^{LH} SBD PROJ 2SG foot-D^{lH} massage^{L}
'If my grandfather massages your foot,

à *wá* *mùrò-nó* *wùrù-báané*
3SG ICPL heal-GER night-one
it will heal in one night'.

6.2. Duration verbs referring to day or year parts

In Soninke, several nouns referring to parts of the day or parts of the year are cognate with verbs expressing 'spend *x* somewhere, or doing something' (*x* a day/year part).[15]

(29) a. *Ń* *kíinà* *Bàmàkó.*
1SG spend_the_dry_season Bamako
'I spent the dry season in Bamako'.

b. *Ó* *wùyí* *légé-né.*
1PL spend_the_night dance-GER
'We spent the night dancing'.

c. *Wàtùnté-n* *ŋùyí* *kán* *mòxó?*
sick_person-D spend_the_night which? manner
'How did the sick person spend the night?'

The list of such verbs is given in (30).

(30)

béetè	'spend the morning'	cf. *béetàyê*	'morning'
kíinà	'spend the dry season'	cf. *kíinàyê*	'dry season'
kírá'	'spend the day'	cf. *kìyê*	'sun, day'
nèllá	'spend the afternoon'	cf. *nèllê*	'afternoon'
qáaxè	'spend the rainy season'	cf. *qáaxò*	'rainy season'
sùnká	'spend the evening'	cf. *sùnkê*	'evening'
wùyí	'spend the night'	cf. *wùrô*	'night'

6.3. Ñá 'do' with a duration phrase in object function

The basic construction of *ñá* 'do' is a transitive construction with an object referring to an activity, as in (31).[16]

(31) a. *Án* *dà* *màní* *ñà?*
2SG TR what? do^{L}
'What did you do?'

b. *Máxà* *ké* *ñá!*
PROH DEM do
'Don't do that!'

Ñá can also be used transitively in the same way as English *spend*, with a duration phrase in object function and a complement specifying the location or the activity to which the duration refers. With nouns referring to parts of the day or parts of the year, this con-

struction expresses analytically the meaning expressed synthetically by the duration verbs presented in Section 6.2.

(32) a. *Ó* *dà* *wùró-n* *mùumâ-n* *ñá* *légé-né.*
1PL TR night-D whole-D^{IH} do dance-GER
'We spent the whole night dancing'.

b. *Ì* *dà* *léerì-nú* *hìllì* *ñá* *hólókà-ná.*
3PL TR hour-PL two^{L} do scream-GER
'They spent two hours screaming'.

c. *Ń* *dà* *síinó* *tànmì* *ñá* *Hàráncì.*
1SG TR year.PL ten^{LH} do France
'I spent ten years in France'.

The meaning of this construction is in principle that the situation in question is in effect at any point within the chunk of time referred to. A weaker interpretation is however possible, according to which, within the chunk of time referred to, the intervals during which the situation is not in effect are as short as possible, given the nature of the situation in question.[17] The constructions described in the following sections carry exactly the same meaning.

7. Transitive verbs denoting activities with a duration phrase in object function

In the canonical construction of transitive verbs, the object slot (between the predicative marker and the verb) is occupied by the patient phrase. However, with verbs denoting activities, the object slot can be occupied by a phrase expressing duration, with the same semantic implication as in the construction described in Section 6.3 – examples (33) to (35).

(33) a. *Yàxàrú-n* *dà* *kónpè-n* *céllà.*
woman.PL-D TR room-D sweep
'The women swept the room'.

b. *Yàxàrú-n* *dà* *kòotá-n* *mùumâ-n* *céllà.*
woman.PL-D TR day-D whole-D^{IH} sweep
'The women spent the whole day sweeping'.

(34) a. *Yúgò-n* *dà* *té-n* *còxó.*
man-D TR field-D cultivate
'The man cultivated the field'.

b. *Yúgò-n* *dà* *kòotá-n* *mùumá-n* *còxó.*
man-D TR day-D whole-D^{IH} cultivate
'The man spent the whole day cultivating'.

(35) a. *Sòró-n* *dà* *máarò-n* *ñígá.*
person.PL-D TR rice-D eat
'The people ate the rice'.

b. *Sòró-n* *dà* *kòotá-n* *mùumâ-n* *ñígá.*
man-D TR day-D whole-D^{IH} eat
'The people spent the whole day eating'.

It is important to observe that the construction in (33b), (34b), and (35b) has all the formal characteristics of a transitive construction, in spite of the fact that the patientive argument is not expressed. In other words, constructions with a duration phrase occupying the object slot constitute an exception to the rule according to which the use of an intransitive construction with the transitive verb in the antipassive form (cf. Section 3.2) is the only way to leave unexpressed the patientive argument of a transitive verb.

In section 9 I will describe a construction that makes it possible to combine the expression of the patientive argument of a transitive verb with the selection of a duration phrase as the object.

8. Intransitive verbs used transitively with a duration phrase in object function

Góllí 'work', *héxù* 'bark', *sángà* 'play', and *wàtí* 'be/become sick' are examples of Soninke verbs that cannot be used transitively with an object coding a participant. However, as illustrated by examples (36b), (37b), (38b), and (39b), they can be used transitively with a duration phrase occupying the object slot.[18]

(36) a. *Ń* *góllí* *dáàrú.*
1SG work yesterday
'I worked yesterday'.

b. *Ń* *dà* *dáàrú* *sú* *góllí.*
1SG TR yesterday all work
'I spent yesterday working'.

(37) a. *Wùllû-n* *péxù* *wùró-n* *mùumâ.*
dog.PL-D bark night-D whole.D^{IH}
'The dogs barked during the whole night'.

b. *Wùllú-n* *dà* *wùró-n* *mùumâ-n* *péxù.*
dog.PL-D TR night-D whole.D^{IH} bark
'The dogs spent the whole night barking'.

(38) a. *Hàatú-nú* *sángà* *wùrí.*
Fatou-PL play last_night
'Fatou and her friends had fun last night'.

b. *Hàatú-nú* *dà* *léerì-nú* *sìkkì* *sángà.*
Fatou-PL TR hour-D three^{L} play
'Fatou and her friends spent three hours playing'.

(39) a. *Ń* *ŋàtí* *yérú.*
1SG be_sick last_year
'I was sick last year'.

b. *Ń* *dà* *qású-báané* *wàtí.*
1SG TR month-one be_sick
'I was sick during a whole month'.

9. The particular case of intransitive verbs resulting from object incorporation

As already commented in Section 7, in the presence of a duration phrase in object function, the patientive argument of transitive verbs denoting activities cannot be encoded as an object. It may be left unexpressed, but it may also be expressed as an incorporated object. This is consistent with the fact that object incorporation creates intransitive activity verbs: there is no reason why intransitive activity verbs resulting from object incorporation should not have a transitive construction with a duration phrase in object function, like the other intransitive activity verbs (cf. Section 8). In (40c), *kòotán mùumân* 'the whole day' occupies the object slot in the construction of *sókkí-bóxótí*, which otherwise, as a compound verb formed by object incorporation, can only be used intransitively.[19]

(40) a. *Sòxáanà-n* *dà* *sókkè-n* *bòxòtí.*
farmer-D TR weeds-D pull_out
'The farmer pulled out the weeds'.

b. *Sòxáanà-n* *cókkí-bóxótí* *dáàrú.*
farmer-D weed-pull_out yesterday
'The farmer weeded yesterday'.

c. *Sòxáanà-n* *dà* *kòotá-n* *mùumâ-n* *cókkí-bóxótí.*
farmer-D TR day-D whole-D^{lH} weed-pull_out
'The farmer spent the whole day weeding'.

However, example (40) tells only part of the story, because *bòxòtí* 'pull out' ends with *i* and consequently does not have a detransitivized form distinct from the form used in the transitive construction. Interestingly, with a verb ending with *a*, *o* or *u*, object incorporation triggers detransitivization marking, as in (41b), but as illustrated by (41c), the detransitivization marking is canceled when the intransitive verb resulting from object incorporation takes a duration phrase in object function.[20]

(41) a. *Ń dà súwà-n kárá.*
1SG TR firewood-D break
'I broke firewood'.

b. *Ń cúwá-káré dáàrú.*
1SG firewood-break.DETR yesterday
'I did firewood-breaking yesterday'.

c. *Ń dà kòotá-n mùumâ-n cúwá-kárá.*
1SG TR day-D whole-D^{IH} firewood-break
'I spent the whole day breaking firewood'.

10. The development of transitivity marking for intransitive activity verbs used transitively with a duration phrase in object function

Interestingly, some intransitive activity verbs may show a different ending in their transitive construction with a duration phrase in object function. This phenomenon is not systematic and the verbs it affects can also be found with their usual ending in constructions with a duration phrase in the object slot. I have observed this phenomenon with several verbs ending with *e* and with one verb ending with *u*. In all cases, the transitive form ends with *a*.

(42) a. *Ń kìsìmá bíré kàmé sìiné.*
1SG grandfather^{LH} live hundred year^{LH}
'My grandfather lived one hundred years'.

b. *Ń kìsìmá dà kàmé sìiné bírá.*
1SG grandfather^{LH} TR hundred year^{LH} live.TR
'My grandfather lived one hundred years'.

(43) a. *Lémínè-n qènqé léerì-nú sìkkì.*
child-D sleep hour-D three^{L}
'The child slept three hours'.

b. *Lémínè-n dà léerì-nú sìkkì qènqá.*
child-D TR hour-D three^{L} sleep.TR
'The child spent three hours sleeping'.

(44) a. *Tógáanà-n tèré léerì-nú sìkkì.*
hunter-D walk hour-D three^{L}
'The hunter walked three hours'.

b. *Tógáanà-n dà léerì-nú sìkkì tèrá.*
hunter-D TR hour-D three^{L} walk.TR
'The hunter spent three hours walking'.

(45) a. *Ó tùumé léerì-nú sìkkì.*
1PL rest hour-D three^{L}
'We rested three hours'.

b. *Ó* *dà* *léerì-nú* *sìkkì* *tùumá.*
1PL TR hour-D three^{L} rest.TR
'We spent three hours resting'.

(46) a. *Ó* *wùrú* *léerí-báané.*
1PL rest hour-one
'We ran one hour'.

b. *Ó* *dà* *léerí-báané* *wùrá.*
1PL TR hour-one run.TR
'We spent one hour running'.

This is a very atypical variety of transitivization marking, since it is specifically used to mark the presence of an atypical object whose presence does not modify the argument structure, whereas the usual function of transitivization marking has to do with the number/status of the participants in the event encoded by the verb.

These vowel alternations are reminiscent of those manifesting the presence of the detransitivizing suffix *-i* with non-monosyllabic verbs: /a/ ~ /e/, /o/ ~ /e/ and /u/ ~ /i/. As explained in Section 3.1 and illustrated by (11), reproduced here as (47), these alternations are regularly used to mark the relationship between transitive verbs and derived intransitive verbs.

(47) a. *Lémínè-n* *dà* *qóllè-n* *kárá.*
child-D TR calabash-D break
'The child broke the calabash'.

b. *Qóllè-n* *káré.*
calabash-D break.DETR
'The calabash broke'.

However, the alternations illustrated by examples (41) to (46) are not fully identical, since they also include a case of /a/ ~ /u/ alternation. Moreover, in the alternations described in Section 3.1, it is clear that the transitive form is basic and the intransitive one derived, whereas in those illustrated by examples (41) to (46), the transitive form cannot be viewed as basic.

A plausible hypothesis is therefore that, historically, the vowel alternations bound to the presence of an atypical object expressing duration emerged by analogy with the vowel alternations resulting from the amalgamation of the detransitivization marker *-i*. One can imagine that the very high frequency of regular intransitive/transitive pairs marked by an /e/ ~ /a/ alternation results in a tendency for Soninke speakers to associate the ending *a* with transitivity, with the consequence that even a very atypical transitivization mechanism

may tend to be marked by a change of the final vowel of the verb into an /a/.

11. Intransitive movement verbs used transitively with an object denoting the interval / distance covered

Intransitive verbs denoting manner of movement, such as *wùrú* 'run' or *tèré* 'walk', can be used transitively with a duration phrase occupying the object slot, like the other activity verbs, but also with an object denoting the interval or distance covered. In this use, as illustrated by (48) and (49), they show the same possibility of transitivization marking as described in Section 10.

(48) *Ó* *dà* *Qàayí* *dò* *Ñóoró* *nàxá-n* *tèrá.*
1PL TR Kayes with Nioro interval-D walk.TR
'We walked from Kayes to Nioro'.

(49) *Ó* *dà* *kílóméetàrá-nú* *sìkkì* *wùrá*
1PL TR kilometer-PL three[L] run.TR
'We ran three kilometers'.

12. 'So much'

12.1. Hó *'thing > so much / many' and the quantitative modification of patientive arguments of transitive verbs*

In Soninke, the noun *hó* 'thing' is used as an emphatic quantitative modifier ('so much/many') in a construction in which the quantified noun is encoded as the head noun in a genitival construction (i.e. marked by the LH morphotoneme) and *hó* as a genitival modifier. For example, in (50a), *hó màaró* 'so much rice' (lit. 'rice of thing') is the object of *yígá* 'eat'. In a variant of this construction, the quantified noun and the quantifier *hó* are syntactically dissociated, with the quantifier occupying the object slot and the quantified noun encoded as an oblique, as in (50b). A third possibility is that the construction includes no mention of the patientive argument, and *hó* 'thing > so much/many' in object function is interpreted as quantifying an unexpressed object, as in (50c).

(50) a. *Múusá* *wá* *hó* *màaró* *yígá-ná.*
Moussa ICPL thing rice[LH] eat-GER
'Moussa eats so much rice'.
lit. 'Moussa eats rice of thing'.

b. *Múusá* *wá* *hó* *yígá-ná* *máarò-n* *dí*
Moussa ICPL thing eat-GER rice-D in
'Moussa eats so much rice'.
lit. 'Moussa eats thing in rice'.

c. *Múusá* *wá* *hó* *yígá-ná.*
Moussa ICPL thing eat-GER
'Moussa eats so much'.
lit. 'Moussa eats thing'.

12.2. Hó *'thing > so much' and the quantitative modification of intransitive activity verbs*

In the construction illustrated in (50c), *hó* can be analyzed as expressing the quantification of an unexpressed participant that could be expressed within the same object slot. However, *hó* 'thing > so much' can also occupy the object slot in the construction of verbs that cannot be used transitively with an object representing a participant and the only possible analysis of such constructions is that *hó* expresses quantitative specification of an activity. In (51), *hó* 'thing' occupies the object slot in the construction of *qènqé* 'sleep', an intransitive verb that can be found in transitive constructions with atypical objects only.

(51) *Lémínè-n* *ŋá* *hó* *qènqè-né.*
child-D ICPL thing sleep-GER
'The child sleeps so much'.
lit. 'The child sleeps thing'.

In this construction, *hó* 'thing > so much' shares an essential property with the atypical objects described in the previous sections: as illustrated by (52), intransitive verbs used transitively with *hó* 'thing > so much' in object function may show the same transitivization marking as described in Sections 10 and 11.

(52) *Yàxàrê-n* *ŋá* *hó* *tèrà-ná.*
woman-D ICPL thing walk.TR-GER
'The woman walks so much'.

13. Coding and behavioral properties of atypical objects

In the constructions examined in Sections 7 to 12, phrases that do not represent a participant occupy the position typically occupied by patientive arguments in transitive predication. The question which arises is to what extent atypical objects share other properties with typical objects (i.e. objects representing patientive arguments).

Atypical objects lend themselves to relativization, questioning, and focalization exactly like typical objects (53). It must be noted that the rule according to which object questioning or focalization triggers a modification of the tonal contour of the verb applies to atypical objects too, whereas the questioning or focalization of obliques in postverbal position has no incidence on the tonal contour of the verb, whatever their status as arguments or adjuncts.

(53) a. *Hàatú-nú* *dà* *léerì-nú* *sìkkì* *sángà.*
Fatou-PL TR hour-D three^{L} play
'Fatou and her friends spent three hours playing'.

b. *Hàatú-nú* *gà* *dà* *léerì-nú* *sìkkì* *bé* *sángà*
Fatou-PL SBD TR hour-D three^{L} REL play
'the three hours that Fatou and her friends spent playing'

c. *Hàatú-nú* *dà* *léerì-nú* *mànímè* *sàngà?*
Fatou-PL TR hour-D how_many play^{L}
'How many hours did Fatou and her friends spent playing?'

d. *Hàatú-nú* *dà* *léerì-nú* *sìkkì* *yá* *sàngà.*
Fatou-PL TR hour-D three^{L} FOC play^{L}
'Fatou and her friends spent THREE HOURS playing'.

Things are different as regards passivization. Among the constructions described in Sections 7 to 12, the construction in which a duration phrase is encoded as the object of *ñá* 'do > spend' lends itself to passivization: in (54b), the duration phrase is the subject of *ñáŋí*, detransitivized form of *ñá*.

(54) a. *Ó* *dà* *wùró-n* *mùumâ-n* *ñá* *légé-né.*
1PL TR night-D whole-D^{lH} do dance-GER
'We spent the whole night dancing'.

b. *Wùró-n* *mùumâ-n* *ñáŋ-í* *légé-né.*
night-D whole-D^{lH} do-DETR dance-GER
'The whole night was spent dancing'.

In Soninke, a similar transformation is impossible with the other atypical object constructions examined in this article. For example, **Wùrón mùumân légé*, lit. 'The whole night was danced' (the passive construction that would correspond to transitive clauses such as *Ó dà wùrón mùumân légé* 'We danced the whole night') is rejected by consultants. It is however interesting to observe that in Bambara (a language belonging to another branch of the Mande family), as mentioned by Vydrine (1994) and confirmed by the speakers I have consulted, such passive constructions are fully acceptable.

14. Conclusion

In this paper, I have described some semantic types of atypical object constructions that are rarely mentioned in language descriptions but are found in Soninke, a language with a particularly clear-cut distinction between transitive and intransitive predication, in which consequently the analysis of atypical objects as occupying the same syntactic position as the patient in the basic transitive construction is uncontroversial. In Soninke, atypical objects expressing duration, distance or quantitative specification, can be found in the construction of otherwise strictly intransitive verbs (i.e. verbs that cannot combine with an object phrase encoding a participant) or in the construction of transitive verbs, in which case they occupy the syntactic slot normally reserved for the patientive argument.

Similar atypical object constructions have also been signaled in Manding languages, a group of languages belonging to another branch of West Mande. Among Manding languages, in addition to the semantic types of atypical objects I have found in Soninke, Mandinka also attests atypical objects expressing the cause of the event (Creissels & Sambou 2013: 361). What makes however the case of Soninke particularly interesting is that, in Soninke, the atypical object constructions are more clearly marked as transitive, with in particular the possibility of transitivization marking on intransitive verbs in constructions involving an atypical object.

Notes

[1] The examples quoted in this paper have been provided by Ismael Diawara, a native speaker of the Soninke variety spoken in Kingi (a traditional Soninke province in North West Mali whose main urban center is Nioro). Here follows the list of the abbreviations used in the glosses: ANTIP = antipassive, CAUS = causative, CPL = completive, D = determination marker, DEM = demonstrative, DETR = detransitivization marker, EP = epenthetic *n*, FOC = focus marker, GER = gerundive, H (superscript) = high morphotoneme, ICPL = incompletive, IMPER = imperative, L (superscript) = low morphotoneme, LH (superscript) = low-high morphotoneme, NEG = negative, O = object, PL = plural, pm = predicative marker, POSTP = multifunction postposition, PROH = prohibitive, PROJ = projective, Q = question marker, REFL = reflexive, REL = relativizer, S = subject, SBD = subordination marker, SG = singular, SUBJ = subjunctive, TR = transitivity marker, V = verb, X = oblique.

[2] Although cognate with the locational copula *wá*/*ntá*, the incompletive predicative marker *wá*/*ntá* has several properties that require treating it as a distinct unit in a synchronic description of Soninke.

[3] The notion of oblique argument raises the question of how arguments are distinguished from adjuncts. My position on this point is that, as discussed in Creissels (2014a), Forker (2014) and other articles in *Linguistic Discovery* 12(2), the 'argument' *vs* 'adjunct' distinction is gradient rather than categorical. It is

basically a matter of lexical entailments and there is no universally valid criterion on which it could be straightforwardly based. The fuzzy limit between arguments and adjuncts is however not a problem in a framework in which the crucial distinction is not the 'argument' *vs* 'adjunct' distinction, but rather the 'core term' *vs* 'oblique' distinction, 'core terms' being defined as NP's whose coding coincides, either with that of agents or patients of prototypical transitive verbs, or with that of the sole argument of a major class of semantically monovalent verbs.

[4] *Dà* is sometimes labeled 'completive positive marker', but this label is hardly compatible with its use in the imperative plural. Alternatively, given its position, it could be analyzed as an ergative postposition or accusative preposition with a restricted distribution. However, there is no decisive evidence for analyzing *dà* as forming a phrase with either the subject or the object and this is the reason why I prefer the more neutral label 'transitivity marker'.

[5] The form labeled here 'subjunctive' combines with noun phrases in subject function in uses broadly similar to those fulfilled by forms traditionally labeled 'subjunctives' in grammars of European languages, but it is also found without an overt subject in uses broadly similar to those of European infinitives.

[6] *Yígá* 'eat' occurs here as *ñígá* because of an alternation that automatically modifies the initial of Soninke words in contact with a nasal belonging to the preceding word. In this context, /r/ ⟶ /l/, /w/ ⟶ /ŋ/, /y/ ⟶ /ɲ/, /s/ ⟶ /c/, /h/ ⟶ /p/, and an initial /ŋ/ is added to the words that have no initial consonant.

[7] Soninke has two pronouns used productively to express reflexivity: *í* is a long-distance reflexive used in logophoric contexts and as a reflexive possessive (as in (13a)), whereas *dú* is a local reflexive used for object or oblique reflexivization.

[8] Interestingly, with the detransitivized form of verbs such as *kárá* 'break', *màxá*-phrases can have the involuntary agent reading 'through the fault of X', whereas with the detransitivized form of verbs such as *gòró* 'pound', 'at X's place' is the only possible reading of *màxá*-phrases.

[9] 'Deagentive' and 'depatientive' do not refer here to operations that could only target agents and patients in the strict sense, but to operations targeting arguments coded like the agents and patients of prototypical transitive verbs, whatever their precise semantic role.

[10] On the /s/ ~ /c/ alternation affecting *séllà* 'sweep' and its detransitivizezd form *séllè* in this example, see Footnote 6.

[11] On the alternation between *sòxó* and *còxó*, see Footnote 6.

[12] For a detailed discussion of incorporation in Soninke, see Creissels & Dramé (*to appear*).

[13] In possessive incorporation and oblique incorporation, an epenthetic *-n-* is inserted between the incorporated noun and the verb. This epenthetic *-n-* also occurs in some types of nominal compounds, but as discussed by Diagana (1995), its occurrence cannot be predicted by a general rule. It must be emphasized that it is probably not cognate with the determination marker *-n* suffixed to nouns, since the determination marker includes a floating L tone, whereas the epenthetic *-n-* is tonally inert.

[14] See Footnote 13.

[15] On the /w/ ~ /ŋ/ alternation affecting *wùyí* 'spend the night' in this example, see Footnote 6.

[16] Note that (a) *ñá* 'do' is distinct from *dàbárì* 'make' and (b) *ñá* is a labile verb, used intransitively with the meanings 'happen, occur' or 'become'.

[17] For example, it is possible (and even normal) to spend a whole night sleeping without any interruption, but spending a whole night dancing without any interruption is hardly conceivable and spending a whole day eating without any interruption even less.

[18] On the *héxù ~ péxù* and *wàtí ~ ŋàtí* alternations, see Footnote 6.

[19] On the /s/ ~ /c/ alternation affecting *sókkí-bóxótí* in (40c), see Footnote 6.

[20] On the /s/ ~ /c/ alternation affecting *súwá-kárá / é* in (41b-c), see Footnote 6.

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