PROBLEMATIC ASPECTS OF COORDINATION AND SUBORDINATION IN MANDINKA

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1. Introduction

Mandinka, spoken by approximately 1.5 million speakers in The Gambia, Senegal, and Guinea-Bissau, is the westernmost member of the Manding dialect continuum included in the Western branch of the Mande language family.[1] The area where Mandinka is spoken largely coincides with the pre-colonial state of Kaabu.[2] Speakers of Mandinka call themselves **Mandiŋkóolu** (singular: **Mandiŋkôo**) and designate their language as **mandiŋkakáŋo**.[3] Creissels & Sambou (2013) constitutes the main source of information on Mandinka phonology and grammar.

In this paper, I show that Mandinka has several constructions that are problematic for the coordination vs. subordination distinction as traditionally conceived. The examples illustrating the discussion have been either extracted from spontaneous discourse material collected in Sedhiou (Senegal), or elicited with native speakers of Sedhiou Mandinka. Dialectal variation in Mandinka is not very important, and does not affect the questions discussed in this paper.

This article is organized as follows. Section 2 provides some background information about basic aspects of Mandinka grammar: clause structure

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[1] On the classification of Mande languages, see Vydrin (2009).

[2] According to oral traditions, the Kaabu kingdom originated as a province of the Manding empire, conquered in the 13th century by a general of Sundiata Keita called Tiramakhan Traore. After the decline of the Manding empire, Kaabu became an independent kingdom. Mandinka hegemony in the region lasted until 1867, when the Kaabu capital (Kansala) was taken by the armies of the Fula kingdom of Futa Jallon.

[3] **Mandiŋkóo** is the definite form of a noun **mandiŋká** resulting from the addition of the suffix **-ŋka** 'people from ...' to the toponym **Mandíŋ**, which primarily refers to the region that constituted the starting point of the Manding expansion. **Mandiŋkakáŋo** is literally 'language of the people from Manding'.

(2.1) and complex constructions (2.2). Section 3 shows that Mandinka has a construction (the associative construction) formally similar to the constructions expressing NP coordination in other languages and used to describe situations for which other languages use dedicated NP coordination constructions, which however is also compatible with a marked dissymmetry between its constituents. Section 4 deals with a construction analyzable as an instance of adverbial subordination which however allows an interpretation of a type rather expected from coordinative constructions. Section 5 is devoted to juxtapositions of apparently independent clauses that must be analyzed as syntactic constructions rather than a merely discursive phenomenon, and which may even behave in some respects as if the second clause were the subordinate clause in a subordinating construction with the first clause in the role of the matrix clause. Section 6 summarizes the conclusions.

2. Background information on Mandinka grammar

2.1. Clause structure

The most striking feature of Mandinka morphosyntax is the extreme rigidity of constituent order.

2.1.1. Transitive predication

The two core terms of the transitive construction (A and P) obligatorily precede the verb, and A obligatorily precedes P. Independent assertive and interrogative transitive clauses always include a *predicative marker* encoding TAM (tense-aspect-mood) and polarity inserted between A and P: **ye** 'completive positive (transitive)', **mâŋ** 'completive negative', **ka** 'incompletive positive', etc.

Obliques (either oblique arguments or adjuncts) are most of the time encoded as postpositional phrases. Mandinka also has prepositions, but as a rule, they are used jointly with a postposition. Toponyms, spatial adverbs and a few common nouns fulfill the function of ground in spatial relationships without requiring the addition of an adposition, but apart from this particular case, adpositionless obliques are only marginally possible. Obliques follow the verb, with the exception of the possible fronting of time and place adjuncts to sentence initial position.

A and P are neither flagged nor indexed on the verb. Pronouns occupy the same positions as canonical NPs and have the same forms in all their possible functions.

(1) a. *Kambaan-óo ye saâ   búsá fál-óo la.*
   boy-D   CPL snake.D hit   stick-D POSTP.[4]
   'The boy hit the snake (with a stick).'

 b. *Kambaan-óo maŋ   ber-ôo fáyí palantéer-óo kaŋ.*
   boy-D   CPL.NEG stone-D throw window-D   on
   'The boy did not throw the stone into the window.'

 c. *Kew-ó ka   a   téerímâa máakóyí kód-óo   to.*
   man-D INCPL 3SG friend   help   money-D LOC
   'The man helps his friend financially.'

2.1.2. Intransitive predication

The unique core NP of intransitive predications (U) [5] precedes the verb. It is neither flagged nor indexed on the verb. Obliques behave exactly in the same way in transitive and intransitive clauses.

In intransitive predication, three predicative markers are different from those found in transitive predication.[6]

- – the completive positive, encoded by the predicative marker **yé** in transitive predication, is encoded in intransitive predication by the verbal suffix **-tá**;
- – the completive negative, encoded by the predicative marker **máŋ** in transitive predication, is encoded in intransitive predication by the predicative marker **mâŋ**;
- – the negative copula **té** used as an incomplete negative auxiliary has its usual form **té** in transitive predication, but occurs as **tê** in intransitive predication.

The other TAM and polarity values are encoded by the same predicative markers in transitive and intransitive constructions. In intransitive

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[4] In the examples below, postpositions marking oblique arguments are glossed according to the meaning they typically express as heads of postposition phrases in adjunct function, with three exceptions: *la*, *má*, and *tí*, for which the generic gloss POSTP is used. The reason is that the analysis of the uses of these three postpositions as extensions of some 'central' or 'prototypical' meaning is particularly problematic.

[5] The unique core NP of intransitive predication is more commonly designated as S, but U has the advantage of avoiding the possible confusion with S(ubject).

[6] Note, however, that, in the completive negative and incomplete negative, the distinction is not always apparent, since depending on the tonal context, the distinction between **máŋ** and **mâŋ**, or **té** and **tê**, may be neutralized.

predication, the predicative markers other than **-tá** (completive positive) are inserted between U and the verb.

(2) a. *Dendik-óo jaa-tá*   *til-óo   la.*
       shirt-D   be/become_dry-CPL sun-D POSTP
      'The shirt dried up in the sun.'
   b. *Kew-ô mâŋ   kúmá mus-óo   ye.*
       man-D CPL.NEG talk   woman-D   BEN
      'The man did not talk to the woman.'
   c. *Díndíŋ-o ka   tootóo jamáajamaa.*
       child-D   INCPL cough often
      'The child often coughs.'

2.1.3. Subject and object in Mandinka morphosyntax

A and P show no contrast in either flagging or indexation, and both precede the verb. The only coding property of A and P that can be used to characterize Mandinka clause structure with respect to intransitive alignment is that A precedes the predicative markers, whereas P follows them. The fact that A and U equally precede the TAM-polarity markers that are not suffixed to the verb, whereas P follows them, constitutes therefore the only coding property of the core terms of transitive and intransitive clauses on the basis of which a notion of subject conflating U and A can be recognized.

    The following formula, in which S, O and X stand for 'subject', 'object' and 'oblique' respectively, summarizes the canonical structure of Mandinka clauses:

$$S\ (O)\ V\ (X)\ (X')\ ...$$

2.1.4. Ditransitive constructions

Mandinka clauses cannot include more than two core NPs, in the sense that they never include a third NP whose behavior would be more similar to that of the object than to that of ordinary obliques. In the construction of semantically trivalent verbs, one of the three arguments must necessarily be encoded as an optional postpositional phrase in post-verbal position, and its behavioral properties do not distinguish it from obliques representing adjuncts. For example, Mandinka has two equivalents of English 'give': with **díi** (which by itself implies nothing more than transfer), the gift (alias *theme*) is represented by the object NP ('indirective' alignment), whereas with **só** (which implies that the recipient

becomes the possessor of the gift) the object NP represents the recipient ('secundative' alignment).

(3) a. *Kew-ó ye   kód-ôo   díi mus-óo   la.*
       man-D CPL.POS money-D give woman-D POSTP
       'The man gave money to the woman.'
    b. *Kew-ó ye   mus-ôo   só kód-óo   la.*
       man-D CPL.POS woman-D give money-D POSTP
       'The man gave money to the woman.'

2.2. Complex constructions

2.2.1. Relativization

In Mandinka, relativization involves a relativizer **mîŋ** (with dialectal variants **mêŋ** and **mûŋ**), which however occurs in two different constructions. In both cases, the relative clause is usually not embedded, and is rather treated as a constituent of the matrix clause that must obligatorily be extraposed and cross-referenced in the matrix clause by a pronoun in the position corresponding to its semantic role. In one of these two constructions, the noun whose lexical meaning is modified by the property expressed by the relative clause is found inside the relative clause, and the relativizer has the behavior of a determiner with respect to this noun – example (4a). In the other construction, the relativizer is used as a linker between a noun and a relative clause modifying this noun, and the noun is represented by a resumptive pronoun within the relative clause – example (4b).

(4) a. [*Í   bé   súw-o   mîŋ dáa   to*]$_i$, *wǒ$_i$ le   mu   ń   yǎa*
       2SG LOCCOP house-D REL door.D LOC DEM FOC EQCOP 1SG home.D
       ti.
       POSTP
       lit. 'You are at the door of which house, it is my home.'
    b. [*Súw-o mîŋ í   bé   a dáa   to*]$_i$, *wǒ$_i$ le   mu*
       house-D REL 2SG COPLOC 3SG door.D LOC DEM FOC EQCOP
       ń   yǎa ti.
       home.D 1SG POSTP
       lit. 'The house that you are at its door,it is my home.'

2.2.2. Complementation

Like many languages, Mandinka has a quotative marker that, in addition to its function of introducing reported speech, is also used as a complementizer – example (5).

(5) a. *Mus-ôo   kó   ñĭŋ   kew-ó mu   suŋ-ó   le   ti.*
       woman-D QUOT DEM man-D EQCOP thief.D FOC POSTP
       'The woman says that this man is a thief.'
   b. *Mus-óo   ye   a   míirá kó   ñĭŋ   kew-ó mu   suŋ-ó   le   ti.*
       woman-D CPL 3SG think QUOT DEM man-D EQCOP thief.D FOC POSTP
       'The woman thinks that this man is a thief.'
   c. *A   kóyí-tá   ŋ́   má   le   kó   ñĭŋ   kew-ó mu   suŋ-ó*
       3SG be_clear-CPL 1SG POSTP FOC QUOT DEM man-D EQCOP thief.D
       le   ti.
       FOC POSTP
       'It is clear for me that this man is a thief.'

Complementation by means of the quotative **kó** may be in competition with infinitival complementation, as in (6), and with modal verbs, the available options are infinitival complementation, and the use of subjunctive with no other mark of subordination, as in (7).

(6) a. *Í   kalí   ka tooñâa fó!*
       REFL swear INF truth.D tell
       'Swear to tell the truth!'
   b. *Í   kali kó   í   bé   tooñáa le   fó-la.*
       REFL swear QUOT 2SG LOCCOP truth.D FOC tell-INF
       'Swear that you will tell the truth !'

(7) a. *Kew-ó-lu son-ta   [yír-óo kuntu-la].*
       man-D-PL agree-CPL tree-D cut-INF
       'The men agree to cut the tree.'
   b. *Ŋ́   máŋ   soŋ [í   yé   taa].*
       1SG CPL.NEG agree 2SG SUBJ leave
       'I don't agree for you to leave.'

2.2.3. Adverbial subordination

In addition to cases of adverbial subordination that can be analyzed as deriving from relativization, Mandinka has a large array of conjunctions whose function is to introduce various semantic types of adverbial clauses: **bíríŋ** 'when, since', **níŋ** 'if', **janníŋ** 'before', etc. – example (8).

(8) a. *Suŋ-ô   cáawú-tá le   kabíríŋ políis-óo-lu   naa-ta.*
     thief-D panic-CPL FOC when   policeman-D-PL come-CPL
     'The thief panicked when the policemen came.'

   b. *Janníŋ kew-ó be   táa-la,   a   si   dómó-r-ôo ké.*
      before man-D LOCCOP leave-INF 3SG POT eat-ANTIP-D do
      'The man should eat before leaving.'
      lit. 'Before the man leaves, he should eat.'

   c. *Níŋ a   yé ŋ   báyíndi, a   bé   ŋ   soto-lá   le.*
     if   3SG CPL 1PL chase   3SG LOCCOP 1PL catch_up_with-INF FOC
     'If he chases us, he will catch up with us.'

3. The associative construction and the notion of coordination

The Mandinka preposition **níŋ** constitutes the usual translational equivalent of English *with* introducing comitative adjuncts, and of English *and* in NP coordination, but is not used for the coordination of other categories. This is a common feature among West African languages,[7] but in some respects, the Mandinka preposition *níŋ* shows cross-linguistically uncommon properties.

As illustrated by the Wolof preposition **ak** 'with' in example (9), the situation commonly found in West African languages is that *with*-phrases are found in two distinct constructions in which they encode related but not identical meanings:

- *with*-phrases may immediately follow an NP with which they form a constituent, in which case they express coordination (i.e., they encode that the semantic role assigned to the NP included in the *with*-phrase is identical to that of the preceding NP);
- *with*-phrases may also occupy the same position as other adposition phrases in oblique role, in which case they encode a comitative meaning.

(9) a. Wolof **ag** 'with' in   the construction N_1 **ak** N_2 'N_1 and N_2'
     Jend-al   ceeb ak diwlin!
     buy-IMPER rice   with oil
     'Buy rice and oil!'

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[7] On the general question of the relationship between *and* and *with* in typological perspective, see Stassen (2000).

b. Wolof **ag** 'with' introducing a comitative adjunct
   Dem-al   ak   moom!
   go-IMPER with 3SG
   'Go with him!'

By contrast, in Mandinka, although **níŋ**, in the same way as for example Wolof **ak**, is the translation equivalent of both *and* in NP coordination and *with* introducing comitative adjuncts, it is not possible to distinguish a construction in which **níŋ** would unambiguously express NP coordination from another in which it would unambiguously mark comitative adjuncts. The reason is that [**níŋ** N] sequences cannot occupy the same postverbal position as other adpositional phrases, and can only be found immediately after a noun phrase with which they form a constituent.

As illustrated by example (10), the [N$_1$ **niŋ** N$_2$] construction can be found in all the positions that can be occupied by NPs in a Mandinka clause with a clearly coordinative meaning, in the sense that the referents of N$_1$ and N$_2$ are interpreted as sharing the semantic role assigned to NPs occupying this position.

(10) a. [N$_1$ niŋ N$_2$] in subject position
      [*Mus-óo-lu   níŋ díndíŋ-o-lu*] *tú-tá   súw-o   kóno.*
      woman-D-PL with child-D-PL   remain-CPL house-D in
      'The women and the children remained at home.'
   b. [N$_1$ niŋ N$_2$] in object position
      Ŋ́   ŋá [*ñoô   níŋ   tiy-óo*] *sene.*
      1SG CPL millet.D with peanut-D cultivate
      'I cultivated millet and peanuts.'
   c. [N$_1$ niŋ N$_2$] complement of a postposition in oblique position
      A   ye kód-ôo díi [*súŋkút-ôo níŋ a   fúláŋ-o-lu*] *la.*
      3SG CPL money-D give girl-D   with 3SG peer-D-PL   OBL
      'He gave money to the girl and her peers.'
   d. [N$_1$ niŋ N$_2$] in genitival modifier position
      I   futa-ta   [Fúládûu níŋ Kaabú] *naanéw-o to.*
      3PL reach-CPL Fuladuu with Kaabu boarder-D LOC
      'They reached the boarder between Fuladuu and Kaabu.'

However, as illustrated by example (11) [N$_1$ **niŋ** N$_2$] sequences can be found in the same syntactic positions in contexts in which it is clear that that the semantic role assigned to NPs occupying the position in question is assigned to N$_1$ only, and N$_2$ can only be interpreted as expressing accompaniment or manner.

(11) a. [*Nóos-ôo níŋ   deenaan-óo*] *naa-ta*.
         nurse-D with baby-D   come-CPL
         'The nurse brought the baby (came with the baby).'

   b. [*A   níŋ cak-óo-lu*]   *ye   a   lá   naafúl-óo kasáara*.
         3SG with prostitute-D-PL CPL 3SG GEN wealth-D   squander
         'He squandered his wealth with prostitutes.'

   c. [*Kambaan-ôo níŋ   bor-óo*]   *naa-ta*.
         boy-D   with running-D come-CPL
      'The boy came running.' lit. 'The boy with running came.'

   d. [*Súŋkút-ôo níŋ   kumbóo*] *naa-ta*.
         girl-D   with crying.D come-CPL
      'The girl came in tears.' lit. 'The girl with crying came.'

   e. [*Kucâa   níŋ   a   lá   kum-óo*]   *le ka   fáliŋ*.
         sorrel.D with 3SG GEN sharpness-D FOC INCPL sprout
         'Sorrel sprouts with its sharpness.'

Crucially, N_2 in [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] sequences that cannot be interpreted as involving semantic role sharing does not behave differently from N_2 in [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] sequences that are the translation equivalent of English NP coordination. In both cases, movement to postverbal position is possible, but only if **níŋ** is immediately preceded by a pronoun resuming N_1, regardless of the precise meaning carried by the construction – compare example (12) with (10b) and (11c) above. This constitutes a clear proof that in all cases, **níŋ** N_2 can only exist as part of a [N_1 **níŋ** N_2] constituent.

(12) a. *Ŋ́   ŋá   ñǒo$_i$ sene*,   [a_i *níŋ tiy-ôo*].
         1SG CPL millet.D cultivate 3SG with peanut-D
         lit. 'I cultivate millet, it with peanuts.'
         'I cultivated millet, and also peanuts.'

   b. *Kambaan-óo$_i$ naa-ta*,   [a_i *níŋ bor-ôo*].
         boy-D   come-CPL 3SG with running-D
         lit. 'The boy came, he with running.'
         'The boy came running.'

To summarize, **níŋ** can only occur in [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] sequences that have the syntactic status of NPs. In this respect, [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] sequences are similar to English [N1 and N2] sequences or their equivalent in other European languages. However, semantically, the [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] construction is not a coordinative construction, and must be rather analyzed as expressing comitative semantics. This means that the semantic role corresponding to the position occupied by [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] is assigned to N_1, whereas N_2 is assigned the role of 'companion of N1'. The role of companion does not exclude role sharing with N1 (and consequently, the associative

construction of Mandinka can be used as the translation equivalent of English NP coordination), but it does not imply it either, and the precise interpretation of the associative construction [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] entirely depends on semantic and/or contextual factors.

An additional proof that Mandinka [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] constituents are only superficially similar to English [N_1 and N_2] comes from the fact that [N_1 **niŋ** N_2] lends itself to manipulations that are not possible with dedicated coordinative constructions. In particular, as shown by example (13), N_1 and N_2 can be dissociated in focalization, relativization, and negation.

(13) a. [*Í   níŋ Músáa*] *be   kúw-o   táamándí-la.*
2SG with Musaa LOCCOP problem-D fix-INF
'Musaa and you will fix the problem.'
 or 'You will fix the problem with Musaa.'

   b. [*Í-te   le níŋ Músáa*] *be   kúw-o   táamándí-la.*
2SG-EMPH FOC with Musaa LOCCOP problem-D fix-INF
'YOU will fix the problem with Musaa.'

   c. *[Í   níŋ Músáa le] be   kúw-o   táamándí-la.*
2SG with Musaa FOC LOCCOP problem-D fix-INF
'You will fix the problem with MUSAA.'

   d. [*í   níŋ míŋ*] *be   kúw-o   táamándí-la*.
2SG with REL LOCCOP problem-D fix-INF
'the person with whom you will fix the problem'

   e. [*mîŋ níŋ Músáa*] *be   kúw-o   táamándí-la*
REL with Musaa LOCCOP problem-D fix-INF
'the person who will fix the problem with Musaa'

   f. [*Í   níŋ Músáa*] *te   kúw-o   táamándí-la*.
2SG with Musaa LOCCOP problem-D fix-INF
'Musaa and you will not fix the problem.'
 or 'You will not fix the problem with Musaa.'

4. Purpose clauses and semantically unspecified infinitive/subjunctive clauses

Not surprisingly, Mandinka infinitive and subjunctive clauses are found in contexts in which there is no difficulty in analyzing them as adverbial clauses of purpose – example (14).

(14) a. *Díndíŋ-o kéñé-ndí   a   ye   táa karambúŋ-o to!*
child-D   get_ready-CAUS 3SG SUBJ go school-D   LOC
'Get the child ready so that he goes to school!'

b. *Ŋ́   ná   kód-ôo   dásá-tá   le   ka   ñĭŋ   wot-óo   saŋ.*
   1SG GEN money-D lack-CPL FOC INF DEM car-D   buy
   'I don't have enough money to buy this car.'

However, superficially identical clause sequences may have an interpretation according to which the infinitive/subjunctive clause does not modify the main verb, and rather refers to an event whose relationship with the event denoted by the first clause is not specified and must be inferred from the context, with the sequential interpretation as the default interpretation. The Mandinka sentences in example (15) may have two distinct translation equivalents in English, depending on the contexts in which they are found.

(15) a. *I   wúlí-tá   ka   táa.*
        3PL rise-CPL INF leave
        1. 'They rose in order to leave.'
        2. 'They rose and left.'
     b. *Ŋ́   bé   í   bula-lá boot-ôo kóno.*
        1SG LOCCOP 2SG put-INF bag-D in
        ŋ́   ŋá   í   fáyí bâa   kóno.
        1SG SUBJ 2SG throw river.D in
        1. 'I will put you into a bag in order to throw you into the river.'
        2. 'I will put you into a bag and throw you into the river.'

In the second part of the proverb quoted in (16), it is clear that there is no idea of purpose, and that simultaneity is the only possible interpretation of the relationship between the subjunctive clause and the clause that precedes it.

(16) *Keebaa-kúm-óo   mu   ninsi-búw-o le   ti,*
     old_man-word-D EQCOP cow-dung-D FOC POSTP
     'An old man's saying is like cow dung,
     sánt-óo le   ka   jaa,   dǔum-oo   ye   sínaŋ.
     top-D   FOC INCPL be_dry underside-D SUBJ be_wet
     its top is dry, but its underside is wet.'
     NOT *its top is dry in order for its underside to be wet

However, even in cases when such clause sequences have a coordinative-like interpretation, their behavior is at least in some respects that of subordinating constructions. In particular, the subjunctive clause is under the scope of a negation operator expressed in the clause that precedes it, as illustrated by example (17). This sentence is interpreted as 'It is not the case that [they will go to the market and they will leave me here]', whereas in an unambiguously coordinative construction, the scope of the negation operator would be limited to 'go to the market'.

(17) *I   tê   táa lúum-ôo tó   i   ye   ŋ́   tú   jaŋ.*
     3PL COP.NEG go market-D LOC 3PL SUBJ 1SG leave here
     lit. 'They won't go to the market they leave.SUBJ me here.'
     'They won't go to the market without me.'

5. Clausal juxtaposition and subordination

Palancar (2012) argues that "clausal juxtaposition, despite its common paratactic function, can also be used to encode hypotactic relations, even in cases of highly integrated subordinate structures", and illustrates this claim in Otomi, an Oto-Manguean language spoken in Central Mexico.

In Mandinka, as in many other languages, assertive utterances referring to complex events may consist of the mere juxtaposition of two or more clauses, each of which could constitute an independent assertive utterance. In this construction, illustrated by example (18a), the precise nature of the relationship between the sub-events (sequentiality, simultaneity, or other) is left implicit. As mentioned in Section 3, the same meaning can be expressed by sequences with an infinitive/subjunctive clause in second position, with the difference that the unspecified reading is then ambiguous with a purpose reading – example (18b-c).

(18) a. *Díndíŋ-o cípón-ta   yír-ôo sánto a   táa-ta.*
        child-D   jump-CPL tree-D top   3SG go-CPL
        lit. 'The child jumped from the tree he went away.'
        'The child jumped from the tree and went away.'
     b. *Díndíŋ-o cípón-ta   yír-ôo sánto ka   táa.*
        child-D   jump-CPL tree-D top   INF go
        lit. 'The child jumped from the tree to go away.'
        1. 'The child jumped from the tree and went away.'
        2. 'The child jumped from the tree in order to go away.'
     c. *Díndíŋ-o cípón-ta   yír-ôo sánto a   ye   táa.*
        child-D   jump-CPL tree-D top   3SG SUBJ go
        lit. 'The child jumped from the tree he go.SUBJ away.'
        1. 'The child jumped from the tree and went away.'
        2. 'The child jumped from the tree in order to go away.'

However, in Mandinka:

   (a) the juxtaposition of independent assertive clauses is not always a
        mere discourse phenomenon, since the juxtaposition of two
        clauses that nothing distinguishes from independent assertive

clauses occurs in contexts in which it can only be analyzed as the realization of a syntactic construction;

(b)   in sequences of two clauses that nothing distinguishes from independent assertive clauses, the second clause may exhibit properties characteristic for subordinate clauses.

Point (a) is illustrated by example (19).

(19) *Níŋ í   yé díŋ-o   wúlúu   a   ké-tá kew-ó ti*,
     if   2SG CPL child-D give_birth 3SG be-CPL male-D POSTP
     'If a baby were born, and if this baby were a boy,
     lit. 'If you gave birth to a baby it was a male,
     i   sí   a   kánátee.
     3PL POT 3SG slaughter
     he was slaughtered.'

In this example, the conjunction **níŋ** 'if' is followed by three clauses showing no other evidence of syntactic dependency: **í yé díŋ-o wúlúu** 'You gave birth to a baby', **a ké-tá kew-ó ti** 'It was a boy', and **i sí a kánátee** 'They slaughtered him'. If clause juxtaposition without any overt dependency mark were always a purely discursive phenomenon, in a sequence '**níŋ** P Q R', the relationship of syntactic dependency implied by the conjunction **níŋ** 'if' could only involve P as the subordinate clause and Q as the matrix clause, and the only possible interpretation of example (15) would be 'If a baby were born, this baby was a boy, and he was killed.' But it is clear from the context in which this sentence was found that this was not the intended meaning: baby girls too were born, but only baby boys were slaughtered. Consequently, in such a sequence, the matrix clause role may be fulfilled by R, in which case the apparently independent clause Q shares with P the syntactic slot of the subordinate clause in the subordinating construction '**níŋ** X, Y':

     níŋ [P Q], R.

Example (19) shows that, in Mandinka, sequences of two apparently independent clauses may be the realization of a syntactic construction, since they can be embedded within sequences constituting uncontroversial syntactic constructions. However, this example allows no conclusion about the status of juxtaposition as a subordinating or coordinating construction. But other sentences in my corpus provide evidence that the second clause in a juxtaposition of apparently independent clauses may behave at least in some respects as the subordinate clause in a subordinating construction.

The proverb quoted in (20) consists of the juxtaposition of two apparently independent clauses which, in isolation, would be interpreted as 'You do not go to a monkey meeting' and 'You were not touched by a monkey tail', respectively. But the meaning of this proverb is 'You cannot at the same time [go to a monkey meeting and avoid being touched by a monkey tail]'. In other words, the negation expressed in the first clause has the whole sequence under its scope.

(20) *Í   búka   táa   sula-béŋ-o   to*
 2SG INCPL.NEG go   monkey-meeting-D LOC
 'One does not go to a monkey meeting
 sula-féñ-ôo   máŋ   maa   í   la.
 monkey-tail-DC PL.NEG touch 2SG POSTP
 without being touched by a monkey tail.'

An important aspect of the coordination vs. subordination distinction is that a clause can only fall under the scope of a negation operator expressed in another clause if it fulfills the function of subordinate clause in a construction in which the other clause is the matrix clause. In (20) the negation in the first clause does not affect the predicate 'go to a monkey meeting', but 'go to a monkey meeting without being touched by a monkey tail', which implies that the second clause behaves as an adjunct of 'go', in spite of the fact that nothing distinguishes it from an independent assertive clause.

6. Conclusion

In this article, I have tried to show that Mandinka has constructions problematic in some respects for the notions of coordination and subordination as they are traditionally conceived (and also, incidentally, for the distinction between finite and non-finite clauses):

– The Mandinka construction expressing NP coordination is superficially similar to the dedicated coordinative constructions found in other languages, but the same construction expresses meanings commonly expressed cross-linguistically by oblique NPs in comitative/manner adjunct function.
– Clause sequences with an infinitive/subjunctive clause in second position are ambiguous between a purpose reading consistent with their analysis as an instance of adverbial subordination, and an unspecified reading typically expressed by coordinative constructions.

– Sequences of two apparently independent clauses may constitute syntactic constructions, in which case they behave at least in some respects as if the second clause were the subordinate clause in a subordinating construction with the first clause in the role of the matrix clause.

Abbreviations

ANTIP = antipassive, BEN = benefactive, CAUS = causative, CPL = completive, D = default determiner, DEM = demonstrative, EMPH = emphatic, EQCOP = equational copula, FOC = focalization, GEN = genitive, IMPER = imperative INCPL = incompletive, INF = infinitive, LOC = locative, LOCCOP = locational copula, NEG = negation, PL = plural, POSTP = multipurpose postposition, POT = potential, QUOT = quotative, REFL = reflexive, SG = singular, SUBJ = subjunctive.

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