

THE ATLANTIC AND MANDE GROUPS OF NIGER-CONGO: A STUDY IN CONTRASTS, A STUDY IN INTERACTION

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This paper presents the effects of long-lasting and pervasive contact between two major language groups of Niger-Congo, both of which diverged relatively early from the parent stock. The influence has been asymmetrical: Mande has more deeply influenced Atlantic than vice versa. The details come from two profoundly influenced languages, Kisi, now completely surrounded by Mande, and Mmani, a closely related language, from which all speakers have switched to the Mande language Soussou.

Le contact entre les locuteurs des langues atlantiques et les locuteurs des langues mande est de longue durée et profond. Les deux ensembles sont très différents typologiquement. À cause de cela on peut facilement identifier les effets du contact. En général ce sont les mande, plus militants et plus organisés, qui ont dominé les agriculteurs atlantiques dans leurs petits hameaux. Les conséquences linguistiques de cette asymétrie sont considérables, comme on le voit aux données du kisi et du mmani, deux langues sous l'influence profonde du mande.

0. INTRODUCTION

This paper¹ argues for the profound and widespread influence of the Mande languages (hereafter ‘Mande’)² on Atlantic. The argument will be based primarily on data from one Atlantic language, Kisi, and secondarily on data from Mmani, another Atlantic language more dramatically under siege from Mande. Evidence will come from synchronic linguistic and sociolinguistic facts and from what is known of the historical record. An important assumption underlying this paper is that to make a convincing case for one language influencing another through contact, one must examine the sociohistorical record (Thomason and Kaufman 1988). In addition to talking about structural features, then, this paper will provide some historical background and some characterization of social relations. It complements the work on prosodic phenomena in Atlantic (Childs 1995a), where the retention of tone in southern Atlantic was attributed to language contact, and work on lexical phenomena (borrowings), presented in Childs 2000 and summarized below. The major finding of these combined statements is that the influence of Mande on the less widely spoken Atlantic languages

¹ This paper is dedicated to the memory of Jean-Léonce Doneux (†1999), whose inspirational work on Atlantic and whose fine example of scholarship will be sorely missed. Research on this project was aided by grants from the Endangered Language Fund (New Haven, CT), the Bremer Stiftung für Kultur- und Sozialanthropologie (Bremen, Germany) and the Fulbright Hays Commission (USA). I am also grateful to the Max Planck Institute (Leipzig, Germany) for financing my trip to the symposium where the longer version of this paper was presented. Scholarly assistance and helpful comments have come from Friederike Lüpke, Raimund Kastenholtz and Valentine Vydrine. I am also thankful to Denis Creissels for making Touré 1989 available to me and to Friederike Lüpke for her unpublished work on Jalonke.

² I will try to be consistent in my use of terms applying to the languages of the Mande group and to the ethnicities of their speakers, following the (‘European’) practices promulgated in Vydrine 1999. ‘Mande’ is the name of the genetic group as a whole, but I use it here to denote the set of relevant Mande languages. Vydrine has pointed out that Mande was an entity only 4,000 years ago, so he would never speak about “Mande superiority, expansion...” etc. Furthermore, it seems to him “methodologically wrong to undertake micro-level analysis by applying such macro-level terms”. This criticism is well taken and I employ the term ‘Mande’ advisedly due to its usefulness as a heuristic. The same caveats surround my use of the term ‘Atlantic’.

has been deep and extensive, ranging from language shift and death to language mixing and substantive structural effects.

There is not a rich literature on areal phenomena in West Africa (Heine 1997; cf. Dombrowsky-Hahn 1999). New and important overviews, however, appear in the relevant chapters of Heine and Nurse 2000. In the earlier literature, Heine 1976 is the most important and comprehensive analysis (but see Creissels 2000:250 ff.).³ He proposes four different types of languages, Types A and B being of interest here, using what he calls a “dominant-recessive” dichotomy (cf. Greenberg 1966). The Atlantic languages⁴ belong to Type A, a group with exclusively dominant features, as in (1).

- (1) Features of Type A languages (Heine 1976:40)
- The subject precedes the verb and the object follows the verb.
 - The adposition precedes the noun (prepositions).
 - The genitive follows its head noun, nominal qualifiers follow the noun.
 - The object pronoun follows the verb; the adverb follows the verb and the adjective; the adverbial phrase follows the object.
 - The subject pronoun precedes the tense/aspect markers, negative particle, the verb, and the object pronoun.
 - Tense/aspect markers precede the verb.

Because so many languages deviate from this pattern (as does Kisi), Heine finds it easier to specify Type A’s defining characteristics negatively:

- (2) Type A defining features (Heine 1976:40)
- The verb does not precede the subject.
 - The adverbial phrase does not precede the verb.
 - Gen-nom and n-post orders do not both occur.

Kisi shows no deviations from the negative specifications if one considers only the ‘dominant’ structures of the language, as Heine insists one should. Kisi does deviate, however, from several positive specifications. Objects can precede the (lexical) verb in some constructions, and Kisi allows both prepositions and postpositions. The question thus arises as to the source of the deviations. Heine suggests that it is an “areal nucleus”, namely, a Manding “center” located just to the north of the Kisi (Map 2 in Heine 1976), which “emanates” recessive features of the type not found in Type A languages. These are the features of Type B languages, given in (3). This center likely has a historical basis in the Mali empire and the Manding horse warriors of the sixteenth century.

- (3) Features of Type B languages (Heine 1976)
- Most have SVO as basic order, although Manding has basic S(Aux)OV.
 - Nominal qualifiers like adjective and numeral follow the noun.
 - The adjective usually precedes the demonstrative and numeral.
 - In most languages, the adverb follows the adjective and the verb.

³ I was not able to consult Pozdniakov 1991.

⁴ Heine considers languages from both the Northern Branch of Atlantic (Wolof, Fula, Serer, Diola, Balanta, Mankanya) and from the Southern Branch (Gola, Sherbro, Temne).

- The subject pronoun precedes the tense/aspect markers, the verb, and the object pronoun.

It will be argued that Kisi's postpositions and exceptional word order are due to contact with Mande, in addition to other, as yet undocumented, differences from its genetic confreres. I will also indicate the social conditions under which such effects could have occurred (presented more fully in Childs 1999). The preliminary facts from Mmani will bolster these contentions.

1. MANDE AND ATLANTIC OVERVIEW

This section and the next deal with language structure and social relationships. As has been suggested in the previous section, Atlantic and Mande are starkly different from a structural perspective. The social relationship has (historically) been an asymmetrical one, as revealed in past events and their outcome, a pattern of borrowing showing, in one case, an overwhelmingly superstratal relationship as Kisi borrowed 'prestige' forms (Hock 1986) from their Mande-speaking neighbors (Childs 2000). Because of these historical events and because of the revelatory pattern of borrowing, I suggest the likelihood of influence at other levels of language with the same directionality.

From a structural standpoint the languages are quite different: "typologically the Mande languages are, in important points, the very reverse of Atlantic, and are genetically totally unrelatable to them" (Wilson 1989:83). This statement undoubtedly needs some qualification, as I have pointed out elsewhere (Childs 1995a); how it should be qualified forms the topic of this paper. There is further controversy as to the internal relatedness of Atlantic, i.e. its internal constituency. Despite these claims (and their qualifications) Mande and Atlantic are generally accepted to be related, albeit at some remote level, although Mande is considered less likely to form part of Niger-Congo than Atlantic (see Newman 2000), despite the fact that Williamson and Blench 2000 see them as separating at the same time.

I will first present the main features of Mande and then those of Atlantic, particularly of Kisi and Mmani.

1.1 MANDE

The Mande languages are spoken in a broad swath of territory covering much of the western Sudan. To the west Mande languages are spoken right up to the Atlantic Ocean, where they surround pockets of Atlantic speakers.

With regard to the group, the question has often arisen, "Does Mande really belong in Niger-Kordofanian, and if so, why does it look so different from other languages in the phylum?" (Newman 2000:271). There are roughly thirty languages (25–35 in Kastenholz 1991/92) uncontroversially belonging to Mande. The languages mentioned in this paper are all part of 'Central/South-West Mande'.

Table 1 summarizes the structural features of Mande, strikingly unified and strikingly different from the rest of Niger-Congo (Dwyer 1989:57). Mande languages are highly analytic compared to the synthesis found in the verbal and nominal morphology of Atlantic. Tense, mood and aspect are not marked just by the M in the SMOVA word order characterization, but also by a set of verbal suffixes.

Table 1. Mande structures (adapted from Table 2.2 in Williamson and Blench 2000)

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| <i>Noun classes</i> | Remnant; remodeled by suffixes; initial consonant mutation |
| <i>Verb extensions</i> | Not generally, but Bòbò has causative, intransitive |
| <i>Pronouns</i> | Alienable/inalienable, inclusive/exclusive common |
| <i>Sentence order</i> | SMOVA; prepositions/postpositions |
| <i>Noun phrase</i> | Gen + N; Poss + N; N + Adj; Dem + N, N + Dem; N + Plural. |

The sentences in (4) are independent clauses from Bambara, a language belonging to the Manding cluster, to illustrate the SMOVA word order. After the verb come various adjuncts (not shown in the examples) as well as oblique objects marked with postpositions.

(4) Independent clauses (Bambara, Creissels 2000:255)

a. wùlú yé démíséŋ 'kíŋ
 dog PERF child bite
 The dog bit the child.

b. n y' ó bðlìtís 'yé
 I PERF this.one running see
 I saw this one running away.

1.2 ATLANTIC

No characterization of Atlantic has appeared since Sapir 1971. The Atlantic languages hardly form a cohesive group, yet no other proposal for their classification has been widely accepted, despite the group's acknowledged basis in geography. Within several subgroups of Atlantic, such as Baga, Sherbro, or Cangin, there are shared lexicons above 30%, but for the group as a whole the percentage of shared basic lexicon is well below 10% (Wilson 1989). "The two features that make Atlantic a meaningful entity are typology and geographical distribution" (Wilson 1989:81). The divisions between the northern and southern branches as well as with the isolate Bijogo may be great enough to see them as constituting separate branchings off the Niger-Congo stock (see also Doneux 1999:7 for doubts as to *un ancêtre unique*).

1.2.1 Kisi

Kisi is one of the Bullom languages of the Southern Branch, geographically separated from other Atlantic languages. All other (surviving) Bullom languages, such as Mmani, are spoken on the coasts of Sierra Leone and Guinea, far away from the forest and savanna remoteness of the Kisi. It is the isolation of the Kisi and their interaction with speakers of Mande languages that have motivated this study.

Within Atlantic itself there are some typological differences, but attested throughout are robust verbal morphology (TMA inflections, verb extensions) and robust nominal morphology (noun class systems). This information is summarized in table 2.

Table 2. Atlantic features (adapted from Table 2.3 in Williamson and Blench 2000:22)

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| <i>Noun classes</i> | Full; original prefixes; weakened, renewed by suffixes, or augments |
| <i>Verb extensions</i> | Widespread |
| <i>Pronouns</i> | Inclusive/exclusive common |
| <i>Sentence order</i> | SVOA; Prepositions |
| <i>Noun phrase</i> | N + Gen (Gen + N in Sua); N + Num; N + Dem. |

Although Kisi has the requisite morphological systems, the language is decidedly un-Atlantic in some ways. For example, Kisi has a full complement of adpositional types: prepositions, postpositions, and circumpositions. Its three prepositions are shown in (5).

(5) Prepositions

- a. **yòmndó hóò ò búúmbiàŋ á ñ-cìŋ lé**
 tree this it scrape.MID with PRO-teeth NEG
 This branch cannot be peeled with the teeth.
- b. **ò kààfâŋ ó yòmndó pêŋ**
 it tie.MID to tree tightly
 It was tightly fastened to the tree.
- c. **à cò cùundǒŋ lé wál-lá ndà-láŋ**
 they AUX praise.MID for work-PRO their-NCM
 They will praise themselves for their work.

Some of the circumpositions consist of the general preposition **ò**, ‘at, to, in’, etc., with a specific locative postposition after the object. The sources of the postpositions in (6) are transparently related to lexical items elsewhere in the language.

(6) Circumpositions

- a. **bòòlùùláj kó ñ tù/i ó bəŋəŋndáj còò ní** Cf. **còò**, ‘sky’.
 noise only you hear to meetings above FOC
 It’s only noise that you hear at meetings.
- b. **ò kpèèŋál yá sálló ó pəŋgáá kòòlì** Cf. **kòò**, ‘back’.
 he remove me trash to kitchen back
 He put the garbage behind the farm kitchen for me.

A subset of the postpositions consists of body parts representing a location; for example, **bəŋgú**, ‘foot’, becomes ‘under’, as shown in (7); **kòò**, ‘back’ becomes ‘behind’ (see (6b)).

- (7) **ò wá kùŋndáj ó bós bəŋgú** Cf. **bəŋgú**, ‘foot, leg’.
 he AUX groan to bush foot
 He was groaning under the bushes.

True postpositions, on the other hand, are not preceded by the general purpose preposition **ó**, and may use the same form as the second part of a circumposition.

- (8) a. **ò cò còòlǒŋ tɛ á fáŋáŋ ndú ìkèí pé**
 PRO AUX tip if you move.from him beside if
 He’ll fall over, if you move away from him.

- b. **tàmbà kó mbò kó bééndià ndá tèèŋ**
 Tamba go and.3SG go harmonize them between
 Let Tamba go and settle the palaver between them.

It is significant that the most transparent, lexical (phonologically full and semantically rich), and probably newer adpositions come after the noun; and the more syntactic adpositions come before, where they most likely represent the earlier forms.

There is another bit of anomaly about constituent order in Kisi, and that is the presence of the Negative marker and the Focus marker at the end of the clause rather than near the verb (with respect to the former), or near the item of focus (with respect to the latter). What is revealing about both of these markers is that their functions are handled elsewhere in the grammar. In both cases the functions are thus doubly marked; in addition to the final morpheme, they are marked, respectively, by movement and a verbal inflection, again suggesting that the final slot is newer.

- (9) Final marking of focus and negation

Focus: **á téléŋ hòðnùláj kínéí ndá wèlù ndú ní**
 at period weeding just they bore him FOC
 He was born right during weeding time.

Negation: **wàná kólàà mààmùèì có wánà fúú lé**
 person drink liquor COP person worthless NEG
 The person drinking liquor is not a worthless person.

1.2.2 Mmani

Mmani, too, has been under some pressure from a Mande language, for at this moment all ethnic Mmani speak Soussou and virtually everyone under sixty speaks only Soussou. In the case of Mmani, then, language shift is virtually complete; a second difference from Kisi's situation is that there is only one relevant Mande language.

The first suggestion that Mmani might have some features from neighboring Mande languages not transmitted genetically comes from the name given to it by missionaries in Grimes (1996), "Bullom So". According to Iverson and Cameron (1986), the name relates Mmani to the other Bullom languages with which it is genetically related (Sherbro, Krim), but also indicates contact facts, i.e. the extent to which it has been extensively influenced by the southwestern Mande language, Soussou. This practice of double-barreled naming has usually been restricted to what would, strictly speaking, be considered jargons or highly mixed contact languages, e.g., Russenorsk (Russian + Norwegian (Fox 1983)).

The Soussou-Mmani interaction has been relatively pacific, compared to what has taken place between the Mmani and the Temne kingdoms, and between the Mmani and the Malinké proselytizers from the Moréah. According to oral history the Temne kidnapped the Mmani king to set in motion a long series of battles that eventually resulted in the dissolution of the Mmani kingdom. The warlike Malinké from the Moréah were just as devastating to what remained of the kingdom as they forced the inhabitants to convert to Islam.

- (10) Some features of Mmani
- Symmetrical seven-vowel inventory, some vowel reduction processes.
 - Obstruents and liquids allowed to fill codas.
 - Nasalization of final vowels / final nasal consonant.
 - Two tone system.
 - A noun class system fallen into desuetude.
 - Inflectional TMA system relatively limited.
 - Verb extensions not widely used, possibly only two.
 - Basic word order SVO, genitive and nominal modifiers follow noun.
 - Prepositions.
 - Focus marker after focused item, no movement.
 - Semantics: inalienable possession, 'surpass' comparison.
 - Lexicon: some ideophones; many Soussou borrowings.

From this brief presentation of the structural facts of Kisi and Mmani, one can note several differences between the two relatively closely related languages themselves, as well as differences from the Atlantic prototype. Although not all of these differences have exact structural counterparts in the Mande languages with which they have been in contact, most have such a source. The next section shows how the socio-historical circumstances support the intimate and asymmetrical contact necessary for such deep influence.

2. SOCIAL-HISTORICAL FACTORS

The historical inequalities between Atlantic and Mande have been great. The relationship has typically been a one-way asymmetrical one, whether in terms of technology, access to resources, cultural elaboration, social and governmental organization, or military might. The Mande speakers have always been on top, as illustrated by the quote below.

Whatever the origin of the various strands of the invasion [the Mane invasions, 1545–1606], the importance of the overlying Mande influence must be recognized. All new soldiers who were enlisted were not only trained in the uses of Mane arms but were also inculcated with a new sense of loyalty. The recruits were chosen as young men, who, after training and indoctrination, were puffed up with pride at being among the Mane ranks. The arms and clothing were clearly Mande, and the language, too, showed pronounced Mande characteristics (Rodney 1967:235, repeated in Rodney 1970:56).

In (11) I summarize the evidence for Mande superiority up through the present, which is manifested in their skill at imposing their social structures on their hosts and in their military might. There is an equal abundance of evidence for Atlantic inferiority. It is this disparity that has created a situation ripe for one language to influence another.

- (11) Summary of evidence for Mande superiority (Childs 1997)
- Prestige and wealth of early traders.
 - Knowledge of utensil- and weapon-making; smiths believed to possess magical powers.
 - Founding of power associations: Komo, Simo, Poro, and Sande/Bunde (Brooks 1993:73).
 - Manding warriors: horses, weapons, military success; enlisted conquered peoples as soldiers or slaves.
 - Reluctance of Mande speakers to assimilate fully (especially if converted to Islam).
 - Mande speakers a part of the town rather than country.
 - Social structure much more hierarchical and centralized.

Furthermore, it has been remarked that “Mande cultural imperialism continues to the present” (Brooks 1993:114), an assessment with which I would agree based on fieldwork in several transitional areas. The Kisi are probably typical of the Atlantic groups conquered by the Manding warriors; the Kisi live in atomized settlements of 500 people with a limited if not totally flat social organization; the Mmani are not dissimilar, living in isolated fishing villages, particularly since the fall of the Mmani kingdom. Both would thus be highly vulnerable to domination by organized outsiders.

- (12) The effects of Mande contact and superiority (Childs 1997)

Cultural effects: Hierarchical social structure with themselves at the top, installing and ruling power associations, various cultural artifacts; switch from matrilineal to patrilineal societies.

Micro-linguistic effects: Specialized vocabulary in such areas as war medicine, political divisions and positions, power societies.

Macro-linguistic effects: bilingualism, language maintenance with interference (retention of tone in Southern Atlantic) and language shift.

To give some idea of the (cultural) mixing that takes place one can consider the Lele, the only documented case of language mixing. Nearly all of those familiar with the group state unequivocally that Lele is a hybrid, not atypical for Africa: the people are ethnically Kisi and linguistically Manding. Lele speakers will say they are Kisi when they need the support of their neighbors, but shun them when they are rich: “When speakers of Lele are poor, they claim to be Kisi, but when they are rich and prosperous they say they are Malinké” (Saa Robert Millimouno 2000 p.c.). Thus, the Lele have something of a dual identity and may also represent a true case of language and cultural mixture, as has been widely claimed, but never actually documented, for other languages of the area, e.g., Rodney 1967. With some idea of the mixing that has taken place and some idea of what can be missed linguistically, I turn now to the findings of the structural comparisons.

3. FINDINGS

I will first and more extensively talk about how Kisi has been affected, adducing lexical evidence of borrowings from its Mande neighbors. The Mmani facts are still incomplete. The obvious changes in Kisi occur in the lexicon, where there are initial

indications of extensive borrowing of the sort typically associated with asymmetrical social relations. The influence is less obvious elsewhere but is nonetheless significant.

3.1 KISI AND MANINKA / MENDE

In an earlier paper (Childs 2000), I detailed the nature of lexical borrowing from Mande into Kisi, using lexicons from two of the languages surrounding Kisi, Maninka and Mende. The summarized findings appear in (13) and (14).

(13) Some general findings

Quantitative: Nearly 200 Mande borrowings in a Kisi lexicon of some 5,800 words (3.5%), excluding proper names (names of people and towns).

Syntactic: Most borrowings are nominals.

Semantic: Some basic vocabulary, most borrowings in the areas of politeness formulae, family relations, political organization, commerce and trade, and religion.

Sociolinguistic: ‘Prestige’ borrowing.

(14) Semantic fields of borrowings into Kisi from Manding, Mende and South-West Mande

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Politeness expressions (n = 10) | Smithing (7) |
| Family relations (10) | Toys and games (4) |
| Political terms (14) | Musical instruments (4) |
| Legal terminology (8) | Initiation societies, cultural events (9) |
| Commercial terms, numbers (11) | Physical states, body parts, health (12) |
| ‘Abstractions’ (9) | Islamic religious words (6) |
| Foods and plants (19) | Discourse words (8) |
| Animals (15) | Ideophones and the like (14) |
| Objects, or places of daily use (23) | Miscellaneous (11) |
| Clothes, hairstyles (5) | |

What was particularly interesting was what I called *doublets* in the language, words for which there already existed a word in Kisi (the English ‘sheep/mutton’ phenomenon), because they also represented an elaboration of Kisi culture, just as would be expected with the introduction of a new social class, the ruling Mande interlopers. Nowhere was this more obvious than in the words for greetings and religious practices, many originally from Arabic.

(15) Borrowings from Arabic (politeness expressions)

báléká ‘thank you’, expression of gratitude, acknowledging a favor. Var.: **bálíká**, **bálíkáá**. Borrowed from Arabic **barka**, ‘benediction, blessing’, via Manding **bárika** (Vydrine 1999).

hàkátó ‘excuse me.’ Var.: **hàkétò**. Maninka **hàkito**, ‘beg pardon’ (Friedländer 1991 as referenced in Kastenholz 1998), Bambara **hàkétó** (Kastenholz 1998 p.c.), Bandi **hèkétó**. See **kàfèiyó**, ‘excuse’. See **hákìó**, ‘pardon, forgiveness, sin’ (GK). Borrowed from Arabic through Maninka **hàki**, ‘injustice; sin; mistake’ (Friedländer 1991 as in Kastenholz 1998).

In many cases the Kisi member of the doublet is a compound. Particularly common is the use of the formative **ɲɛ-**, the stem of ‘thing’. This internal process is productive and represents the language-internal process for augmenting the lexicon. The display in (16) gives first the borrowed term and then the attested Kisi equivalents using this compounding process.

- (16) Kisi compounds vs borrowed lexemes
- | | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| káníí ‘money’ | ɲɛ-tʂó ‘something valuable’, lit., ‘thing renowned’ |
| | ɲɛm-kíʂɲ ‘inheritance, lit., thing given’ |
| ɲìnáá ‘genie, devil’ | ɲɛ-bèndòó ‘devil, mask’, lit., ‘thing big’ |
| | ɲɛ-kèméí ‘devil, mask, masked dancer’ |
| | ɲɛ-wénáɲndó ‘supernatural being, spirit, devil’, lit., ‘thing hidden’ |
| fáció ‘bucket’ | ɲɛ-pìàndùéí ‘tool, implement’, lit., ‘thing bought’ |
| fàɲndó ‘sword’ | ɲɛ-còùwé ‘weapon’, lit., ‘thing (for) war’. |

In (17) I provide a conservative list of non-lexical features possibly introduced from Mande.

- (17) Syllable structure (more like Mande than Atlantic)
 Postpositions (not attested elsewhere in Atlantic)
 S–Aux–O–V word order (unique to Kisi and common to Mande)
 Final negative and focus markers (unique to Kisi).

3.2 MMANI AND SOUSSOU

One general expectation would be that the morphology of Atlantic would be reduced under contact with Mande languages, especially among the Mmani with their extended contact and universal bilingualism with Soussou, a language with little verbal morphology (Creissels 1991:298). Such a generalization is certainly true of Mmani, less so than of Kisi, where a fully productive noun class system exists, albeit it somewhat reduced from more robust systems elsewhere in Atlantic (Childs 1995b). In Mmani TMAP (tense-mood-aspect-polarity) contrasts seem to have been reduced dramatically and there are even hints of a Mande-like analytical verb phrase. In (18) some possible effects of Soussou contact are listed.

- (18) Inalienable possession: body parts and familial relations
 Atrophy of morphology, especially verbal
 Lexicon, e.g., greetings
 Global: Language shift and language death.

4. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

At this stage of the investigation, I would say that the effects of Mande on these two Atlantic languages have been profound, more profound in the case of Mmani based on preliminary evidence from the verb phrase. Nonetheless, Kisi has also been affected dramatically in a part of core grammar, the morphosyntax of the verb phrase.

It should not be surprising that these two languages have changed—the geographical and sociohistorical facts are right, as outlined above. It is significant that the features changed are quite different, showing the lack of predictability to what happens in conditions of language contact. Further research will determine whether these differences are simply unpredictable or related to the incipient death of Mmani.

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