

THE SYNTACTIC STATUS OF OBJECTS IN MÒÒRÉ DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Mòòré [mos] is a Gur language spoken in Burkina Faso by approximately 5 million people (Lewis *et al.* 2015). Data in this paper comes from elicitation conducted at the University of Oregon with a native speaker who spent his formative years in Ouagadougou. This paper has three main objectives: (i) identify overt and covert properties of ditransitive clausal constructions in Mòòré (section 4 and 6), following the work of Mal'chukov, Haspelmath and Comrie (2010); (ii) offer a list of verbs which can be defined as ditransitives in this language (section 5); (iii) determine whether, based on overt and covert properties of objects, the grammatical relation of Object in Mòòré ditransitive constructions fit any of the proposals present in the literature (section 7), i.e. *primary vs secondary object* language type (Dryer 1986, 2007) or *symmetrical vs asymmetrical object* language type (Bresnan and Moshi 1990).

2. SOME STRUCTURAL FEATURES OF MÒÒRÉ

Mòòré displays a nominative-accusative alignment system. Word order is rigid both in intransitive (SV) and transitive clauses (AVO). There appear to be three sets of pronouns: one for S/A arguments (set A) and two for O arguments (set B and C). The O argument of a monotransitive verb and O_R (Recipient) and O_T (Theme) of a ditransitive verb can be optionally indexed in the verb by the set C forms (but see Canu 1974 and Kaboré 1985 for a different analysis of pronominal forms; the present one is similar to Kouraogo 1976):

TABLE 1: MÒÒRÉ PRONOUNS

	SET A (S/A)	SET B (O)	SET C (cliticized O)
1SG	<i>màm</i>	<i>máám</i>	= <i>m-là</i>
2SG	<i>fò</i>	<i>fóó</i>	= <i>f-là</i>
3SG	<i>à</i>	<i>yééndà/yé</i>	= <i>à-là</i>
1PL	<i>tónd</i>	<i>tóndò</i>	= <i>d-là</i>
2PL	<i>yámb</i>	<i>yámbà</i>	= <i>í-là</i>
3PL	<i>ób/bámb</i>	<i>bámbá</i>	= <i>b-là</i>

When an optional bound pronominal form occurs, if the polarity of the main clause is affirmative, the set C pronoun must co-occur with the factual marker *-là*, which is an allomorph of *-à* (cf. Manessy 1963 and Peterson 1971). The factual marker *-à* (1) has allomorphs which are copies of the vowel of the verb root when the verb root is CV (2):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>(1) <i>à</i> <i>záms-à</i> <i>Mòòré</i>
 3SG.S learn-FACT Moore
 ‘She learnt Mòòré’</p> | <p>(2) <i>à</i> <i>kú-ù</i> <i>yééndà</i>
 3SG.S kill-FACT 3SG.O
 ‘She killed him’</p> |
|--|--|

The 3SG clitic pronoun from set C, $-\grave{a}$, undergoes the same phonological process as the factual marker $-\grave{a}$. When it is contiguous to a CV verb root (3), this pronoun takes the form of a copy of the last vowel of a given verb (Manuel Otero, p.c.). If the contiguous verb root is not CV (4), then the 3SG clitic pronoun surfaces as $-\grave{a}(-l\grave{a})$:

	A	V-O=mè		A	V-O=mè
(3)	\grave{a}	$k\acute{u}-\grave{u}-l\grave{a}=m\grave{e}$	(4)	$m\grave{a}m$	$z\acute{a}ms-\grave{a}-l\grave{a}=m\grave{e}$
	3SG.S	kill-3SG.O-FACT-MCF		1SG.S	learn-3SG.O-FACT-MCF
	‘She killed him’			‘I learned it’	

The main clause final marker $-m\grave{e}$ (cf. 3, 4) occurs only when the polarity of the main clause is affirmative and no full-fledged NP functioning as a core argument or oblique, nor adverb, follows a given verb. Proper nouns *in any syntactic role* are usually preceded by the free pronoun \grave{a} (3SG).

3. DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

In Mòdré, a DITRANSITIVE CONSTRUCTION contains the following structural components: a Subject, a verb and two Objects (5). This structure has also been reported for Dagbani (Olawsky 1999). The two Objects are not morphologically or analytically marked, that is, they do not show anything like object case-marking morphology and they are not introduced by any adposition or relator noun:

	A	V	O_R	O_T
(5)	$m\grave{a}m$	$t\acute{o}l-\grave{a}$	$p\acute{a}g-\grave{a}$	$r\acute{u}-k\grave{a}$
	1SG.S	send-FACT	woman-CL1.DEF	pot-CL12.DEF
	‘I sent the pot to the woman’			

A DITRANSITIVE VERB in Mòdré is a verb which displays the following syntactic features: (i) it can or must appear in a construction followed by two morphologically and analytically unmarked objects and (ii) *both* of its objects can be expressed by means of optional bound pronominal marking in the verb, although not simultaneously.

4. OVERT PROPERTIES

4.1 Object alignment of monotransitive and ditransitive clauses

Mòdré displays a neutral-object alignment system in terms of pronoun forms: the O of a monotransitive verb (6), and O_R (7), and O_T (8) of a ditransitive verb are expressed formally by the same set of pronouns (same is true for optionally bound pronominal marking).

	A	V	O		A	V	O_R	O_T
(6)	\grave{a}	$k\acute{u}-\grave{u}$	$y\acute{e}nd\grave{a}$	(7)	$m\grave{a}m$	$k\acute{e}-\grave{e}$	$y\acute{e}nd\grave{a}$	$r\acute{u}-k\grave{a}$
	3SG.S	kill-FACT	3SG.O		1SG.S	give-FACT	3SG.O	pot-CL12.DEF
	‘She killed him’				‘I gave the pot to him/her’			

	A	V	O_R	O_T
(8)	<i>màm</i>	<i>kǎ-ǎ</i>	<i>pág-à</i>	<i>yéndà</i>
	1SG.S	give-FACT	woman-CL1.DEF	3SG.O
	‘I gave it to the woman’			

4.2 Constituent order in relation to animacy

If one of the two objects is [+human] or [+animate] and the other is [-animate], the order is [+human/animate] followed by [-animate] (9):

	A	V	O_R [+animate]	O_T [-animate]
(9)	<i>màm</i>	<i>rílg-à</i>	<i>búú-s-á</i>	<i>nàngù-rí</i>
	1SG.S	feed-FACT	goat-CL13-DEF	peanut-CL5
	‘I fed peanuts to the goats’			

When O_R and O_T are both [+human], both [+animate], or [+human] and [+animate], the order is variable and the construction might display ambiguity as to which of the two object is semantically the Recipient and which is semantically the Theme if no further specification is added:

	A	V	O_{RT} [+human]	O_{RT} [+human]
(10)	<i>màm</i>	<i>wíníg-à</i>	<i>bíí-gà</i>	<i>pág-à</i>
	1SG.S	show-FACT	child-CL12.DEF	woman-CL1.DEF
	‘I showed the boy to the woman’ or ‘I showed the woman to the boy’			

	A	V	O_{RT} [+animate]	O_{RT} [+human]
(11)	<i>màm</i>	<i>wíníg-à</i>	<i>wób-g-à</i>	<i>bíí-gà</i>
	1SG.S	show-FACT	elephant-CL15-DEF	child-CL12.DEF
	‘I showed the child to the elephant’ or ‘I showed the elephant to the child’			

4.3 Splits

There appears to be a split in Mòdré between the set of pronouns used for 1SG, 2SG, 3SG and the set used for 1PL, 2PL and 3PL when these are expressed as full, independent pronouns. In the singular persons, the independent pronoun for O_R always comes from set B:

TABLE 2: 1SG, 2SG and 3SG FUNCTIONING AS O_R FOLLOWED BY O_T

A	V	O_R [SET B]	O_T
<i>bámb</i>	<i>kǎ-ǎ</i>	<i>mám</i>	<i>péén-d</i> <i>myú-g-à</i>
3PL.S	give-FACT	<i>fóó</i>	scarf-CL5 red-CL12-DEF
		<i>yéndà</i>	
	‘They gave me/you/him/her a red scarf’		

For 1PL, 2PL and 3PL, a pronoun form from set A is used if another NP, including one functioning as O_T, or an adverb, follows:

TABLE 3: 1PL, 2PL and 3PL FUNCTIONING AS O_R FOLLOWED BY O_T

A	V	O _R [SET A]	O _T	
<i>à</i>	<i>kǎ-ǎ</i>	<i>tɔnd</i>	<i>péén-d</i>	<i>myǔ-g-à</i>
3SG.S	give-FACT	<i>yámb</i>	scarf-CL5	red-CL12-DEF
		<i>bámb</i>		
‘He gave us/you all/them a red scarf’				

This split in pronoun-form selection appears to be phonological rather than syntactic in nature. This split casts doubts on the nature of set B as a set of specifically case-marked ‘accusative’ pronouns (especially for the plural forms).

4.4 Optional indexation of O_R and O_T in the verb

In Mòdèré, only core syntactic arguments can be optionally indexed in the verb. This means that obliques (12a) and NPs followed by relator nouns like *zúgù* (13a) cannot be indexed in the verb:

- (12a) *à Músá wé-é Ouérmí né kúg-rì*
 3SG.S Musa hit-FACT Ouermi with stone-CL5
 ‘Musa hit Ouermi with a stone’

- (12b) **à Músá wé-é-là Ouérmí*
 3SG.S Musa hit-3SG.O-FACT Ouermi
 *‘Musa hit Ouermi with it’

- (13a) *à yéés-à zíí-m-à fǔ-gà zú-gù*
 3SG.S swipe-FACT blood-CL22-DEF cloth-CL12 head-CL15
 ‘She swiped the blood off the cloth’

- (13b) **à yéés-à-là zíí-m-à*
 3SG.S swipe-3SG.O-FACT blood-CL22-DEF
 *‘She swiped the blood off it’

In the case of ditransitive constructions, either O_R or O_T can be optionally indexed in the verb, but *never* at the same time. Tests have been carried out to establish possible restrictions on the indexation of the two objects depending on animacy, definiteness and plurality. So far, there appears to be no restriction depending on these parameters. Table 4 shows the animacy combinations that have been tested so far:

TABLE 4: OPTIONAL INDEXATION OF O_T AND O_R DEPENDING ON ANIMACY

	O ₁ (R)	O ₂ (T)	Tested verbs	Indexation of O ₁ and O ₂
I	+ human	+ human	show, give	YES
II	+ human	+ animate	show, send, lend	YES
III	+ animate	+ human	show	YES
IV	+ human	-animate	send, give, tell, teach, ask for, show, leave	YES
V	+ animate	+ animate	show, feed	YES
VI	+ animate	-animate	feed, show, give	YES

An example of combination V is illustrated in (14a) to (14c):

	A		V	O _R	O _T
(14a)	<i>à</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>wíníg-à</i>	<i>báá-gà</i>	<i>búú-s-á</i>
	3SG.S	Musa	show-FACT	dog-CL12.DEF	goat-CL13-DEF
	‘Musa showed the goats to the dog’				

	A		V = O _T	O _R
(14b)	<i>à</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>wíníg = b-là</i>	<i>báá-gà</i>
	3SG.S	Musa	show-3PL.O-FACT	dog-CL12.DEF
	‘Musa showed them to the dog’			

	A		V = O _R	O _T
(14c)	<i>à</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>wíníg-à-là</i>	<i>búú-s-á</i>
	3SG.S	Musa	show-3SG.O-FACT	goat-CL13-DEF
	‘Musa showed the goats to it’ (i.e. to the dog)			

There also seems to be no restrictions for optional bound pronominal indexation depending on a hierarchy of animacy or person (such as that indexation is possible only if R is higher than T on the scale 1 > 2 > 3):

	A		V = O _T	O _R
(15)	<i>à</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>wíníg = m-là</i>	<i>yéndà</i>
	3SG.S	Musa	show-1SG.O-FACT	3SG.O
	‘Musa showed me to him’ (i.e. to someone else)			

4.5 Constituency

Adverbs of time such as ‘yesterday’, ‘only’ and ‘again’ cannot go between V and O_R or between O_R and O_T. Acceptable versions feature the adverbs at the beginning or at the end of the clause, but never in a position which disrupts the sequence [V O_R O_T]:

- (16) **A** **V** **ADV** **O_R** **O_T**
màm *tóól-à* *yàsá* *pág-à* *rú-kà*
 1SG.S send-FACT again woman-CL1.DEF pot-CL12.DEF
 *‘I sent to the woman again the pot’

- (17) **A** **V** **O_R** **ADV** **O_T**
màm *tóól-à* *pág-à* *yàsá* *rú-kà*
 1SG.S send-FACT woman-CL1.DEF again pot-CL12.DEF
 *‘I sent to the woman again the pot’

5. DITRANSITIVE VERBS IN MÒÒRÉ

Several ‘semantically’ ditransitive verbs such as ‘bring’ and ‘send’ (someone somewhere) do not classify as ditransitives in this language for two reasons: (i) they are found in multi-verb constructions (18); or (ii) they are found in constructions including a spatial goal or location (19), which is case-marked, occupies a fixed position after the verb and its object and cannot be optionally indexed on the verb.

- (18) **A** **V₁** **O** **V₂** **O**
màm *táll-à* *bíí-gà* *ń* *kén* *kórón-gò*
 1SG.S keep-FACT child-CL12.DEF VC go school-CL15
 ‘I brought the child to school’ (I walked with him to school and came back)

- (19) **A** **V** **O** **LOC**
màm *túm-à* *bíí-gà* *zá-k-è*
 1SG.S work-FACT child-CL12.DEF house-CL12-LOC
 ‘I sent the child home’

Table 5 shows verbs which can be classified as ditransitives because they comply with the following criteria: (i) they can/must appear in a ditransitive clausal construction **and** (ii) *both* objects can be optionally indexed on the verb (although not at the same time):

TABLE 5: DITRANSITIVE VERBS IN MÒÒRÉ

Verb	Meaning
<i>tóólè</i>	‘send’ (O _T never [+ human])
<i>kǎ</i>	‘give’
<i>péngè</i>	‘lend’
<i>bǎsè</i>	‘ask for’
<i>wínígì</i>	‘show’ (frozen causative)
<i>tógsè</i>	‘tell’
<i>kóósè</i>	‘sell’

<i>lóngè</i>	‘contaminate’ (frozen causative)
<i>rílgè</i>	‘feed’ (causative)
<i>yǐngì</i>	‘make drink’ (causative)
<i>kéllè</i>	‘leave’ (O _T never [+ human/animate])
<i>zámsè</i>	‘teach’
<i>lóbǵè</i>	‘throw’

Some verbs in table 5 can occur in a transitive or ditransitive clausal construction, with a difference in meaning, as in the case of *lóbǵè* ‘throw’:

- (20) **A** **V** **O_R** **O_T**
à *lóbǵ-à* *máám* *kúg-r-à*
 3SG.S throw-FACT 1SG.O stone-CL5-DEF
 ‘She threw the stone to me (I am trying to catch it)’

- (21) **A** **V** **O** **OBL**
à *lóbǵ-à* *máám* *né kúg-rì*
 3SG.S throw-FACT 1SG.OBJ with stone-CL5
 ‘She threw a stone at me (she wants to hit me with the stone)’

Crucially, the verb *lóbǵè* ‘throw’ allows the indexation of both of its objects when used ditransitively:

- (22a) **A** **V=O_R** **O_T**
à *lóbǵ=m-là* *kúg-r-à*
 3SG.S throw=1SG.O-FACT stone-CL5-DEF
 ‘She threw me the stone (I am trying to catch it)’

- (22b) **A** **V=O_T** **O_R**
à *lóbǵ=à-là* *máám*
 3SG.S throw=3SG.O-FACT 1SG.O
 ‘She threw it to me (I am trying to catch it)’

Some verbs appear to be good ditransitive candidates at the clause level. For instance, the verb ‘build’ can appear in a ditransitive construction (23) or in the *n kǵ* construction (24), used to express an NP with the semantic role of benefactive.

- (23) **A** **V** **O_R** **O_T**
à *Músá mwé-è* *máám* *zá-kà*
 3SG.S Musa build-FACT 1SG.O house-CL12
 ‘Musa built me a house’

	A		V₁		O		V₂	BEN
(24)	<i>à</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>mwé-è</i>		<i>zá-kà</i>		<i>ń</i>	<i>kǎ</i> <i>máám</i>
	3SG.S	Musa	build-FACT		house-CL12		PVC	give 1SG.O
	‘Musa built a house for me’							

However, this verb, as several others, shows restrictions on the verbal indexation of one of its Objects. The optional indexation of O_R is possible (25), but the indexation of O_T is never possible in a ditransitive context in which O_R follows (26):

	A		V=O_R		O_T
(25)	<i>à</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>mwé=m-là</i>		<i>zá-kà</i>
	3SG.S	Musa	build-1SG.O-FACT		house-CL12
	‘Musa built me a house’				

	A		V=O_T		O_R
(26)	<i>à</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>mwé-è-là</i>		<i>máám</i>
	3SG.S	Musa	build-3SG.O-FACT		1SG.OBJ
	*‘Musa built it for/to me’				

O_T (‘house’) can be successfully indexed only if the verb is followed by the main clause final marker – *mè* (this morpheme only appears when no core or oblique arguments, or adverbs follow a given verb within the same main clause) and the Benefactive is expressed by the *ń kǎ* construction:

	A		V₁=O		V₂	BEN
(27)	<i>à</i>		<i>mwé-è-là-mè</i>		<i>ń</i>	<i>kǎ</i> <i>máám</i>
	3SG.S		build-3SG.O-FACT-MCF		PVC	give 1SG.O
	‘He built it for me’					

These tests (i.e. appearance of a given verb in a ditransitive clausal construction and the possibility to index both object arguments) differentiate ditransitive VERBS from ditransitive CLAUSES, showing the relevance of morphosyntactic transitivity at both levels for this language.

6. BEHAVIORAL PROPERTIES

6.1 Relativization

Both O_R and O_T can be relativized by means of the same strategy:

	N_{HEAD}	[REL	A	SUBRD	V	O_T]S_{REL}
(28)	<i>pág</i>	<i>lánníngà</i>	<i>á</i> <i>Músá</i>	<i>hǎ</i>	<i>tóól</i>	<i>rú-kà</i>
	woman	REL	3SG Musa	SUBRD	send	pot-CL12.DEF
	‘The woman to whom Musa sent the pot’					

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------|-----------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------------------------|---------------|
| | N_{HEAD} | [REL | A | SUBRD | V | $O_{\text{R}}]S_{\text{REL}}$ | |
| (29) | <i>rú-k</i> | <i>lánníngà</i> | <i>à</i> | <i>Músá</i> | <i>hě</i> | <i>tóól</i> | <i>pág-à</i> |
| | pot-CL12 | REL | 3SG | Musa | SUBRD | send | woman-CL1.DEF |
- ‘The pot which Musa sent to the woman’

6.2 Control of co-reference

6.2.1 Control of co-reference of a logophoric possessive pronoun

When both Objects are [+human], *both* can control co-reference of a following possessive pronoun:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|-------------|----------------|----------|---------------|----------------|----------|-----------------|
| (30) | <i>à</i> | <i>Músá</i> | <i>wíníg-à</i> | <i>à</i> | <i>Ouérmí</i> | <i>bíí-gà</i> | <i>à</i> | <i>zá-k-òwà</i> |
| | 3SG.S | Musa | show-FACT | 3SG | Ouermi | child-CL12.DEF | 3SG.S | house-CL12-LOC |
- ‘Musa_i showed the child_j to Ouermi_y in his_{ijy} house’

6.2.2 Control of co-reference under coordination

In Mòòré, different coordinators are used depending on whether the Subject of the second coordinate clause is co-referential with the Subject versus the Object in the transitive main (linearly first) clause. If the Subject of the coordinate clause is co-referential with the Subject of the transitive main clause, the coordinator used is *là* (31):

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| (31) | <i>à</i> | <i>Músá</i> | <i>mókà</i> | <i>à</i> | <i>Ríhnátà</i> | <i>là=à</i> | <i>lóóg-è</i> |
| | 3SG.S | Musa | kiss-FACT | 3SG | Rihnata | and=3SG.S | leave-CFV |
- ‘Musa_i kissed Rihnata_j and he_i/she left’

If the Subject of the coordinate clause is co-referential with the Object of the main clause, the coordinator used is *tí* (32):

- | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|-------------|-------------|----------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| (32) | <i>à</i> | <i>Músá</i> | <i>mókà</i> | <i>à</i> | <i>Ríhnátà</i> | <i>t=à</i> | <i>lóóg-è</i> |
| | 3SG.S | Musa | kiss-FACT | 3SG | Rihnata | and=3SG.S | leave-CFV |
- ‘Musa_i kissed Rihnata_j and he/she_j left’

The same pattern is observed when the main clause is ditransitive. In (33), only ‘Musa’ can be leaving. In (34), where the coordinator *tí* is used, *both* ‘Ouermi’ and ‘the child’ could be leaving. Thus, both Objects can be the controllers of the target (3SG pronoun) in the following coordinate clause:

- | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|-------------|----------------|----------|---------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|
| (33) | <i>à</i> | <i>Músá</i> | <i>wíníg-à</i> | <i>à</i> | <i>Ouérmí</i> | <i>bíí-gà</i> | <i>là=à</i> | <i>lóóg-è</i> |
| | 3SG.S | Musa | show-FACT | 3SG.S | Ouermi | child-CL12.DEF | and=3SG | leave-CFV |
- ‘Musa_i showed the child_y to Ouermi_j and he_i left’
- | | | | | | | | | |
|------|----------|-------------|----------------|----------|---------------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| (34) | <i>à</i> | <i>Músá</i> | <i>wíníg-à</i> | <i>à</i> | <i>Ouérmí</i> | <i>bíí-gà</i> | <i>t=à</i> | <i>lóóg-è</i> |
| | 3SG.S | Musa | show-FACT | 3SG.S | Ouermi | child-CL12.DEF | and=3SG | leave-CFV |
- ‘Musa_i showed the child_y to Ouermi_j and he_{yj} left’

6.3 Reflexivization and reciprocalization

Both O_R (35) and O_T (36) can be the target of reciprocalization (but the reciprocal must occur immediately after the verb):

	A			V	O_R RECPR	O_T
(35)	à	<i>Ouérmí</i>	<i>né</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>wíníg-à</i>	<i>tááb</i>
	3SG.S	Ouermi	with	Musa	show-FACT	each.other
						<i>báá-gâ</i>
						dog-CL12.DEF
						‘[Musa and Ouermi] _i showed the dog to each other _i ’

	A			V	O_T RECPR	O_R
(36)	à	<i>Ouérmí</i>	<i>né</i>	<i>Músá</i>	<i>wíníg-à</i>	<i>tááb</i>
	3SG.S	Ouermi	with	Musa	show-FACT	each.other
						à <i>Alí</i>
						3SG.S Ali
						‘[Musa and Ouermi] _i showed each other _i to Ali’

In the same vein, both Objects can also be targets of reflexivization (when animacy scale allows for it, the order can be switched)

	A	V	O_R REFL	O_T
(37)	<i>pág-â</i>	<i>kǎ-ǎ</i>	à <i>méng</i>	<i>máng-rè</i>
	woman-CL1.DEF	gave-FACT	3SG.S self	mango-CL5
				‘The woman gave a mango to herself’

	A	V	O_T REFL	O_R
(38)	<i>pág-â</i>	<i>kǎ-ǎ</i>	à <i>méng</i>	<i>ràò-á</i>
	woman-CL1.DEF	gave-FACT	3SG.S self	man-CL1
				‘The woman gave herself to the man’

7. THE STATUS OF O_R AND O_T IN MÒDRÉ WITHIN A TYPOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

So far, symmetrical object systems have been attested, among others, in Bantu (Bresnan and Moshi 1990), Austronesian (Donohue 1996), Yagua, an isolate from Peru (Payne and Payne 1989), Western Australian (Dench 1987) and Totonac-Tepehua (McKay and Trechsel 2008). At first glance, Mòdré appears to be a symmetrical object language. According to Bresnan and Moshi (1990), in symmetrical object languages, the basic patient or theme object of a causative or ditransitive (by means of applicatives) verb retains its object properties in the presence of another object, that is, both objects display ‘primary object’ properties in the sense of Dryer. Crucially, ‘in a truly symmetrical object language [...] different arguments can *simultaneously* have primary object properties’ (Bresnan and Moshi 1990:153, emphasis in the original). The condition of simultaneity as pivotal to symmetrical object language types (Bresnan and Moshi 1990) invites further research to establish that in fact, both objects in Mòdré can display different object properties at the same time.

TABLE 6: SUMMARY OF OVERT AND COVERT PROPERTIES

	OBJECT PROPERTY	O _R	O _T	Observations
OVERT	CASE-MARKING	-	-	Neither O _R or O _T are case marked.
	WORD ORDER	✓	✓	both O _R and O _T can appear immediately after the V when both are [+human/animate].
	OPTIONAL BOUND PRONOMINAL MARKING	✓	✓	no significant restrictions found based on animacy, number, definiteness or hierarchy of person.
	CONSTITUENCY	✓	✓	both appear to be a single constituent with V
COVERT	CONTROL OF CO-REFERENCE OF A POSSESSIVE PRONOUN	✓	✓	both O _R and O _T can control co-reference
	CONTROL OF CO-REFERENCE UNDER SUBORDINATION	✓	✓	both O _R and O _T can control co-reference
	RELATIVIZATION	✓	✓	the same strategy is used for O _R and O _T
	REFLEXIVIZATION	✓	✓	both O _R and O _T can be the target
	RECIPROCALIZATION	✓	✓	both O _R and O _T can be the target

Object properties tested by Bresnan and Moshi (1990) for Bantu languages include: passivization, unspecified object deletion, retention of object marking on verbs in presence of applicatives, reflexivization and reciprocalization. Object properties tested by Hyman and Duranti (1982) include: word order, subjectivization, and cliticization. It should be noted in this respect, that, since Mòdré does not display a copious array of morphosyntactic coding properties (applicatives, object marking on the verb, case marking of objects, obligatory bound pronominal agreement, etc.), some of the covert properties discussed here for Mòdré are not listed among the common tests for types of object systems in the literature on other languages. This raises the theoretical question of whether overt vs. covert properties should be assigned the same amount of ‘weight’ or ‘relevance’ in establishing the syntactic status of objects in a given language. Finally, the preliminary analysis advanced here for Mòdré invites future comparative work on object properties in other Gur languages.

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Abbreviations

1SG first person singular; 1PL = first person plural; 2SG second person singular; 2PL second person plural; 3SG = third person singular; 3PL = third person plural; CFV = citation form vowel; CL = noun class marker; FACT = factual; DEF = definite; LOC = locative (case marker); MCF = main clause final marker; O = Object; PVC = pre verbal conjunction; REL = relativizer; S = Subject; SUBRD = subordinator.