# 20

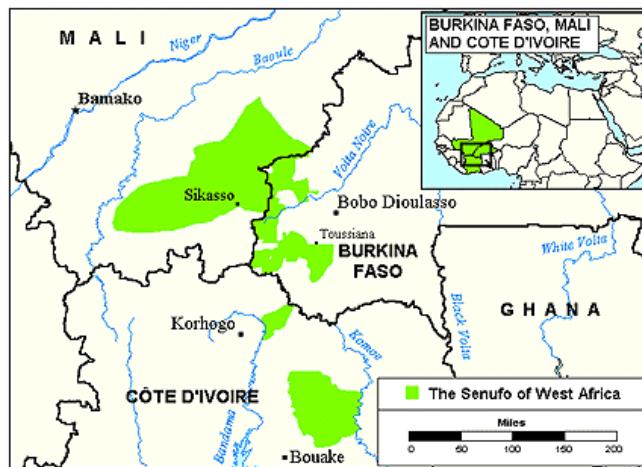# Supyire[1] (Senufo, Gur)
## Sarah Rose/Christa Beaudoin-Lietz

## 20.1  General

This chapter discusses Supyire, a member of the Northern branch of the Senufo language group[2]. Estimates of speakers of Senufo languages vary from around 1.5 million to well over 2 million, in Côte D'Ivoire, Mali and Burkina Faso. Senufo can be divided into different branches, the northern one, to which Supyire belongs (also Sicité and Marmara), the central (e.g., Cebaara and Syenara) and the southern one. The Senufo languages are geographically contiguous with Mande languages and share several features with them[3].

The Supyire are said to number between 350,000 (SIL 2007) and 621,000 (the Joshuaproject); they are located in southeastern Mali in the region of Sikasso. Published sources on Supyire are very few: we rely on Carlson's recently published grammar (1994). Carlson's grammar is based on functional-typological theory. The spelling is phonemic and follows the cited grammar in its conventions, which in turn follows standard conventions according to the *Direction Nationale d'Alphabétisation Fonctionelle et de Linguistique Appliquée*[4]:



Map source: Bethany World Prayer Center

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[1] This chapter was written in collaboration with Christa Beaudoin-Lietz.

[2] Abbreviations used in this chapter refer to terms used in Carlson's grammar and include: IP 'intransitive prefix'; FP 'future prefix' (see §20.3.1 for details); ND 'non declarative'; REM(P) 'remote (past)'; REC(P) 'recent (past)'; SC 'serial connector'; SSC 'subjunctive serial connector'; EXCL ('exclamative particle'); INDEF ('indefinite pronoun or determiner').

[3] For example, the type of word order in which one argument (direct object) precedes the verb while others (the indirect object, etc.) follow the verb. Not only is lexical borrowing from Mande languages heavy, there is evidence for syntactic and typological influence as well. Carlson (1994:2) notes evidence of grammatical constructions borrowed from Bambara, as well as typological influence: Supyire is predominately SOV (as are Mande languages), rather than the more typical SVO (as in NC in general).

[4] Generally IPA, to be noted y = [j], j = [ʤ], c = [ʧ], zh = [ʒ], sh = [ʃ], h = [ʔ]. In spelling, a nasalized vowel is indicated by an 'n' after the vowel, [r] = flap variant of /d/ medially before unstressed vowel, but written as *r*. /g/, when flapped before unstressed vowel, = [R].

Supyire has seven oral (/ i, e, ɛ, a, u, o, ɔ /) and five nasalized (/ ĩ, ɛ̃, ã, ũ, ɔ̃/) vowels[5]. All vowels may be either short or long (indicated by doubling the vowel in orthography). Vowel harmony (which works from left to right) with unstressed vowels is pervasive, though certain morphemes do not harmonize (e.g. the definite noun suffix).

Supyire is a tone language of high complexity. There are four phonemic tones: high (ˊ), low ( ˋ ), and two mid tones-- strong mid (Ms) and weak mid (Mw). The mid tones are unmarked in spelling. The symbol (ˆ) indicates a sequence of two tones: HL (as in the morpheme **nî** that marks "Recent Past"). Floating tones also exist (see examples under Negation). Tonal rules can apply across several (closely syntactically-linked) items in the sentence (e.g., DO and V).

There are no closed syllables in Supyire: syllable structure is CV or CVV. A few words, for example some pronouns, can consist of a V-initial syllable. Verb roots may have the following shapes: CV, CVV, CVCV, CVVCV, or CVCVCV. Most lexical roots are stressed on the first syllable. Affixes, clitics, and most other grammatical morphemes do not have stress by themselves, but many acquire stress in compounds. Most verbs are di- or tri-syllabic with stress on the initial syllable (Carlson 1994:32). Supyire has a noun-class system, marked on the noun at suffix (as in Kisi and Fula).

## 20.2 Word Order

Word order is S AUX DO V O(ther)[6] (see examples in (15)). Sentences without AUX occur as in (1) with a copula, though most verb phrases contain at least one AUX, and several AUXs can co-occur.

(1)     **mìi ɲyɛ yìì     núŋi**
        1s   be   2p       mother.DEF
        'I am your mother.' (1994:238)

In (1) the copula is followed by a predicate nominal; the element following the verb, if present, could also consist of a postpositional phrase (e.g. dative, locative) or adverb. The schema does not mean to imply that elements cannot occur before the S. For example, focused constructions, heavily stressed, occur at the beginning of the sentence (see also §20.6.3). The following is such an example of an affirmative declarative simple sentence:

(2)     **sigé       e     u   a       kàrè**
        bush.DEF   to    3s   PFT     go
        'It is to the bush that 3s has gone.' (1994:468).

For a declarative sentence (without serial verbs or complement clauses), the basic word order seems to be:

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[5] There are four nasal consonants which Carlson treats as phonemic. He says "they are not as well established as some others." Vowels are automatically nasalized following nasals (not written).

[6] Other items could include (indirect) objects and adverbs, in that order if co-occurring.

(3)     S NEG[7] AUX DO prefix-V-suffix Other NEG

Not all categories co-occur; this is meant as a general template. Comments and examples are provided in the following:

**S**:     As stated above, items can occur before S, as in example (2).

**NEG**: Generally the copula that is glossed as NEG is at the left boundary of the verb phrase. However, the persistive AUX translating as 'still' (with imperfective V) or 'again' (with perfect) or 'no longer' can occur before the element glossed as NEG as in (4). (The full verb phrase is indicated by square brackets). See also the examples in §20.7.

(4)     **wà**          **[sàhà  ɲyɛ      a       bwɔ̀n]**      **li**      **nà**      **mɛ́**
        INDEF      [AUX NEG      PFT   hit ]           it         on       NEG
        'One did not again touch it.'[8]

In many tense/aspect forms, the initial NEG at AUX can also be indicated by a floating tone, occurring with AUXs with high tone. The negative occurring with the future AUX illustrates this pattern (see examples in §20.7). The negative generally occurs before the PRG or the PFT or one of the copulas (see examples under Negation). The NEG morpheme at the end of the clause is obligatory.

**AUX**:  Several aspectual AUXs can co-occur as the following examples show, depending on the type of AUX. The tense auxiliaries **nî** 'Recent Past' ($P_1$) and **ná** 'Remote Past' ($P_2$) combine with either the base form of the verb or the perfective form. Combinations of copula verbs with AUXs can create lengthy VPs (see §20.8). Clauses with **m/pyi** in (6) and (7) could be analyzed as clauses with serial verbs. Carlson describes the verb **pyi** 'do, make, become' as "an auxiliary in the making"; its exact function needs more investigation: it could be seen as a 'shifter', as it moves the time frame back a step. Alternatively, given its meaning, it could be emphasizing the 'process' involved. Notice that the maximum number of verbal morphemes appears to be four.

(5)     **kwùŋi      sàhà    na   sí          m̀ -pà**
        die.DEF      again    PRG   FUT         FP-come
        'Death will come again...' (1994:346)

(6)     **fyìŋa          à       pyi          à        m̀pɪ́í    sanmpɪ́í    jò**
        python.DEF   PFT   do>AUX           PFT   those   rest.DEF     swallow
        'The python had swallowed the rest of them [chickens]'. (1994:342)

(7)     **pira          à       pyi          na           múvááɲyi         bìlì-lì**
        3p.EMPH   PFT   do>AUX         PRG           tigernut.beds.DEF   gather-IPFV
        'They were harvesting the tigernut beds.' (1994:354)

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[7] What is glossed as NEG is the copula **ɲyɛ** 'be', which is used with PFT or PRG as an indicator of negation early in the sentence.

[8] The main verb 'hit' has the meaning of 'touch' in a sentence without DO as the one above.

**DO**:    This position is important in the VP structure: marking is required on the verb in most cases when the DO position is not filled (for details see §20.3). Marking on the verb also obtains when the DO has moved, i.e. fronted to focus position at the beginning of the sentence, as in the following set of examples (where zero symbol [ **Ø** ] indicates original position of moved object):

(8)    **pi na    kuru    pìŋke        pyi 'bogo'**
       3p PRG   this.EMPH  drum.DEF     call  bogo
       'They call this drum "bogo".' (1994:469)

(9)    **kuru        pìŋke        pi  ɲyɛ na    Ø      m-pyi        'bogo'**[9]
       this.EMPH   drum.DEF     3p  be   PRG            IP.call        bogo
       'It is this drum which they call "bogo".' (1994:469).

**V:**    Many verbs can be used transitively or intransitively, whereby a change in meaning might result (see example (4) and footnote (9)).

**Other:** The label covers a variety of items, for example objects and adverbs, in that order when co-occurring.

## 20.3   Verb Structure

The verb template is as follows:

(10)    Prefix-root-suffix

### *20.3.1    Prefix*

In initial position, only two prefixes may occur: in Carlson's terminology IP and FP. The IP ('intransitive prefix') is used if the verb is not immediately preceded by its direct object (applies to transitive verbs also). It is a phonologically conditioned toneless nasal, occurring only on verbs with a voiceless stop (**p**, **t**, **k** and **ʧ**). Otherwise, there is no form.

The FP ('future prefix'), a low-weak MID nasal, is used only with an AUX with future time reference (such as the AUX **sí**), and/or irrealis modality, and is not phonologically conditioned. Its segmental support disappears in transitive clauses with direct objects. Low tone remains. The FP survives as tone only where the DO precedes the V. Thus future time reference is doubly marked. These prefixes mark information concerning the preceding DO position on the verb: "[IP] is required by most tense-aspect auxiliaries when they immediately precede the verb" (1994:127). With the TA markers for perfect and Recent Past, the verbs do not require a prefix. Examples of the FP verb prefix follow (see (9) above for the IP prefix):

(11)    **ku sí      m̀-bò**
        it   FUT   FP-kill
        'It will be killed.' [10] (1994:129)

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[9] When the tense-aspect is present-progressive, the copula (**ɲyɛ** in this example) is inserted before the aspect. With other aspects in the affirmative this marking is not required.

(12)  **mìì  sî          mu   bwɔ́n**[11]
1s    FUT.FP    2s    hit
'I'm going to hit you.' (1994:129)

## 20.3.2   Root

As indicated above, the verbal root may have the following shapes: CV, CVV, CVCV, CVVCV, or CVCVCV. If the root has no prefix, one may assume that there will be a perfect or Recent Past auxiliary (see examples (2), (4), (6) and (7)).

## 20.3.3   Suffixes

There are three possible suffixes: imperfective, causative, plural/intensive. The last, which is marked by –**lV**, may be termed a "pluractional", as it indicates that the same action is performed more than once (by the same actor or different actors). It is not productive -- nor is the causative, which is marked by -**gV**, with a great deal of morphophonemic irregularity and applying only to a small group of verbs (about 20). The imperfective, marked by -**li** and several allomorphs (-**ni**, -**re**, -**ge**) and changes in tone, is productive. Examples follow:

(13)  base    **fágá**  'grab'        imperfective    **fágá-li**    'grabbing'
                **cyɛ̀rɛ́**  'be small'                      **cyɛ̀rɛ́-gɛ́**  'being small'
                **yige**   'take out'                      **yìgè**      'taking out'

## 20.4   Tense, Aspect, Mood (see also §20.6)

Supyire has both tense and aspect. There are two past tenses, both expressed as independent lexical items. There is only one future. All futures, the potential and the subjunctive appear with the 'future prefix'. In the TAM category, the basic aspectual distinction is one of perfective, the unmarked category, and the imperfective, the latter (as above) morphologically marked by suffixation on the verb. In addition to suffixation, TAM distinctions are achieved by AUXs and serial verb constructions. The present is not marked.

Besides the imperfective, the TAM morphemes are the following (using mostly Carlson's labels). The information in brackets indicates whether a prefix is required on the verb under certain conditions, and whether the form can co-occur with the perfective, i.e. the basic root, or the imperfective form of the verb. All are exemplified below:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **ná** | Remote Past ($P_2$) | [IP; PFV] |
| **nî** | Recent Past  ($P_1$) | [Ø;PFV] |
| **na** | Progressive | [IP;IPFV] |
| **màha** | Habitual | [IP;PFV/IPFV] |
| **à** | Perfect | [Ø;PFV] |
| **sáhá** | Persistive | [IP;PFV] ('still, again, no longer, not yet') |
| **sí** | Future | [FP;PFV] |

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[10] The translation in English shows a passive that is not morphologically evident in the original form.

[11] Pronouns in declaratives: 1s **mìì**. 1p **wùu**. 2s **mu**, 2p **yìì** (used as pronouns and determiners).

| **cáá**[12] | Future | [FP;PFV] (no apparent meaning difference) |
| **kú** | Potential | [FP;PFV] |
| **bú/bá** | Remote | [IP;PFV] |
| **sí** | Narrative/Sequential | [IP;PFV] |
| **ká/(a)há** | Conditional | [IP;PFV] |
| **sí** | Subjunctive | [IP;PFV] |
| **a** | Imperfective Subjunctive | [FP;IPFV] |
| **kà/hà** | Negative Subjunctive | [FP;PFV] |
| **ta** | Imperfective Imperative | [IP;IPFV] |

Examples:

(14)  a   Imperative (mood)   [PFV]

**ntɛ́  kyaàre      kwɔ́n**
this   meat.DEF    cut.PFV
'Cut this meat!' (a small amount of meat to cut)


b   Imperative (mood)   [IPFV]

**ta        ǹtɛ́     kyaàre       kwùùn**[13]
IMP.IPFV  this     meat.DEF       cut.IPFV
'Cut this meat!' (a lot of meat to cut)

(15)   Progressive (aspect) [IPFV] (ongoing action with present time reference, or iterative, or on occasion separate events but the "ongoingness" is stressed, also habitual, and, in some cases, Future)

a   **u      na   dùfinimɛ̀      béé-lì**
she[14]  PRG  potash          evaporate-IPFV
'She is evaporating potash.' (1994:312)

b   **u      na   pinŋke       bwùùn**
he     PRG  drum.DEF      hit.IPFV
'He is beating the drum.' (1994:312)

(16)   a   Habitual (aspect) [PFV] (a series of habitual events occurring together, generic)

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[12] Carlson sees no clear meaning difference between the two future markers, though **sí** is far more common (1994:335).

[13] When the root is CV, the [l] of the Imperfective -**li** is elided; the suffix vowel, if it is [-front], assimilates (1994:133).

[14] Rather than saying 3s, we have kept the gloss as presented in Carlson, where the gloss gave only he or she; cultural information included would be lost by using numerals.

| mu | màha | yìrì, | maá | ˀ | fááyi | taana | a | kwùùlò |
|----|------|-------|-----|---|-------|-------|---|--------|
| 2s | HAB | rise | and.NARR | | rock.DEF | line.up | SC | circle |

'You get up and place the stones round in a circle.' (1994:317)

This form is occasionally used to introduce formal narratives in the first clause. This "Formal Past" usage is perhaps similar to "Once upon a time"…

    b   Habitual (aspect) [IPFV] (showing duration, simultaneity)

| tire | màha | lè-nì | cení | í |
|------|------|-------|------|---|
| 3p.EMPH | HAB | put-IPFV | calabash.DEF | in |

'…they are put in the calabash'(1994:317)

(17)    Remote Past (tense)

| u | ná | m̄-pá | motóŋi | shwɔ | à | pa |
|---|-----|-------|--------|------|---|-----|
| 3s | P₂ | IP-come | motorcycle.DEF | buy | it | come |

'He finally bought a motorcycle and brought it.' (1994:332)

(18)    Recent Past (tense)  (generally earlier the same day or emotionally closer)

    a

| mìì | nî | mu | pyi | dì | yɛ |
|-----|-----|----|-----|----|-----|
| 1s | P₁ | 2s | tell | how | Q |

'What did I tell you (earlier today)?' (1994:333)

    b

| u | nî | pa |
|---|-----|-----|
| 3s | P₁ | come |

'3s came earlier today.'(1994:340)

(19)    Perfect (prototypical perfect)

| mu | a | pèè |
|----|---|-----|
| 2s | PFT | be.fat |

'You are fat/you have gotten fat.' (1994:340)

(20)    Persistives ('still, again, longer, not yet')

    a

| u | sáhá | na | lyí |
|---|------|-----|-----|
| 3s | still | PRG | eat.IPFV |

'3s is still eating.'

    b

| mu | sáhá | à | pa |
|----|------|---|-----|
| 2s | again | PFT | come |

'You have come again.'

(21) Future

a  **pi   sí    ù       bò**
   3p   FUT   FP.him   kill
   'They will kill him.'

b  **pi   sî    bá        mu   bwɔ́n**
   3p   FUT.FP remote       2s   hit
   'They will beat you tomorrow (*today).' (1994:336)

c  **mu   cáà   kapii   cè     kuru       cànŋké   e**
   2s   FUT.FP act.bad    know   that (EMPH) day.DEF   in
   'You will know (i.e. experience) a bad deed on that day.' (1994:336)

d  **mìì  cáá   m̀-pà      mu    wíí**
   1s   FUT   FP-come    2s    look
   'I'll come see you.' (1994:335)

e  **u    gú    ɲ̀-jà      ǹ-tìri     mɛ́**
   3s   POT   FP-be.able  FP-grind   NEG
   'She wouldn't be able to grind.'

In sum, we find Supyire to have both tense (Remote Past, Recent Past, Future) and aspect (PFV, IPFV (HAB, PRG), PFT, etc.).

## 20.5  Serial verbs

Lengthy serial verb constructions (with three or four verbs) are not uncommon though "the most frequent serial constructions have two verbs" (1994:289). Certain aspects are expressed by serial verbs, exemplified in the following four types of constructions, of which the inceptive is the most common (48% of all serials are of this type):

(22) Inceptive ('come/go') construction.

a  …**mà pà      a       zàntùŋɔ̀ bwùùn**
   …and  come    PRG   hyena     hit.IPFV
   …'and [the bush people] began [past from initial clause] to beat Hyena'

b  **u  a   sà   a    byànhàrè        kànhe          na**
   3s PFT go   PRG  approach.IPFV    village.DEF      at
   '3s was getting near' (lit: 'went and was approaching')
   (**Sa**, a reduced form of **shya** 'go', cannot occur by itself.)

(23) Future serial construction

**u gú ɲ̀-jà ǹ-tìri mɛ́**
she POT FP-be.able FP-grind NEG
'She wouldn't be able to grind.' (1994:291)

(24) Subjunctive serial construction

**mu ahá ˙ bú lyí à kwɔ̀ ma á**
2s CND eventual eat SC finish you.non-decl SBJ

**ná wyɛ́rɛ́ŋi wùlà à kàn náhá**
my.non.decl money.DEF take.out SSC give here
'When you finally finish eating, you must take out my money and give it here'.
(1994:292)

(25) Realis serial construction (occurs with a variety of tense-aspects with past time reference,
with habitual and conditional).

**kà pi í yí á màrà bagé tòtompé e**
and 3p NAR jump SC cling house.DEF rafters.DEF to
'They jumped and clung to the rafters.'

## 20.6 Other categories

### 20.6.1 Voice

There is no morphological passive construction in Supyire. A passive interpretation depends on
the thematic role of the NP in subject position and the aktionsart of the verb. Carlson translates
intransitive sentences where S has the thematic role of the patient as passives, based on use and
function (see example (11)).

### 20.6.2 Mood

The imperative has both a perfective and an imperfective form (see examples in (14)). The
subjunctive also shows the distinction of perfective (**sí**) and imperfective (**a**) and what Carlson
calls the "zero subjunctive". The "zero subjunctive" is found, for example, in sentences such as
the following, which is considered more polite than the "bare" imperative:

(26) a **ma taha na fyè e**
2.ND follow my.ND footprints in
'Follow me (lit. follow in my tracks), please!'

b **ma a ma**
2.ND SBJ.IPFV come.IPFV
'Come, please!'

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For prohibitive sentences, the negative subjunctive (**kà**) is used. In the following example, one of the allomorphs, **hà**, appears:

(27)　**ma　　hà　　　m̀-bwɔ̀n　li　nà　mɛ́**
　　　　2.ND PROHIB FP-touch　it　on　NEG
　　　　'Don't touch it!'

The subjunctive is also used in complement clauses:

(28)　**mìi à　　yaa　mɩ̀ì　í　　ŋ́-káɽɛ́　Sukwoo na**
　　　　1s PFT　　must　1s　SBJ IP.go　　Sikasso　at
　　　　'I must go to Sikasso.' (1994:421)

The conditional (auxiliary) is **kà** [IP.PFV]: (1994:375, but see 570ff)

(29)　**téŋi　　　kà　　ḿ-pá　ŋ́-ká**
　　　　tea.DEF　　CND　IP-come IP-boil
　　　　'When the tea comes to a boil….'

## 20.6.3　　Focus

Supyire marks two main types of focus: contrastive and "marked topic" focus. Both are indicated by moving the focused noun phrase from its ordinary place to initial position in the sentence. Carlson mentions both "strong" and "weak" focus. Here, we discuss only the more common "strong" type.

　　　　Three elements mark an affirmative focused construction: fronting, heavy intonational stress and a slight pause before the rest of the utterance (30a); in the negative, a copula or "quasi-copula" appears as in (30b, where **bà** 'it is not' fulfils this function):

(30)　a　**sigé　　　　e　　u　　a　　kàrè**
　　　　　　bush.DEF　　to　　3s　　PFT　　go
　　　　　　'It is <u>to the bush</u> that 3s has gone.' (1994:468).

　　　　b　**sigé　　　　e　　bà　　u　　a　　kàrè　mɛ́**
　　　　　　bush.DEF　　to　　AUX　3s　　PFT　　go　　NEG
　　　　　　'It isn't <u>to the bush</u> that 3s has gone.' (1994:468).

　　　　Carlson indicates (1994:469) that the clause that follows the preposed focused item receives no special marking except in one instance: if the aspect is present progressive (with the AUX **na**), the copula ɲyɛ appears before the auxiliary:

(26)　**ná　　mu　　í　　　mɩ̀ì　ɲyɛ　na　　yu**
　　　　with　you　　with　1s　　be　　PRG　speak.IPFV
　　　　'<u>It is with you</u> that I am speaking'

Encoding of a focused direct object is by preposing and the use of the IP prefix (which indicates that the object has been moved from its "typical" position) (32b).

(27)    a    unfocused direct object

       **pi  na    kuru      pìŋke        pyi 'bogo'**
       3p PRG   this.EMPH   drum.DEF     call  bogo
       'They call this drum "bogo".' (1994:469)

       b    focused direct object

       **kuru       pìŋke       pi  ɲyɛ na    Ø     m-pyi      'bogo'**
       this.EMPH  drum.DEF    3p  be  PRG           IP.call     bogo
       '<u>It is this drum</u> which they call "bogo".' (1994:469).

Adverbs of time, place and manner may be focused:

(33)    **waní  mìi  à    na  vàànyi   ta**
       there  1s   PFT 1s  cloth.DEF find
       '<u>It was there</u> that I found my clothes.' (1994:472)

Apparently, it is not possible in Supyire to focus the verb per se by clefting. Rather, verbal focus is achieved by the use of an exclamatory particle **dɛ́** placed after the verb:

(34)    **u   a     kàrè dɛ́**
       3s  PFT   go    EXCL
       'S/he has <u>left</u>!'

## 20.6.4    Relatives

Relative clauses in Supyire are all of the "restrictive" type. The most common method for indicating a relative clause is by preposing it to the main clause. In this sense, Relatives are similar to focus constructions. They differ, however, in that they are "embedded", in that they follow the pre-posed noun they modify, and must be followed by a clause-final relative marker **kɛ́** (or **gɛ́**):

(35)    **yaagɛ́      ka   a    ù    bò   kɛ́  mu  a   kùrù    cɛ́**
       thing.DEF   it   PFT  3s   kill  REL 2s   PFT it.EMPH  know
       'You know the thing <u>that killed him</u>.' (lit: 'The thing it has killed him, you know it.')

Coreferentiality is signalled both by a definite pronoun in the main clause and the use of an emphatic pronoun (here, **uru**):

(36) pùcwòŋí u ɲyɛ ná mu í ke uru sí ŋ̀-kwû
girl.DEF 3s be with 2s with REL 3s.EMPH FUT FP-die
'The girl <u>who is with you</u> will die.' (lit: 'The girl she be with you she will die.'
(1994:489)

## 20.7 Negation

Negation is marked with an obligatory clause-final negative particle and in most tenses and aspects marking also takes place in the AUX position. The main clause-final marker is **mɛ́,** with **mà** or **màà** "principally used in questions" (1994:377). The negative politeness marker is **mô**.

     The two major negative markers that occur in AUX position can be a segmental element **ɲye** (examples (37) and (38), or a floating low tone which occurs to the left of the AUX and docks onto it (examples (39-44). The markers are tense-aspect specific and some types of tense and aspect do not take these markers. In narratives/sequentials negation does not occur, and conditionals demand a very complex structure to express negation (not listed above). Some examples follow:

(37) mɪ̀ì ɲye à yaaga ta mɛ́
1s NEG PFT thing get NEG
'I didn't get a thing.'(1994:379)

(38) wùu ɲye na jínà ŋàà mɛ́
1p NEG PRG jinn see.IPFV NEG
'We don't see (a) jinn.' (1994:379)

Low tone is used with auxiliaries that express TA marking and are high-toned without negation, such as future markers **sì**, **càà**, Remote Past **nà**, Recent Past **nì,** 'still, yet' **sàhá,** 'be here' **náhá**, 'be there' **wá**:

(39) yi sì ɳ̀-jà ùrù jyìile mɛ́
3p NEG.FUT FP-be.able it.EMPH cross NEG
'They (the bush cows) won't be able to cross it (the river).' (1994:381)

(40) wáráŋi sijéréŋi nà fyììnna à
Wara.DEF celebration.DEF NEG.P$_2$ cancel NEG.Q
'Wasn't the celebration of the Wara cancelled?'[15]

(41) u nì pà mɛ́
3s NEG.P$_1$ come NEG
'He didn't come (earlier today).'

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[15] See Carlson (1994:726) for cultural information concerning the "Wara".

(42)　wùù sàhá　　sá　à　nɔ　　à
　　　　1p　NEG.yet　　go　SC arrive　NEG.Q
　　　　'Haven't we arrived yet?'

(43)　mìì sáhá ɲye　à　　ɲɛna à　　　jwo　mɛ́
　　　　1s　still NEG PFT agree SC　　say　　NEG
　　　　'I didn't any longer try (agree) to speak.'

(44)　u　nàhà　　　　˙náhá　mɛ
　　　　3s　NEG.be.here　　here　　NEG
　　　　'3s isn't here.' (1994:382)

There is no marking at all with certain auxiliaries: HAB (**màha**), what Carlson calls Potential (**kú**), and Past (**mpyi**). Clauses with these markers contain presupposed information.

## 20.8　Auxiliaries

### 20.8.1　'Be' auxiliaries

There are five verbs which are used as copulas, two of which have other functions. According to Carlson, all of these verbs are highly grammaticalized as AUXs. They are **ɲye** 'be', **pyi/mpyi** 'do, belong', used in the non-present forms, **sii** (emphatic) from the verb meaning 'begin', **náhá** 'be here', and **wá** 'be there'. Only the progressive auxiliary can be used with **ɲye**. **Mpyi** is used to indicate past, while **pyi** is also used in other tense-aspects. Examples:

(45)　kuru　　　bà　na　ɲye　kàn-bwɔ̀hɔ̀
　　　　that .EMPH　even PRG　be　　village.big
　　　　'That even is a big village.'

(46)　ku　sí　m̀-pyì wùù á　silege
　　　　it　FUT FP.be　us　to　shame
　　　　'It will be a shameful thing for us.'

(47)　kàshì a　sìì　　　　ya-pege　dɛ̀
　　　　war　PFT be.EMPH　thing-bad EXCL
　　　　'War is a really bad thing!'

The last two copulas include deictic information for **náhá** (see (44)). Their use with predicate nominals is relatively rare.

### 20.8.2　　Other TAM auxiliaries

Most of the auxiliaries that mark various tense, aspect and mood categories have transparent etymologies, many from verbs. These include inceptive aspect marker **pa**, from the verb **pa** 'to come', habitual AUX **màha**, from a verb **màhànà** 'to go around in circles', future marker **cáá** from a productive verb **cáá** 'to want' and future AUX **sí**, a reduced form of **shya** 'to go'.

Progressive AUX **na** is related to the preposition **na** 'at' or 'on'; Persistive **sáhá** is identical to an adverb meaning 'still', 'not yet'.

## References

Carlson, Robert. 1994. *A grammar of Supyire*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.