

UNUSUAL SUPYIRE CONSTRUCTIONS BORROWED FROM BAMBARA

Over 10% of single-root words in the Supyire lexical database maintained by the author (currently comprising 11,184 entries) are borrowed from Bambara . The extensive phonological alteration of many of these borrowings demonstrates the great time depth of the interaction between Senúfo languages and northern Mande languages. This interaction has not been limited to lexical borrowings, but can be shown to be pervasive in the syntax as well. This paper looks at three pairs of constructions in Bambara and Supyire and shows that the peculiarities of the alternations between members of the pairs is best explained by borrowing from Bambara into Supyire.

1. Post-verbal versus NP-internal secondary (or depictive) predicates. Both Bambara and Supyire have crosslinguistically relatively ordinary secondary predicates (cf. Schultze-Bernd and Himmelmann 2004, Himmelmann and Schultze-Bernd 2005) which are separated syntactically from their controllers, as in the following examples, in which the controller is the direct object of the main verb and the secondary predicate (underlined) follows the verb:

nsònsan b' án file nálonma yé! BAMBARA
hare PRES us look idiotic EQU
'Hare considers us idiots.' (Dumestre 2003, 257)

m̄pi na wùù wíí s̄ɲcòmii! SUPYIRE
hare PROG us look idiots
'Hare considers us idiots.'

Both Bambara and Supyire have another much more unusual construction in which the secondary predicate appears to be part of the noun phrase of which its controller is the head (something which disqualifies them as secondary predicates according to Schultze-Bernd & Himmelmann 2004):

à y' à ká dúnanke s̄ìgilen s̄òrɔ. BAMBARA
3S PAST 3S POSS guest sitting find
'He found his guest sitting.' (Dumestre 2003, 332)

u à u nàm̄pɔ̀n̄h̄í n̄intɛ̀n̄h̄i ta. SUPYIRE
3S PERF 3S guest sitting find
'He found his guest sitting.'

The Supyire construction is best explained as a calque on the Bambara construction.

2. Preposed versus postposed relative clauses. In both Bambara and Supyire, relative clauses with definite heads are normally preposed to the main clause, whereas relative clauses with indefinite heads are obligatorily postposed to the

main clause (cf. Dumestre 2003, 367; Carlson 1994,609ff). Although the details of the relative clause construction are different in the two languages (relative determiner in Bambara versus focus position in Supyire, for example), this type of alternation is best explained as another structural borrowing into Supyire from Bambara.

3. Positive versus negative conditional clauses. Conditional clauses marked solely by a conditional mood particle (*mána* in Bambara, *ká* in Supyire) may not be made negative (cf. Dumestre 2003, 366; Carlson 1994, 708ff). Instead, the corresponding negative conditional has to use the conditional conjunction (*ní* in Bambara, *ná* in Supyire), introducing a clause which apart from the conjunction is identical to an indicative. Once again, this state of affairs is best explained as a constructional borrowing by Supyire.

In all three of these cases, the constructions involved have cross-linguistically unusual characteristics. The occurrence of identical or very similar characteristics in both languages is clearly the result of constructional borrowing rather than independent syntactic development.

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