

# Gender and declension in Karaboro (Senufo)

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The Senoufo languages, Karaboro within Senoufo and the choice of Syer as variety presented here



## The agreement system in Syer: noun phrase and pronouns illustrated with relative clauses

*[[yí ηwně-y ãjn yí]]<sub>O</sub> wù na ηgbõ]<sub>RC</sub>*

DEF4 stories-Y two4 REL4 she HEST tell

‘The two stories that she told yesterday

*[mε laa Ø tò lè [yi nì]<sub>OBL</sub>]<sub>MC?</sub>*

your interior PRF fall Q PR4 at

do you remember them (lit.: has your interior fallen on them)? (Secoke 0963 35:39,91)

*[ki klùgò hyí kì]<sub>S</sub> si ná ù ηgbõ]<sub>RC</sub> ù tìgĩ,*

DEF3 owl:GV REL3 PR3 DP HOD him pinch he.PRF descend

‘The owl that has pinched him (so that) he fell down, (lit.: descended),

*[[kihìgè]<sub>S</sub> fnε sí u krè-n]<sub>MC</sub>*

EMPH3 also DP him chase-IPFV

is now chasing him.’ (Frog Syer 072 03:29,8)

Agreement  
triggers  
are bold

# The agreement system in Syer

## noun phrase - definite article

*pwõ*  
dog:U  
'dog'

*u*      *pwõ*  
DEF1      dog:U  
'the dog'

*mǎàb*  
sheep:~B  
'sheep; pl.'

*pí*      *mǎàb*  
DEF2      sheep:~B  
'the sheep, pl.'

*wugel*  
hole:L  
'hole'

*li*      *wuge-l*  
DEF5      hole-L  
'the hole'

*jè-r*  
send-R  
'commission'

*ti*      *jè-r*  
DEF7      send-R  
'the commission'

In Karaboro (Kar & Syer) the definite is marked with an article preceding the full noun.

Nouns bear suffixes, which are however not always clearly separable from the stem

# The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase - discourse demonstrative (EMPH) as determiner

wugò cɔ

1EMPH woman:U

‘this woman’

yigè nɛ̃ɲ

4EMPH cow:Y

‘these cows’

tigè brê

7EMPH play:RV

‘this play, game’

pigè snɔ̃

8EMPH oil:MV

‘this oil’

The short EMPH form:  
reconstructed Proto-Senufo  
“anaphoric” set of pronouns  
\**Ce* (Carlson 2012) still found in  
this form in Tyebari as  
“particules de rappel”  
(Laughren 1974) + (in Syer)  
suffix *-gV*.

The suffixation follows the  
regular vowel harmony with an  
unspecified target.

# The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase - discourse demonstrative (EMPH) as determiner

wuwùgò cɔ

1EMPH woman:U

‘this woman’

iyìgè nɛ̃ɲ

4EMPH cow:Y

‘these cows’

titìgè brê

7EMPH play:RV

‘this play, game’

pipìgè snɔ̃

8EMPH oil:MV

‘this oil’

The long version of the discourse demonstrative results from the combination of the definite article and the short discourse demonstrative.

# The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase - exophoric demonstrative (DEM)

*có*            *ɲwò~ ɲwà*

woman:U    DEM1

‘this woman’

*tũn*            *nnè*

work:LV    DEM5

‘this work’

*plĩy*            *nyè*

day:Y        DEM4

‘these days’

*põr*            *ndè*

mud:RV     DEM7

‘this mud’

The exophoric demonstrative has the shape NCè (C + voiced), for some agreement classes the vowel is alternatively ò, à.

# The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase - Indefinite determiner (IND) ‘certain, another ...’

*cɛ̀ɛ̀b*

woman:ˆB

‘women’

*cɛ̀-plǎ̀à*

woman-IND 2

‘certain women’

*laa*

sun-A

‘sun, time, era’

*la-gâ*

sun-IND 3

‘a certain/another era’

*nĩwùgɔ*

rainy.season:GV

‘rainy season’

*nĩwù-gà*

rainy.season-IND 3

‘another rainy season’

*fàl*

net-LV

‘net’

*fà-lâ*

net-IND 5

‘a part of the net’

When used as determiners, indefinite morphemes are most often suffixed to the noun root; they replace the usual (‘neutral’) noun suffix.



## The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase - Indefinite determiner (IND) ‘certain, another ...’

However, the indefinite determiner is not always suffixed to the root: occasionally, it follows the full noun as a free form, either

a) as an alternative to the suffixed form,

or

b) as unique possibility

a) <i>cɔ</i>	<i>cɛ-wâ</i> ~	<i>cɔ wâ</i>	
woman:U	woman-IND1	woman:U	IND1
‘woman’	‘a certain woman’	‘a certain woman’	

b) <i>wɔ-de</i>	<i>wɔde lâ</i>	<i>*wɔ-lâ</i>
knife-DE	knife-DE IND5	knife-ind5
‘knife’	‘a certain knife’	‘a certain knife’

pl. *wɔ-jɛɛ*  
knife-Jɛɛ

# The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase – interrogative ‘which’ (INT) as determiner

*gbìgaà*

pot:GVLV

‘pots’

*gbã-klèè*

pot-INT6

‘which pots’

*wlɛb*

mahogany-B

‘mahogany’

*wlɛ-pyü*

mahogany-INT8

‘which mahogany’

*plígì*

day:GV

‘day’

*blî-hyü*

day-INT3

‘which day, when?’

*nîndè*

place:DE

‘place’

*nîn-dyü*

place-INT5

‘which place, where?’

interrogative ‘which’ – form: *C-yü*

in some agreement classes

- simplification  
(AGR1 \**wyü* > *yü*),
- spirantization  
(AGR3 \**kyü* > *hyü*)
- additional -IV- suffix  
(AGR2 *plèè* and AGR6 *klèè*)

the same morphemes  
are used as relativizers  
in relative clauses

# The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase – interrogative ‘which’ (INT) as determiner

Like the indefinite determiner, the interrogative occurs as suffix or as free form which follows the full noun

- a) as an alternative to the suffixed form
- b) in more complex noun phrases, where another element intervenes between the noun stem and the INT morpheme

a)  $c\omega$                        $c\varepsilon$ -*yii*                      ~                       $c\omega$                       *yii*  
woman:U      woman-INT1                      woman:U      INT1  
‘woman’      ‘which woman’                      ‘which woman’

b) *yí*      *ɲwnɛ̃-y*      *ʃɪn*      *yíí*  
DEF4      stories-Y      two4      REL4  
‘the two stories that’  
*ɲwnɛ̃-yíí*  
stories-REL4  
‘which stories / the stories that’

# The agreement system in Syer

## noun phrase small numbers

Small numbers 1,2,3,4 and 7 show agreement with the trigger

*ndye*     *nùn*

person:∅    one1

‘one person’

*ketyigi*   *nùn*

tree:GV    one2

‘one tree’

*cilɛ*         *nùn*

calabash:LV    one6

‘one calabash’

*ndyeèb*   *fɔ̃b*

person:Ḃ    two2

‘two persons’

*ketyiy*    *fɔ̃n*

tree-Y      two4

‘two trees’

*cilɛ̃n*         *fɔ̃ã*

calabash:GVLḂ    two6

‘two calabashes’

*ndyeèb*   *trāb*

person:Ḃ    three2

‘three persons’

*ketyiy*    *tààr*

tree-Y      three4

‘three trees’

*cilɛ̃n*         *taàr*

calabash:GVLḂ    three6

‘three calabashes’

*ndyeèb*   *klɔ̃fɔ̃b*

person:Ḃ    seven2

‘seven persons’

*ketyiy*    *klɔ̃fɔ̃n*

tree-Y      seven4

‘seven trees’

*cilɛ̃n*         *klɔ̃fɔ̃ã*

calabash:GVLḂ    seven6

‘seven calabashes’

# The agreement system in Syer

noun phrase – quantifier *-jɛ-* ‘only, sole, unique, -self’

*-jɛ-* ‘only, unique, -self’ needs one of the two following supports:  
either the uniform prefix *wò-* or the discourse demonstrative of the  
respective agreement class

<i>cɔ</i>	<i>wò-jɔ</i>	~	<i>cɔ</i>	<i>wùgò-jɔ</i>
woman:U	wò-only:U		woman:U	EMPH1-only:U
‘the only woman’				

<i>cɛ̀ɛ̀b</i>	<i>wò-jɛ̀b</i>	~	<i>cɛ̀ɛ̀b</i>	<i>pìgè-jɛ̀b</i>
woman:̀B	wò-only:̀B		woman:̀B	EMPH2-only:̀B
‘the only women’				

<i>jònhìga</i>	<i>wò-jìgɛ</i>	~	<i>jònhìga</i>	<i>hìgè-jìgɛ</i>
hyena:GV	wò-only:GV		hyena:GV	EMPH3-only:GV
‘the only hyenas’				

# The agreement system in Syer

## Pronouns

Many pronouns are the same morphemes as those presented here as determiners in a noun phrase.

There is a strong association between certain agreement classes and semantic categories

AGR1 / AGR2	humans
AGR3 / AGR4	artefacts
AGR5	speech, events, problems, issues
AGR7	masses, substances
AGR8	pourables

# The agreement system in Syer

## Pronouns – anaphoric and discourse demonstratives

### a) anaphoric pronoun

### b) short discourse demonstrative

*ù*      *ligè*    *pàr*    *máà*      *hǎ* ...  
PR1:PRF    5EMPH    speak    CONS.IT(go)    finish

‘She finished saying this...’ (Madu 0499 18:38)

### c) long discourse demonstrative

[There is a thing in the water, we call it “turtle”. It catches people.]

*kihìgè*    *gá*      *pàà*      *nè*      *mε*      *páá*      *lě*.  
3EMPH    UNEX(go)    VEN      arrive    CONS      VEN(come)    stop

‘It (such a thing) suddenly came near (the girl) and stopped there.’ (Madu 0426 16:18,9)

# The agreement system in Syer

## Pronouns – indefinite pronouns

[Storyteller: “Hyena killed the speaking bird, but when its voice repeated the warning, he assembled the feathers and burned them.” A listener asks:]

*kà sī klò lè?*

IND3 NEG remain Q

‘Nothing remained?’

(Misc 0006, reformulated from Secoke 0320 12:43,10)



# The agreement system in Syer

## Pronouns – possessum pronouns

- Form: root *ɨwã-* alternatively *wã-* + suffix.
- Order in genitive constructions: genitive – possessum
- Expression of something like ‘X’s one’ or ‘the one of X’.
- The controller or trigger of the agreement is the possessum noun which has been previously mentioned or to which reference is made and which is evident from the context / from the speaker’s encyclopedic knowledge.
- The possessum pronoun replaces in such a genitive construction the trigger

*mɛ*      *ɨwãn*

your      POS7

‘yours’ (ref.: ‘to’)

*pi*   *tũŋ*      *fnɛ*, *ki*   *sî*   *mè*   *nì*   *wô*   *ɨgǎl*   *ni*   *nĩcèn*.

their work:GVLV̇   DISC   PR6   NEG   COP   with   our   POS6   with   same

‘Their works and ours are not the same.’ (Secoke 0640 25:29,77)

# The agreement system in Syer

## Copulas – simple identifier morphemes

Form: NV or NCV, vowel [+high], nasal component goes back to a copula \**ni*, known from many Niger-Congo languages;

Function: identification or categorization of a noun phrase

*cɔ*      *wũ*  
woman:U IDEN1  
'It's a woman.'

*nugò*      *wũ*  
I.EMPH      IDEN1  
'It's me.'

*jònhìga* *ɲì* ~ *ɲkĩ*  
hyena:GV IDEN3  
'This is a hyena'.

*gbãn*      *nì*  
pot:LV      IDEN5  
'This is a pot'

# The agreement system in Syer

## Copulas – deictic identifier morphemes

- Form: *NCV* , *V* corresponds to *-e* or *-a*;
- resembles exophoric demonstratives
- Function: it adds the location of the identified noun as being near the speaker or at least perceivable for him/her. Speakers use it in order to attract the listeners' attention to the entity.

*u plɔ ɲwo ...*

her husband:U DEIC.IDEN1

'Here is her husband ...' (Secoke 0182 07:55,70)

*u !ye é! syè-gà ɲge!*

he say INTERJ baobab-IND 3 DEIC.IDEN3

'He said: "Hey, what a wonderful baobab (lit.: here is a baobab)!"' (Secoke 0130a 06:01,49)

# The agreement system in Syer

## Suffixes and characteristic consonants

Gender in Senufo languages is generally an overt one, being marked on the noun itself. But some agreement elements of nominal origin show the usual **noun suffixes**, too.

- *-jɛ-* ‘only’
- (numerals)
- possessum pronoun based on the morpheme *ɲwã-* ~ *wã-* going back to the noun ‘thing, artefact’ *ɲwã-* ‘thing, object’

All other elements display the initial consonant characteristic of the respective agreement class (+ traces of a *-lV-* morpheme in the agreement classes 2 and 6)

- anaphoric pronouns and reflexive pronouns built on them: *unì, pinì*
- discourse demonstratives
- indefinite pronouns and determiners
- demonstratives
- identifiers

# The agreement system of Syer

## Agreement targets

AGR	NU	ANAPH	DEF	INDEF	EMPH		INTER	POSS
1	S,TR	(w)u	(w)u	-wâ	wugò	wuwùgò	-yii	ŋwɔ̃
2	P,TR	pi	pi	-plàà	pigè	pipìgè	-plɛ̀è	ŋwɔ̃m̀
5	S, TR	li	li	-lâ	ligè	liligè	-dyii	ŋwnɔ̃
6	TR,P	ki	ki	-klàà	higè	kihìgè	-klèè	ŋgɔ̃l
3	S, TR	ki	ki	-gâ, kâ	higè	kihìgè	-hyii	ŋwɔ̃ŋ
4	P,TR	yi	yi	-yâ	yigè	yiyìgè	-yii	ŋwɔ̃ŋ
7	TR,P	ti	ti	-râ, tâ	tigè	titìgè	-tyii	ŋwɔ̃n
8	S,TR	pi	pi	-bâ, pâ	pigè	pipìgè	-pyii	ŋwɔ̃m

8 agreement classes, AGR 1-8;

five more agreement classes with a reduced set of targets can be added for diminutives

# The agreement system of Syer

## Agreement targets

AGR	REFL	DEM	SIMPLE IDENT	DEIC.IDENT	-jɛ- 'only'
1	unì	ńwò	wũ	ɲwa, ɲwe, ɲwo	wòjɔ
2	pinì ~ binì	ńhnè	hnɛ	nhnɛ	wòjɛb
5	linì	ńnè	nì	nna ~ nne	wòjɛl
6	ginì	ńhnè	hnɛ	nhnɛ	wòjigè
3	ginì	ńgè	ɲkĩ ~ ɲ	ɲga ~ ɲge	wòjigɛ
4	yinì	ńyè	ɲì	ɲya ~ ɲye	wòjɛy
7	tinì	ńdè, ńnè	ntĩ	nda	wòjɛr
8	pinì	ńbè	mpĩ	mba ~ mbe	wòjɛb

# The agreement system in Syer

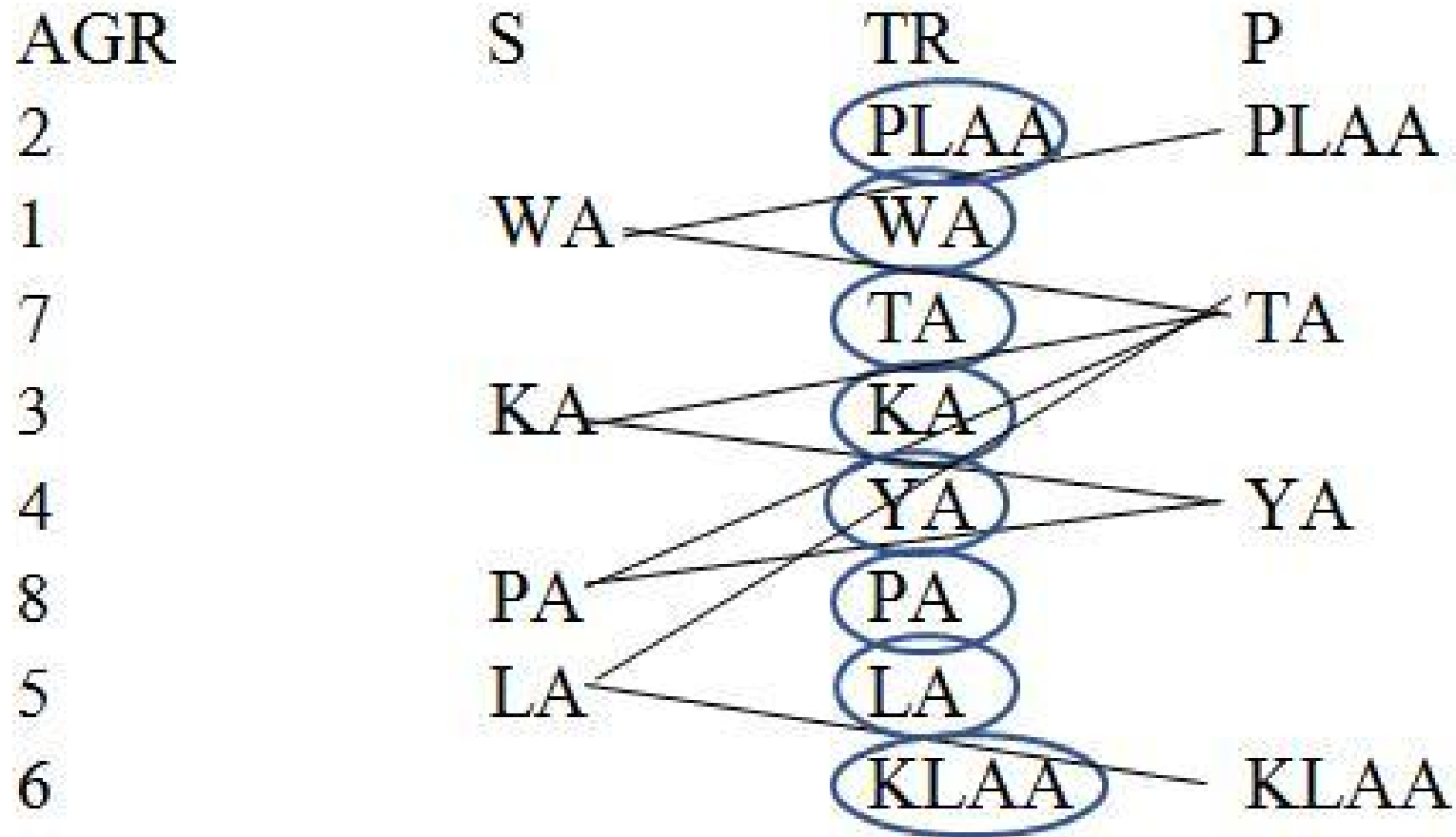
## The representation of the agreement classes

AGR	NU	ANAPH	DEF	INDEF	EMPH		INTER	POSS
1	S,TR	(w)u	(w)u	<b>-wâ</b>	wugò	wuwùgò	-yii	ηwõ
4	P	yi	yi	<b>-yâ</b>	yigè	yiyigè	-yii	ηwõη
2	P	pi	pi	<b>-plàà</b>	pigè	pipigè	-plèè	ηwõm
8	S,TR	pi	pi	<b>-pâ</b>	pigè	pipigè	-pyii	ηwõm
5	S, TR	li	li	<b>-lâ</b>	ligè	liligè	-dyii	ηwnõ
6	TR,P	ki	ki	<b>-klàà</b>	higè	kihigè	-kleè	ηgõl
3	S, TR	ki	ki	<b>-gâ, kâ</b>	higè	kihigè	-hyii	ηwõη
7	TR,P	ti	ti	<b>-tâ, tâ</b>	tigè	titigè	-tyii	ηwõn

- representation of the agreement classes by the marker set of **indefinite pronouns and determiners**, because it involves the maximal class differentiation

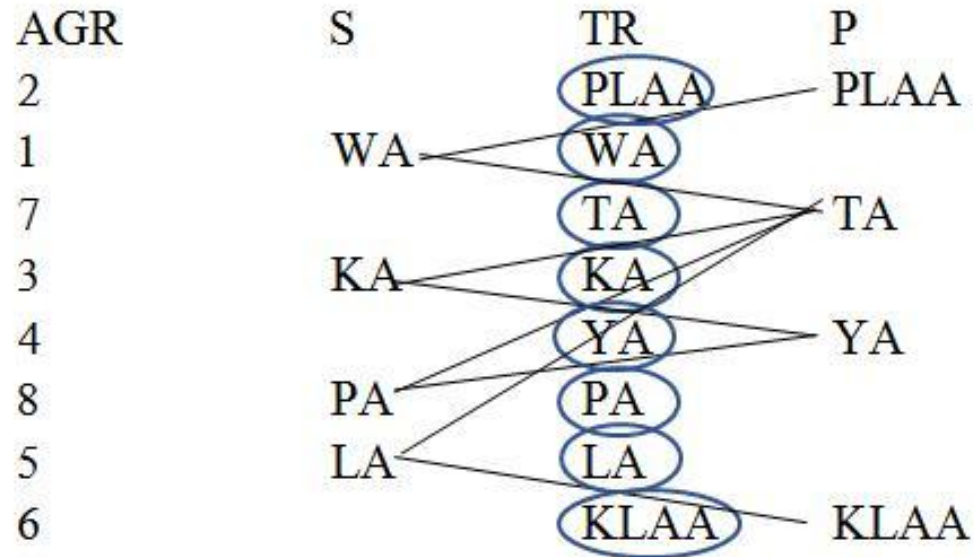
## The gender system of Syer

Gender = “classes of nouns in abstract lexicon”





## The gender system of Syer



- 8 paired genders
- all agreement classes occur with transnumeral nouns, this means that all the others are not dedicated to a single number value.
- the following singular agreement classes 1WA, 3KA, 8PA, 5LA, and the plural agreement classes 2PLAA, 4YA, and 6KLAA host also transnumeral nouns
- derivational use: the single gender 7TA (collectives, masses) is used as secondary plural; gender 3KA / 4 YA as augmentative

## The noun form classes of Syer

Noun form classes that represent the counterpart of agreement classes at morphophonological level are suffix classes. They occur on

- agreement controllers:
  - simple nouns (bearing one nominal root only)
  - compounds, including noun + adjective compounds
- and on agreement targets
  - headless adjectives
    - wĩ-tyĩ-ŋ
    - NOM-long-GV
    - ‘a long one AGR3’
  - the possessum pronoun
  - -jε- ‘only’
  - (the lower numerals)

## The noun form classes of Syer

There are 14 different noun form classes

NF	Form	NU	Examples	AGR
-U	-u	S,TR	<i>cɔ</i> ‘woman’ (cɛ-)	1
	-w		<i>nsrɔ̀</i> ‘honey’	1TR
∅	-	S,TR	<i>lɔ̀w</i> ‘(a woman’s) brother’ (lɛ̀-)	1
			<i>Sɛ̀cɔ̀ke</i> ‘woman’s name’, <i>Adama</i> ‘Adam’	1
-LV	-IV -nV  -l -n	S,TR	<i>ndye</i> ‘person’	1TR
			<i>tɔ̀gɔ̀plɔ̀</i> ‘sumbala’	1TR
			<i>dyiɲã</i> ‘world’	3
			<i>ɲɛ̀</i> ‘mouth’	3TR
			<i>ɲɛ̀</i> ‘grass’	8TR
			<i>ɲgbɔ̀</i> ‘funeral, death’, <i>hliɲ</i> ‘shame’	
-LV	-IV -nV  -l -n	S,TR	<i>cìlì</i> ‘seed, kernel’	5
			<i>cìnè</i> ‘egg’	5
			<i>keɲine</i> ‘truth’	5TR
			<i>hòl</i> ‘stool’	5
			<i>kémã̀n</i> ‘upper arm’, <i>kã̀n</i> ‘stick’	5
			<i>myĩ̀n</i> ‘voice’(myĩ̀-)	5TR

## The noun form classes of Syer

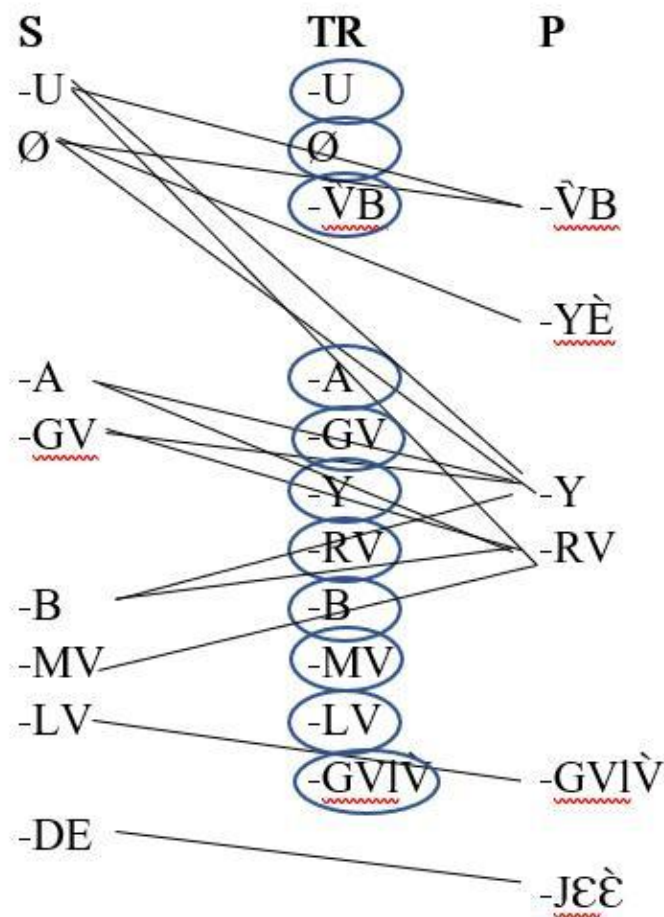
-V̂B	-(V̂)b  -̂ m  - V̂, V̂V	TR,P	<i>ŋkòòb</i> ‘chickens’ <i>˘ klèèb</i> ‘Eastern Karaboro people’ <i>nǎǎm</i> ‘men’ <i>tě̂ŋě̂m</i> ‘inhabitants of Tenguéréla’ <i>tícìrèè</i> ‘children’	2P 2TR 2 2 2
-YĚ	-yè	P	<i>bèbeyè</i> ‘deaf-mutes’ (<J. <i>bóbo</i> )	2
-DE	-de -ne	S	<i>yede</i> ‘eye’, <i>wode</i> ‘knife’ <i>kēde</i> ~ <i>kēne</i> ‘route, road’	5 5
-GVIV	-gV̂V -gV̂ -gV̂l -̂ŋ -V̂ŋ -V̂ -(V̂)l  -̂ (:)	TR,P	<i>fīgaà</i> ‘nets’ <i>pyìgē</i> ‘bowls’ <i>ŋìgèl</i> ‘horns’ <i>ŋkū̀ŋ</i> ‘navels’ <i>kěhòòŋ</i> ‘applause’ <i>hlì</i> ‘lianas’ <i>tyèl</i> ‘ponds’, <i>ʃl</i> ‘millet’ <i>jèèl</i> ‘year’	6 6 6 6 6TR 6 6 6TR 6
-JĚĚ	-jèè, jè	P	<i>wɔjèè</i> ~ <i>wɔjè</i> ‘knives’	6

## The noun form classes of Syer

-GV	-gV -ŋ	S	<i>lyige</i> ‘Borassus palm’ <i>tītùgu</i> ‘potash’, <i>cùgò</i> ‘clay’ <i>ntāŋ</i> ‘shoe’, <i>nīŋ</i> ‘root’ <i>kēmpīŋ</i> ‘sorghum’	3 3TR 3 3TR
-A	-a	S,TR	<i>fla</i> ‘place’ ( <i>flɛ-</i> ) <i>laa</i> ‘sun’	3 3TR
-Y	-y -ɲ	TR,P	<i>lyey</i> ‘Borassus palms’ <i>nīŋ</i> ‘roots’ <i>kēwrɛŋ</i> ‘crossroads’	4 4 4 TR
-TV	-rV -r -n	TR,P	<i>suru</i> ‘porridge’, <i>lyer</i> ‘Borassus palms’ <i>sur</i> ‘millet’, <i>fyɛr</i> ‘Syer language’ <i>nīŋ</i> ‘roots’ <i>ŋīkōn</i> ‘wood’, <i>ntūn</i> ‘iron’	7TR 7P 7TR 7P 7TR
-B	-b -m	S,TR	<i>wleb</i> ‘mahogany’ <i>tyib</i> ‘medicine’ <i>ŋīnāām</i> ‘tamarind’	8S 8tr 8S
-MV	-m -nV		<i>mùgòm</i> ‘salt’ <i>snō</i> ‘oil, butter’	8TR

## The declension classes of Syer

Declension classes are the morphophonological counterpart of genders, they are represented by the pairing of singular and plural noun form class exponents.



- 15 types of singular-plural pairings
- 11 noun form classes occur also with transnumeral nouns
- only 1 singular NF class (-DE) and 2 plural NF classes (-YÈ, -JÈÈ) are not used for transnumeral nouns

## Types of singular-plural pairings

S	P	example pairing	gloss
-U	-VB	<i>dỳ / dỳèèb</i>	‘boy’, ‘son’
-U	-Y	<i>sôpl̃ / sôpl̃y</i>	‘boar’
-U	-RV	<i>sôpl̃ / sôpl̃r</i>	‘boar’
∅	- VB	<i>p̃ / p̃ib (‘ p̃ib)</i>	hare
∅	-YÈ	<i>̀sò / ̀sòoyè</i>	‘cat’ (< J. s̀g̀lon)
∅	-Y	<i>̀ / ̀y</i> <i>̀higa / ̀higay</i>	‘mouth’ ‘dry season’
-LV	-GVIV	<i>c̀ / c̀g̀</i>	‘seed, kernel’
-LV	- ̀ L	<i>tyel / tyèl</i>	‘pond’
-DE	-JÈÈ	<i>k̀de / k̀jèè</i>	‘route, road’
-A	-Y	<i>̀nã / ̀ny</i>	‘story’ (̀nẽ- as in ̀nẽ-yí ‘the stories that’)
-A	-RV	<i>̀nã / ̀nr</i>	‘story’
-GV	-Y	<i>k̀tyigi / k̀tyiy</i>	‘tree’
-GV	-RV	<i>k̀tyigi / k̀tyir</i>	‘tree’
-B	-Y	<i>hlib / hliy</i>	‘mahogany’
-MV	-RV	<i>nr̀m / nr̀n</i>	‘sp. tree mostly found in humid places’

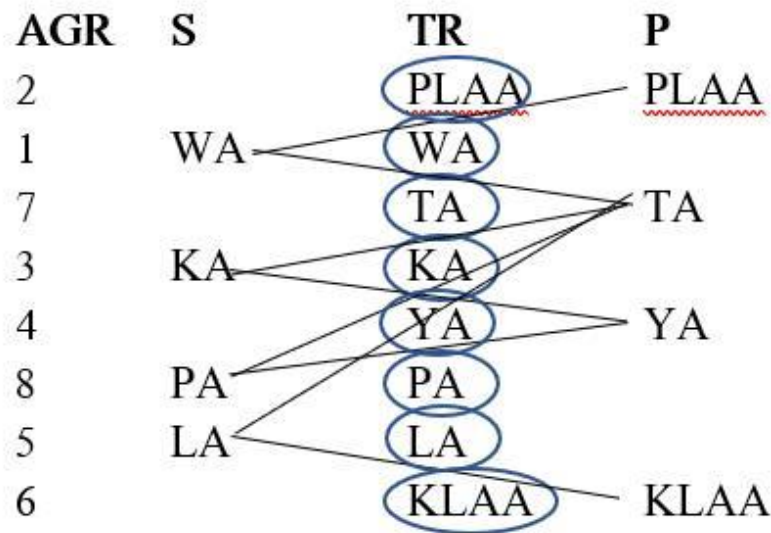
## Noun form classes for transnumeral nouns

NF	example	AGR + num
∅	<i>tògòplo</i> ‘sumbala’, <i>dyijnā</i> ‘world’ <i>ɲě</i> ‘grass’ <i>ɲgbɔ̃</i> ‘funeral, death’, <i>hlìy</i> ‘shame’	1TR 3TR 8TR
-U	<i>nsrɔ</i> ‘honey’	1TR
-LV	<i>kɛɲinɛ</i> ‘truth’, <i>myĩn</i> ‘voice’( <i>myĩ-</i> )	5TR
-GVIV	<i>kěhòòɲ</i> ‘applause’	6TR
-A	<i>laa</i> ‘sun’	3TR
-Y	<i>kěwrěɲ</i> ‘crossroads’	4 TR
-TV	<i>suru</i> ‘porridge’, <i>fyěɾ</i> ‘Syer language’, <i>ɲĩkɔ̃n</i> ‘wood’	7TR
-GV	<i>títùgu</i> ‘potash’, <i>cùgò</i> ‘clay’, <i>kěmpĩɲ</i> ‘sorghum’	3TR
-MV	<i>mùgòm</i> ‘salt’ <i>snɔ̃</i> ‘oil’	8TR
-B	<i>tyib</i> ‘medicine’	8TR
-VB	<i>těɛɲěẽm</i> ‘inhabitants of Tenguérela’, ‘ <i>klěèb</i> ‘Eastern Karaboro’	2TR

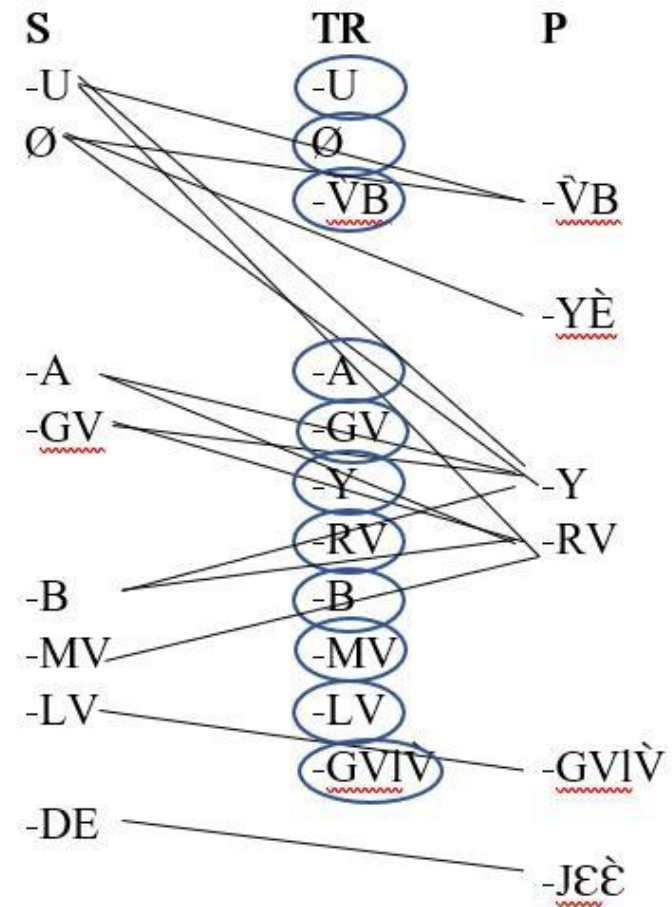


# The gender system and the declension system of Syer

The gender system with 8 paired and 8 single genders is much simpler than the declension system showing 15 different paired declensions and 11 single-class patterns.

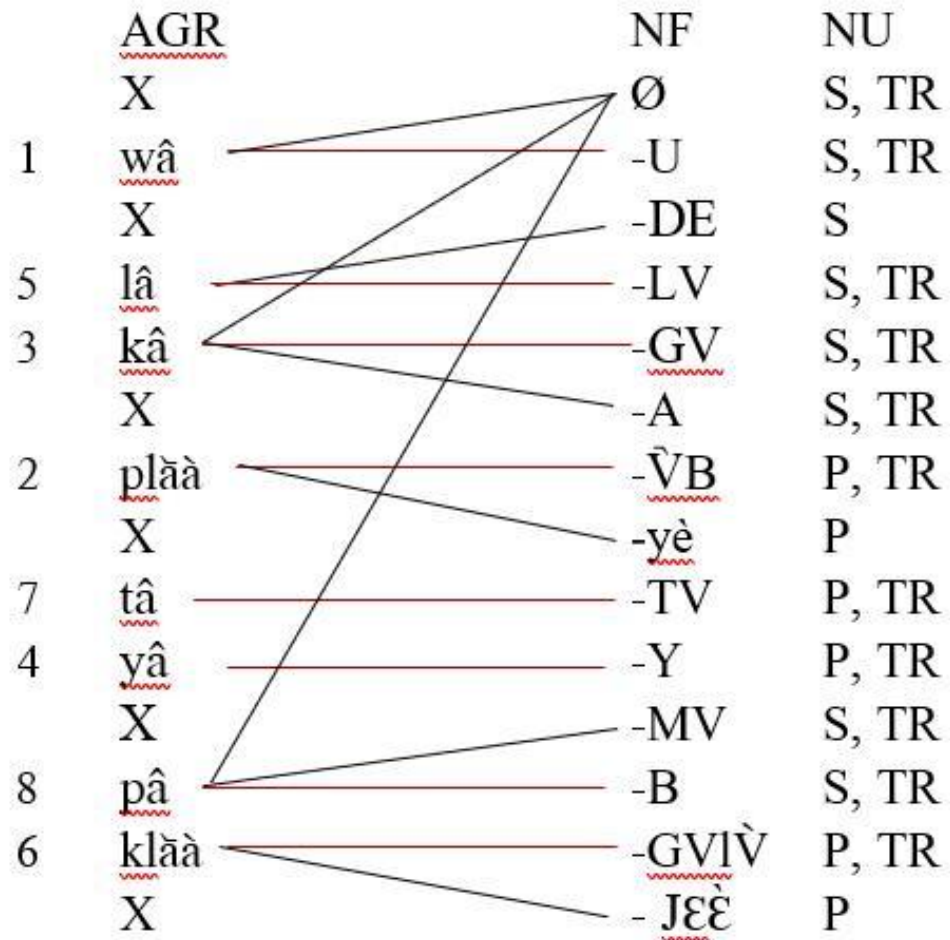


Gender system of Syer



Declension system of Syer

# The mapping of agreement and noun form classes in Syer



The differences between the gender system and the declension system are due to mismatches between agreement and noun form classes.

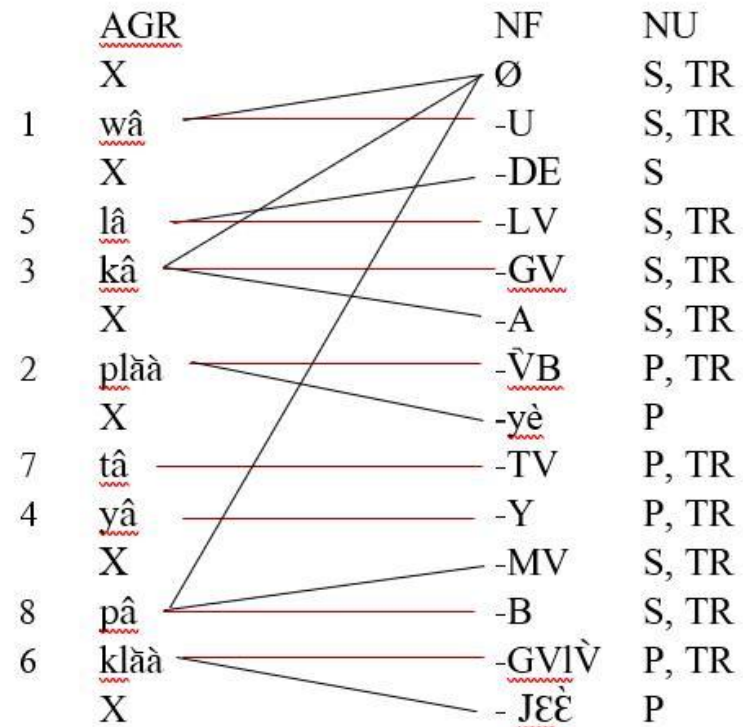
Mapping of AGR and NF in Syer

# The mismatches between agreement and noun form classes: the problem of conflation of NF and AGR

The mapping of gender and declension shows:

- 8 cases of inherited one-to-one alliterative mapping noun form classes and agreement classes

- AGR WÂ corresponds to NF -U
- AGR LÂ corresponds to NF -LV
- AGR KÂ corresponds to NF -GV
- AGR PLAÀ corresponds to NF -VB
- AGR TÂ corresponds to NF -TV
- AGR PÂ corresponds to NF -B
- AGR YÂ corresponds to NF -Y
- AGR KLÀÀ corresponds to NF -GVLV̂

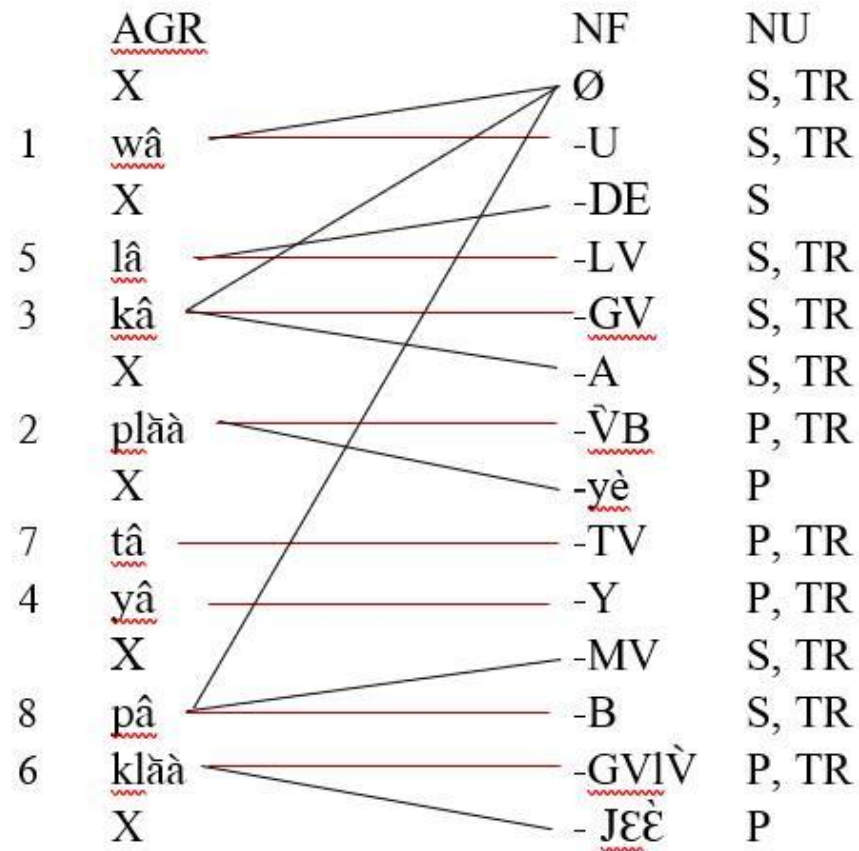


Mapping of AGR and NF in Syer

## The mismatches between agreement and noun form classes

- 6 NF classes lack an exact independent counterpart on the side of the agreement classes. These are, more precisely

- Ø,
- -DE
- -A
- -YÈ
- -M
- -JÈÈ



Mapping of AGR and NF in Syer

# The mismatches between AGR and NF classes

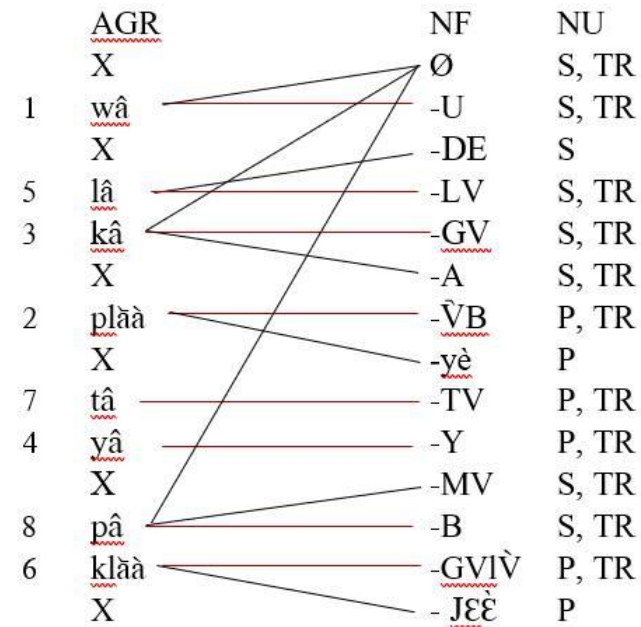
There is a NF which are represented in several AGR:

- the  $\emptyset$  NF is represented in three agreement classes,
  - 1 WÂ,
  - 3 KÂ
  - 8 PÂ

There are AGR that go with more than one NF.

The following AGR host, next to the inherited alliterative NF also the following NF:

- AGR 1 WÂ hosts the NF  $\emptyset$
- AGR 5 LÂ hosts the NF -DE
- AGR 3 KÂ hosts the NF  $\emptyset$  and -A,
- AGR 2 PLAÀ hosts the NF -YÈ
- AGR 6 KLAÀ hosts the NF -JËË
- AGR 8 PÂ hosts the NF  $\emptyset$  and -M



Mapping of AGR and NF in Syer

## Conclusions

- there is no consistent alliterative one-to-one mapping of agreement and noun form classes in Syer, because one noun form class is associated with more than one agreement class and vice-versa
- the agreement-based gender system is simpler than the declension system in size and structure, because one agreement class goes frequently with more than one noun form class
- In the closely related Eastern Karaboro varieties, especially Kar of Tiéfora described by Wichser (1994), or in the Tyebari variety Nyɛnɛɛ spoken around Kolia (Central Senufo, Rongier 2002), which have reduced their gender systems to 7 instead of 8 paired genders (Kar) or lost a single gender (Nyɛnɛɛ ) we can expect to find more agreement classes going with even more noun form classes than in Syer