

A Grammar of a Susu Xutuba

Brad Willits – Free University of Amsterdam

SOMMARIO

Questo articolo esamina un sermone musulmano susu in base ai principi dell'analisi del discorso. L'autore è infatti convinto che mentre la grammatica tradizionale opera a livello di frase, vi è un'altra "grammatica" che opera a livello di discorso. La sua analisi cerca quindi di comprendere i fenomeni del discorso susu che vengono usati in questo particolare sermone. Per definizione, tali fenomeni si manifestano nella grammatica di superficie, a differenza degli aspetti retorici che si osservano (e si interpretano) nel contenuto semantico del testo. Mentre i fenomeni del discorso vengono usati da un oratore, o da qualsiasi altro parlante nativo in analoghi contesti comunicativi, l'ambito della sua retorica si estende al di là di questi fenomeni.

Introduction to the Susu context

The Susu people



The Susu people live along the coast of West Africa in the Republic of Guinea and Sierra Leone. Their population no doubt surpasses one million, but solid statistical data is scarce. For the most part they are subsistent farmers, but along the coast many fish and process salt. Being one of the three largest ethnic groups in Guinea, they participate actively in the socio-political arena. The vast majority are Muslims, though Christianity made its

debut in the territory in the nineteenth century.

The Susu language

The Susu language belongs to the Mande family found in the Niger-Congo phylum. (Grimes, 134) It is spoken along the coast of Guinea, notably in the *préfectures* of

Boke, Boffa, Dubreka, Conakry, Coyah, Forecariah, and Kindia, as well as in the northwestern corner of Sierra Leone.

The phonetic inventory of the language is represented by 22 phonemes. The 15 consonants can be divided into stops (*p, t, k, b, d, g*), double stops (*gb*), fricatives (*f, x, h*), nasals (*m, n, ɲ*), and approximants (*l, r, y, w*). The 7 vowels can be divided into front vowels (*i, e, ɛ*), mid vowels (*a*), and back vowels (*u, o, ɔ*). They can be nasalized and lengthened. Nasalization is represented by adding a “n” after the vowel, and lengthening by doubling the vowel. The language also has two tones, low and high, but they are usually not marked in the orthography.

The syllabic structure consists of V and CV, the later being the more dominant. There is a limited set of emphatic adverbs that have a CVC structure found only at the end of a phrase.

The noun morphology includes only one suffix (*-e*), and it marks plurality. The verbal morphology has 4 affixes (*-ma, -xi, fɛ, -o*) and 6 pre-object markers (*bara, naxaa, xa, naxab, nu, na*) indicating a combination of tense and aspect.

The syntax follows a subject-object-verb word order. Expansions consisting of adverbs or post-positional phrases are phrase initial or phrase final. Subordinate conjunctions introduce subordinate clauses, which can either precede or follow the independent clauses. Relative phrases are introduced by a relative pronoun that follows the qualified noun¹.

The Susu “Xutuba”



As mentioned earlier, the majority of the Susu practice Islam. Their formal worship revolves around five liturgical prayers recited daily at 5:00, 14:00, 17:00, 19:00, and 20:00. These *sali* (“liturgical prayer”) can be performed anywhere either individually or in group. People can enter a mosque for their prayers, but it is not obligatory. However, most Muslims will typically perform their 14:00 prayer on Fridays in the mosque.

The Susu word *xutuba* refers to the sermon preached by the imam in the mosque before the 14:00 prayers on Fridays. The imam typically delivers or reads his sermon from a pulpit at the front of the mosque, or from the niche in the eastern wall of the mosque which is reserved for the imam. Frequently he divides the sermon in two parts, and delivers the second part which is usually quite short, after a brief interval. The *xutuba* plays an important role in religious formation among the Susu, since it constitutes one of the main sources of teaching for the average Muslim.

¹ For a more elaborate description of the grammar see Houis in the bibliography.

A proposed methodology

The present study proposes to analyze Susu discourse grammar in the specific context of a *xutuba*. Four different sermons were transcribed and one was chosen as the most complete and representative. The text of this sermon will be presented in such a way as to give the reader the opportunity to see the original grammar and an English translation at the same time. The layout will consist of two columns. The column on the left provides the reader with the Susu text, indented according to phrase subordination. The column on the right will offer the reader a semi-literal translation, which is understandable, yet formal enough to display key grammatical elements of the original.

The text has been divided according to the development of the theme of the sermon. Each unit has a reference number, followed by a discourse component type. This particular sermon is composed of such types as values, exhortations, narratives, and blessings. In each stanza title the semantic content summary follows the component type label. Each unit is then analyzed from a linguistic perspective with special attention to discourse features based on the surface grammar².

Since the sermon used in this research has been divided into sections, stanzas, and sub-stanzas, the reference system indicates the unit in question. The reference X3.4.2, for example, indicates the *xutuba* number 3 (X3)³, section 4, stanza 2. The sub-stanzas are divided from each other with blank lines and begin with a number to identify them.

Grammatical Description of a Xutuba

X3.1.1 – Value: God is our providing Lord.

<i>Wo bara Ala tantu,</i>	<i>You thank God,</i>
<i>mane naxan nemexi won ma.</i>	<i>who is the one who nourishes us.</i>
<i>A mu won kixi sese ra,</i>	<i>He has not given us anything</i>
<i>naxan xungbo l'Isilamu dine be.</i>	<i>greater than the Islamic religion.</i>
<i>Wo bara seedeja na Ala ma.</i>	<i>You testify that to God.</i>
<i>A mu won kixi sese ra,</i>	<i>He has not given us anything</i>
<i>naxan xungbo l'Isilamu dine be.</i>	<i>greater than the Islamic religion.</i>
<i>Won bara seedeja na Ala ma.</i>	<i>We testify that to God.</i>
<i>Won Marigi na a tan nan na.</i>	<i>He is our Lord.</i>

The first two stanzas of this sermon provide a strong doctrinal base for the discussion that will follow. The belief that God is Lord and that Mohammed is his servant and messenger lies at the heart of Islam, attested in this first stanza as the greatest gift of God to mankind.

² A separate study proposes to analyze these various sections from a rhetorical perspective.

³ Other sermons were analyzed, but this sermon was used as the base text for this research.

Given the importance of this ideological foundation, the Imam immediately employs a structural device to underline this message. Two parallel couplets envelop a single line which clearly underlines the certainty of the believer’s testimony. Both couplets marked A and A’ in the table below elevate God by claiming that he is provider and Lord. The identical couplets B and B’ state that God’s greatest gift is Islam. The single line C remains at the heart of the A-B-C-B-A structure, affirming that Muslims testify to that truth before God.

Table 1 – A-B-C-B-A structure in X3.1.1

A	You thank God, who is the one who nourishes us.
B	He has not given us anything greater than the Islamic religion.
C	You testify that to God.
B’	He has not given us anything greater than the Islamic religion.
A’	We testify that to God. He is our Lord.

Another interpretation of this structure identifies two parallel couplets surrounded by an *inclusio*. This interpretation has merit, namely that it recognizes the identical nature of the two couplets. On the other hand, the *inclusio* is deficient in that the first half has two lines while the second only has one.

Table 2 – Synonymous parallelism with inclusio in X3.1.1

<i>Inclusio a</i>	You thank God, who is the one who nourishes us.
A	He has not given us anything greater than the Islamic religion.
B	You testify that to God.
A	He has not given us anything greater than the Islamic religion.
B	We testify that to God.
<i>Inclusio b</i>	He is our Lord.

X3.1.2 – Value: Mohammed is God’s slave and messenger

<i>Won bara seedeɓa Nkila Mohamedi ma.</i>	<i>We testify to Beloved Mohammed</i>
<i>Ala xa konyi na a ra.</i>	<i>He is God’s slave.</i>
<i>Ala xa xɛera na a ra,</i>	<i>He is God’s messenger,</i>
<i>Ala xa konyi.</i>	<i>God’s slave.</i>

The same verb *seedeɓa* is used in this stanza with reference to Mohammed. The repetition in grammatical form and lexical choice provides cohesion between the two units. The copula verb construction *na a ra* identifies Mohammed both as God’s slave and his messenger. The expression “God’s slave” without a verb concludes the ABA triplet.

X3.2.1 – Value: “Donkin Sali” is a happy occasion for Muslims.

<i>La Gine die, wo xa a kolon,</i>	<i>Children of Guinea, you should know</i>
<i>a donkin sali naxan ya,</i>	<i>that this Id el Kibir before us,</i>
<i>Ala nan yi findixi xulunyi ra,</i>	<i>God made it a happy occasion,</i>
<i>a findi sara ti ra Misilimie be.</i>	<i>it is made into a “trumpet blowing” for Muslims.</i>
<i>E xa naxalinyi masen.</i>	<i>They should show happiness.</i>
<i>E naxalinyi masenma munfera?</i>	<i>Why should they show happiness?</i>

In this stanza the Imam expresses the joyfulness of the Id el Kibir celebrations with two couplets, both of which use grammatical and lexical parallelism. The first couplet uses the same verb *findi* (“make into” or “become”), while the second uses the same object-verb combination, *naxalinyi masen* (“show happiness”).

X3.2.2 – Value: These are the 5 pillars of Islam.

<i>A Misimiliya dɔxɔxi piliye suuli nan fari:</i>	<i>Islam sits on five pillars:</i>
<i>Layilaha, ilanlahu, ilanlahu, Mohamɔdu rasurulahi.</i>	<i>“There is not God but Allah,</i>
	<i>and Mohammed is his prophet.”</i>
<i>Piliye keren nan na ki.</i>	<i>That is the first pillar.</i>
<i>A firin nde, wayiximu salatu.</i>	<i>The second, ritual prayers.</i>
<i>A saxan nde, wayutuyakati.</i>	<i>The third, required alms.</i>
<i>A naani nde, sanli ramadane</i>	<i>The fourth, fasting during Ramadan.</i>
<i>A suuli nde, waxati bayitilahi Haramu.</i>	<i>The fifth, the pilgrimage.</i>
<i>Alahutala, a diine naxan fixi won ma,</i>	<i>God, the religion he gave us,</i>
<i>na piliye suuli nan na a bun ma.</i>	<i>those five pillars are under it.</i>

The Imam provides a straightforward list of the five pillars of Islam. He uses the French loan word *piliye* (French: “pillier” English: “pillar”) to introduce the list in the first line, and to conclude the list in the last line. This lexical repetition forms an *inclusio* that clearly marks the stanza boundaries.

X3.2.3 – Value: This month is important because of the pilgrimage.

<i>Na piliye suuli,</i>	<i>Those five pillars,</i>
<i>Alihamudulinlahi rabialamina,</i>	<i>Thanks be to the compassionate God</i>
<i>ne kui,</i>	<i>within the year,</i>
<i>na xundusuma yi kike nan na.</i>	<i>They culminate this month.</i>
<i>Misimilie xa mixie keli boxi birin ma,</i>	<i>Muslim people come from all lands,</i>
<i>e sa naralan na boxi seniyenxi ma.</i>	<i>they meet in that holy land.</i>
<i>Maaka tan mu kanama, Ala xa banxi rabilinyi.</i>	<i>Mecca does not end⁴, going around God’s house.</i>
<i>Hiyilae e na naralan menni,</i>	<i>When the pilgrims meet there,</i>
<i>e maɓonxi ne na.</i>	<i>they wash there.</i>

⁴ This expression is used to denote any type of destruction, cessation, or ruining, be it in a physical sense, be it in a more figurative sense.

In this stanza the Imam connects the preceding doctrinal statement to the audience's present situation, the feast of *Id el Kabir*⁵. During this month Muslims from all over the world make the required pilgrimage to Mecca. The speaker uses lexical repetition in lines 5 and 6, as well as in lines 6 and 8, to emphasize this “meeting” of pilgrims from all “lands” in the holy “land.” A looser form of lexical repetition links lines 6 and 9 with the semantic concept of cleanliness. They are meeting in a *seniyenxi* land (“holy, pure, clean”) where the pilgrims will *maḥon* (“wash”). This lexical repetition provides internal cohesion to the stanza, while the lexical repetition in the first line (“five pillars”) provides cohesion between the stanzas.

X3.3.1 – Value: The pilgrimage presents to the world that Islam is a peaceful religion.

<p>1 - <i>Misimilijna a yatagi gbete masen</i> <i>dunupe mixi dɔnxɔɛ be,</i> <i>naxee mu Misimilijna.</i></p> <p><i>Yatagi mundun?</i> <i>Misimilimie, e ngaxakeren nan e boore ra,</i> <i>barenma nan e ra.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Misilimie, i na lu e longori ra,</i></p> <p><i>i bɔne bara sa.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>I xa nafuli, i ni, i wuli, i xa yuge kobie,</i> <i>e birin bara kisi,</i> <i>ba i na Misilimie nan longori ra.</i></p> <p>2 - <i>Na Misilimijna,</i> <i>Misilimie sigama na nan masende</i> <i>dinela gbete be a nun mixie be,</i> <i>naxee mu danxaniyaxi dine yo ma,</i> <i>a fasamaxili Musimilijna bɔnesa diine [na a] ra.</i></p> <p><i>Lanyi diine na a ra.</i> <i>Bɔne rafan dine na a ra.</i> <i>Djɛ birin nalanxi i boore ma.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>A na fe kana i ma,</i> <i>i djɛ a ma.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>I sanxɔne iso a ya ra,</i> <i>i ya fa a be.</i> <i>Yi diine a kolonma na nan ma.</i></p>	<p><i>Islam shows another forehead</i> <i>to the other people of the world</i> <i>that are not in Islam.</i></p> <p><i>Which forehead?</i> <i>Muslims, they are brothers to each other,</i> <i>they are relatives.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Muslims, when you are among them</i> <i>you are at peace.</i></p> <p><i>Your riches, your life, your blood, your bad habits,</i> <i>all is saved,</i> <i>because you are among Muslims.</i></p> <p><i>That Islam,</i> <i>Muslims go to show it</i> <i>to other religions and people,</i> <i>who do not believe in any religion,</i> <i>because clearly Islam is a peaceful</i> <i>religion.</i></p> <p><i>It is a unity religion.</i> <i>It is a loving religion.</i> <i>Forgiveness is given to each other.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>When someone hurts you,</i> <i>you forgive him.</i></p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;"><i>Pull your outstretched hurt foot back,</i> <i>you let him pass.</i> <i>This religion is known by that.</i></p>
--	---

Lexical repetition plays an important role in this stanza as well. Two words from the same root, *Misilimijna* (“Islam”) and *Misimilimie* (“Muslims”) are used eight times in the first six sentences. The first sentence uses the word *Misilimijna* (“Islam”) as the first and last word of the sentence. Apparently, the speaker does this on purpose because he sacrifices grammatical accuracy (i.e. the sentence should end with a post-

⁵ This name varies from region to region (e.g. Eid al-Adha, Eid el-Kbir/Kebir, Tabaski, Eid ul-Azha, etc.).

position) to use the word in the second instance. The second sentence is a rhetorical question that also repeats a key word used in the first sentence. The next four sentences use the term *Misimilimie* (“Muslims”).

The sixth sentence uses the word *Misilimija* (“Islam”) at the beginning and end just like the first one did, though this time it does not sacrifice grammatical accuracy. These sentences are parallel not only by the use of this technique, but also in overall meaning. In fact, this resemblance could justify a sub-stanza break with the rationale that both sub-stanzas begin in the same manner. In either analysis, the speaker is clearly weaving the various parts of his discourse together creating tremendous cohesion, be it stanza internal or between stanzas.

This sixth sentence uses an interesting word which proves to be somewhat difficult to translate. This research has chosen to translate *fasamaxili* as “clearly,” but the value of the term lies at the discourse level rather than the sentence level. With this word the speaker calls attention to this proposition and affirms its importance. Here, the speaker clearly states the message of the entire stanza, that Islam is a peaceful religion. Everything in the first half of the stanza leads up to this summary statement, and everything in the second half seems to restate it in various ways.

The stanza’s final sentence plays a similar role. The first and sixth sentences stated that the Muslim pilgrimage shows the world the peaceful nature of Islam. The final sentence uses the demonstrative pronoun *na* (“that”) along with an emphatic marker (*nan*) to summarize that peaceful nature, and affirms that *yi diine* (“this religion”, i.e. Islam) is characterized by that behavior. The stanza begins by stating that Islam portrays a peaceful image, and it ends by stating that Islam can be recognized by that image.

X3.3.2 – Narrative/Value: During the pilgrimage all different kinds of people gather in peace.

<p>1 - <i>Xa [e] mini e xonyie,</i> <i>e naxa fa naralan Maaka,</i> <i>e xuie keren mara,</i> <i>e mayingixie keren mara,</i> <i>e yugue keren mara,</i> <i>e xa namunye keren mara.</i></p>	<p><i>If they leave their homes,</i> <i>and they meet in Mecca,</i> <i>their languages are not the same,</i> <i>their colors are not the same,</i> <i>their personalities are not the same,</i> <i>their customs are not the same.</i></p>
<p>2 - <i>Kɔnɔ Ala na e xili,</i> <i>e naxa naralan na,</i> <i>a toma ne birin sabatixi,</i> <i>e dijexi,</i> <i>e sese mu tinma e boore xa mantɔrɔli ra.</i></p>	<p><i>But when God calls them,</i> <i>and they meet there</i> <i>one sees they are all settled,</i> <i>they are forgiving,</i> <i>they don't want any trouble for each other.</i></p>

This stanza begins to describe the behavior of the pilgrims with two parallel sub-stanzas. After two lines referring to the gathering together at Mecca, both end with multiple lines describing the behavior of the pilgrims. The second lines in both sub-

stanzas are identical except that the second instance uses the demonstrative pronoun instead of the proper name “Mecca.”

The four lines in the first sub-stanza that describe the behavior of the pilgrims all end with the same word. The three parallel lines in the second sub-stanza do not employ this lexical repetition, but they do form a type of antithetical parallelism with the first sub-stanza. They do this by giving a description that is contrary to the expectations one could form based on the parallel lines in the first sub-stanza. For example, in the first sub-stanza one learns that they do not speak the same languages or have the same customs; yet contrary to what would be expected in a similar situation, the second sub-stanza informs the audience that the pilgrims settle together without any conflict.

X3.3.3 – Narrative/Value: During the day of Harafa different kinds of people unite.

<p>1 - <i>Na waxati, xa e bara malan menni, e xa malan xungbe lɔxe, naxan xungbo a birin be, na nan lanxi Haraf^a lɔxe ma, naxan lanxi arabe ma.</i></p>	<p><i>At that time, if they are gathered there, on their big meeting day, which is bigger than all the others, that is the “harafa” day, which is Arabic.</i></p>
<p>2 - <i>Xa e bara malan, e naxa ti Harafa kene ma, e bɔnsɛ birin, mixi miliyɔn yo naxan naralanxi, a birin ti yire keren.</i></p>	<p><i>If they gather together, they gather at the open place of Harafa, all their tribes, all the millions of people gathered, they all gather in one place.</i></p>
<p>3 - <i>Kɔbiri kanyi mu kolonma e ya ma, mange mu kolonma e ya ma, ɲalamae mu kolonma e ya ma, furema mu kolonma e ya ma, konyi mu kolonma e ya ma, xɔre mu kolonma e ya ma.</i></p>	<p><i>Rich people are not distinguished among them, rulers are not distinguished among them, the healthy are not distinguished among them, sick people are not distinguished among them, slaves are not distinguished among them, freemen are not distinguished among them.</i></p>
<p>4 - <i>E birin maxiri sose keren na, dugi mɔɔli keren nan xirixi e birin na, mafelen mɔɔli keren nan saxi e birin kɔn.</i></p>	<p><i>They are all dressed with one dress, one kind of dress dresses them all, one kind of covering is on top of them all.</i></p>

This stanza also begins with two parallel sub-stanzas, both of which use the same initial phrase, *xa e bara malan* (“if they are gathered”). The first sub-stanza refers to the time of gathering, while the second refers to the place of gathering. Lexical repetition and analogous concerns with setting link these two sub-stanzas together.

The third sub-stanza also uses lexical repetition by ending the first six lines with the same post-positional phrase *e ya ma* (“among them”). These six lines can be divided

⁶ The name of a place in Mecca where Satan is symbolically stoned.

into three couplets, the first of which describes analogous types of people in both lines (i.e. the rich and the rulers), while the last two refers to contrastive types of people in their lines (i.e. the health and the sick, the slaves and the freemen).

The final sub-stanza employs a chiasm and a case of amplified parallelism to conclude the description of the pilgrims. In the chiasm three elements are rearranged: the clothing (*dugi mooli keren* “one type of cloth”, *sose keren* “one type of dress”), the people (*e birin* “all of them”), and the action of dressing (*maxiri* “to dress” *xiri* “to tie/dress”).⁷ In the final two lines there is an amplification of this concept with the use of the more specific term *mafelen* (“Muslim head covering”), which is “laid” on top of someone’s head as opposed to “tying” it. Despite these changes, the parallelism is obvious as illustrated in the following table.

Table 3 – Chiasm and amplified parallelism in X3.3.3

(1) <i>E birin</i> they all	(2) <i>ma-xiri</i> dress	(3) <i>sose keren na.</i> with one dress
(3) <i>dugi mooli keren nan</i> one type of cloth	(2) <i>xiri-xi</i> ties/dresses	(1) <i>e birin na</i> with all of them
(3+) <i>mafelen mooli keren nan</i> one type of head dress	(2+) <i>saxi</i> lays	(1) <i>e birin kon.</i> on all of them

X3.3.4 – Value: Pilgrims are at peace with each other during the pilgrimage.

E birin xa masen Ala be,

"Konyi na n na i be.

I mato, Look,

n to faxi be,

galanbui mu na,

gere mu na."

Nde nde mu tinma a xa fe xone niya a boore ra.

I ne tima i boore ma Maaka,

i ne a falama a be, "I haake to,"

a fan a falama i be, "I haake to."

I tan naxan tixi a ma,

i ne a falama a be, "I haake to."

I tixi a tan naxan fan ma,

a fan a falama i be, "I haake to."

They all should say to God,

"I am your slave.

I came here,

there are no quarrels,

there are no wars."

Some people do not want to hurt others.

If you step on someone in Mecca,

you say to them, "Forgive me,"

he also says to you, "Forgive me."

You who stood on him,

you say to him, "Forgive me."

The one you stood on also,

he says to you, "Forgive me."

⁷ Both of these words are from the same root verb *xiri* (“tie”). The first is prefixed by a derivative marker *ma-* (repetitive action), and the second is suffixed by a verb aspect marker *-xi* (completed action).

The first sub-stanza indicates that the pilgrims in Mecca sojourn together peacefully. The second illustrates this peaceful state with a specific example, which is described in seven lines constituting two chiasmic structure. The speaker creates symmetrical structure in the unit by playing with the interaction between the “agent” (i.e. the person who stands on top of someone else) and the “experiencer”⁸ (i.e. the person who is stood upon). Subordinate clauses are used to identify these two actors. In the first case the identification is generic, but in the second case the subordinate clauses specify which actor is the agent. The following table illustrates the way the author rearranges the syntax to develop cohesion, and to maintain cognitive participation of his audience.

Table 4 - Chiasms in X3.3.4

First chiasm:

(identification of the two actors)

i ne tima i boore ma Mecca,

If you stand on your neighbor in Mecca,

(agent)

i ne a falama

you say

(experiencer)

a be, “I haake to,”

to him, “Forgive me,”

(agent ex-experiencer)

a fan a falama

he also says

(experiencer ex-agent)

i be, “I haake to.”

to you, “Forgive me,”

Second chiasm:

(identification of the agent)

I tan naxan tixi a ma,

You who stood on him,

(agent)

i ne a falama

you say

(experiencer)

a be, “I haake to,”

to him, “Forgive me,”

(identification of the agent ex-experiencer)

i tixi a tan naxan fan ma,

the one you stood on

(agent ex-experiencer)

a fan a falama

he also says

(experiencer ex-agent)

i be, “I haake to.”

to you, “Forgive me.”

⁸ This identification is based on Longacre’s definitions of semantic roles. He defines the experiencer as, “An animate entity whose registering nervous system is relevant to the predication”. He goes on to define the agent as, “The animate entity which intentionally either instigates a process or acts.” (Longacre, 155-156).

X3.3.5 – Value: Islam is a peaceful religion and God forgives those who are peaceful.

<p>1 - <i>Na na a ra, na yatagi naxa sa na ki Maaka,</i> <i>a masenfe na ra mixie be,</i> <i>xa naxan mu Musilimiḡa faxamuxi,</i> <i>a Musilimiḡa bḡesa diine na ra,</i> <i>boore maxanu diine na ra,</i> <i>lanyi diine na ra.</i></p>	<p>Therefore, that “forehead has been laid” like that at Mecca, showing to people, that do not understand Islam, that Islam is a peaceful religion, it is a loving religion, it is a unity religion.</p>
<p>2 - <i>Kḡḡ won to mu luma,</i> <i>mixi mu fe kobi raba a boore ra,</i> <i>kḡḡ a fā lu ki yo ki,</i> <i>fo won xa diḡe ne won boore be.</i> <i>Na diḡe na a niyama Ala fan diḡe won ma.</i> <i>Namiḡḡḡme naxe, “Sanlanlahu Alahi wasalama.”</i> <i>Mixi naxee kinikini dunuḡe be,</i> <i>e naxa hinne mixie ra,</i> <i>e naxa mixie haaka matanga,</i> <i>Ala fan hinnema nee nan na.</i> <i>Aligiḡama, Ala xa hinne won na.</i></p>	<p>But since we do not last without people harming each other, but at one point in time, we must forgive each other. That forgiveness makes God forgive us. The prophet says, “Great is the name of God.” People who are compassionate to the world, they do good to other people, they protect themselves from hurting people, God will do good to them. In the other world⁹, may God do good to us.</p>

This final stanza forms a perfect *inclusio* with X3.3.1 using two techniques. The first is that of lexical repetition. The speaker utilizes the same metaphor *yatagi* (“forehead”) with which he began the section to speak of Islam’s image to the world. He also repeats three descriptive titles of Islam (i.e. “a peaceful religion,” “a loving religion,” “a unity religion”), that constitute an important point of the whole sermon.

The second technique used is a summary formula. He introduces this stanza with the phrase *na na a ra* (“that is”), which has the role of introducing a summary. This phrase consists of a copula structure where the demonstrative pronoun represents the content of the discourse.

The second sub-stanza of this summary stanza mentions the inevitable human tendency to not live at peace with each other. The antidote for this is forgiveness, which eventually causes God to forgive us. The Imam concludes this stanza with a citation from the prophet, and a formal blessing in which he asks God to do good for us in the afterlife. While this is the only instance of a stanza being concluded with a citation from a religious authority, the Imam concludes other stanzas in this sermon with formal blessings.

⁹ This word indicates man’s state after life on this earth. It includes heaven, hell, and a general description of whatever man will find on the other side of death.

X3.4.1 – Narrative: The pilgrimage and the fasting started yesterday.

<i>Hiyila ne na menni xɔrɔ.</i>	<i>The Hijra is there tomorrow.</i>
<i>Musilimi donxɔɛe fan na bɔxi gbetee kui,</i>	<i>All other Muslims in other lands,</i>
<i>nee fan na sunyi.</i>	<i>they also are fasting.</i>
<i>Wo sun munfera?</i>	<i>Why do you fast?</i>
<i>Munfera xɔrɔ won naxa sun?</i>	<i>Why did you fast yesterday?</i>
<i>Won sunxi xɔrɔ nan be munfera?</i>	<i>Why did you fast exactly yesterday?</i>

The Imam begins this new section with a narrative statement followed by three rhetorical questions that introduce the subject of fasting during the month of *Donkinyi*. The content of these questions is identical, asking why Muslims fast during this time. The author draws attention to this important question not only by repeating the question three times, but also by forming a crescendo in which every formulation is amplified. The first question asks simply, “Why do you fast?” The second question adds the temporal concept by asking, “Why did you fast yesterday?” The final formulation adds the emphatic marker *nan* to say, “Why did you fast exactly yesterday?” The audience can easily connect the introductory statement that tells what happened yesterday, to the rhetorical questions that culminate with “exactly yesterday.”

Another interesting aspect of these rhetorical questions can be seen in the way that the author uses grammatical variety in formulating the questions. In each of the three lines he uses a different verb aspect marker (i.e. “*sun*,” “*naxa sun*,” “*sunxi*”), probably not to indicate some peculiar difference in nuance, but rather simply to use the legitimate grammatical free variation available in Susu to enable him to ask the same question without being monotonous.

Still another use of legitimate grammatical free variation revolves around the word order of these three questions. The SOV structure of the language is relatively rigid, but some adverbial expansions can be placed either at the beginning or the end of the sentence. The speaker uses this grammatical freedom to add movement to the three lines. He begins by placing *munfera* (“why?”) at the end, and then at the beginning, and finally at the end again.

X3.4.2 – Narrative: The angels ask God why he is creating man and putting him on the earth.

<i>1 - Ba, xɔrɔ Alahutala won gbe wɔyenyi</i>	<i>Because, yesterday God presented our words</i>
<i>ɲɔxɔma malekee be xɔrɔ ne.</i>	<i>to the angels, yesterday.</i>
<i>Ala to won daafe,</i>	<i>When God created us,</i>
<i>binye ragbilen malekee ma.</i>	<i>the honorable presentation</i>
	<i>was made to the angels.</i>
<i>2 - Malekee a i ne Ala be,</i>	<i>The angels said to God,</i>
<i>"I wama mixi nan daafe,</i>	<i>“You want to create people</i>
<i>e xa lu bɔxi?</i>	<i>so they can stay on the earth?”</i>

*E e boore tɔnegema ne,
e boore wuli raminima ne,
e bɔxi xunnakanama ne.*

*The falsely accuse each other,
they shed each other's blood,
they ruin the earth.*

3 - *Muxu tan nan bere na ra nu,
i na muxu tan lu na,
muxu "Subuhan Alahi"¹⁰ masenma ne i be.
Muxu "Alahu Akibar" masen i be,
muxu kinikin muxu boore ma,
muxu muxu belexe sa muxu boore kɔn.*

*We are agreed that if
you leave us there,
we will present to you "Glory to God."¹¹
We will say "God is great" to you,
we will have compassion on each other,
we will not hurt each other.*

4 - *Kɔnɔ i naxee daafe yi ki,
yee tan, e boore tɔnegema ne de.*

*But those that you have created,
these ones, they will falsely accuse each other.*

The speaker connects this stanza to the previous one by highlighting the word *xɔɔ* ("yesterday"), which he interestingly places at the beginning and at the end of the sentence. This anomalous usage no doubt intends to call attention not only to the link between the two stanzas, but also to the importance of this historical reason behind the fasting in question.

The historical incident consists of a conversation between God and his angels at the creation of man. The angels' quotation covers three sub-stanzas in which the personal pronouns referring to the angels and referring to the humans are contrasted. In the first stanza of the quotation *e* ("they") is used four times with reference to the *mixi nan* ("people!")¹² The first person plural exclusive pronoun *muxu* ("we") is then used six times with reference to the angels. When the author uses this pronoun, he couples it with *tan nan* (contrastive emphatic marker and a non-contrastive emphatic marker) to underline the contrast between the angels and the humans. The final shift between the two pronouns occurs with the contrastive conjunction *kɔnɔ* ("but"), the demonstrative pronoun referring to the people, and the contrastive emphatic marker.

Table 5 – Contrastive pronoun shift in X3.4.1.17-18

*Kɔnɔ i naxee daafe yi ki,
yee tan, e boore tɔnegema ne de.*

*But those that you have created,
those ones, they will falsely accuse each other.*

All of these techniques demonstrate the numerous ways in which Susu speakers can manipulate their text to emphasize their point.

¹⁰ An Arabic salutation or honorific term for God.

¹¹ Koran, 37:180.

¹² The emphatic marker *nan* is used with the noun for people.

X3.4.3 – Narrative: God shows the angels the pilgrims in peace and unity.

<i>Ala naxe, "Awayire, wo naxan tan masenxi na ki, menni tan wo nɔndi. Kɔnɔ n fe kolon e xa fe, wo mu na tan kolon." Na na ra xɔrɔ loxe na a li,¹³ dunujɛ mixi birin naxa naralan, donma keren, mafelen keren, na nan gbakuxi e birin ma. Dugi keren nan xirixi e birin na. Na leeri na yanyi ra, Ala ama ne malekee be, a naxe, "Wo wo ya ragoro bɔxi." E na e ya ragoro, a naxe, "Wo nu naxee ma, a n na e be, wo nun nee nan man yire keren yi ki. Wo nu naxee ma, e e boore tɔɲegema, wo wo ya ti e ra. E tan nan naralanxi yi ki yire keren, e mu bari banxi keren, e mu xui keren falama, e ɲingi keren mara. Kɔnɔ e tan nan wo yatagi yi ki, birin dijɛxi a boore be, birin wakilixi a boore ra. E tan nan e boore xanuxi yi ki kira keren na. E man gbilen kira keren na. Gi ti mu na. I ne tima e boore ma, i ne a falama a be, "Dijɛ," a fan a falama i be, "Dijɛ."</i>	<i>God said, "OK, that which you have said, that is true. But I know something about them, that you do not know. Therefore when yesterday arrived, all the people of the world were gathered, one shirt, one head covering, that was hanging on them all. One dress was tied on them all. That time was day time, God said to the angels, he said, "Look down on the earth." They looked down, and he said, "Those you talked about, that I was for them, you and they are in the same situation. Those you talked about, that they falsely accuse each other, look at them. They are gathered together in one place, though they were not born in the same house, they do not speak the same language, they are not the same color. But those who are before you like this, they all forgive each other, they all help each other. They love each other on the same road. They go back on the same road. There is not running and shuffling. If you step on one of them, you will say, "Forgive me," he also will say, "Forgive me."</i>
--	---

This part of the narrative consists in God's response to the angels. The Imam ties God's quotation to something that happened xɔrɔ ("yesterday") to link this episode to the previous sections. Other elements of this narrative also link back to previous statements in the discourse: that the pilgrims have the same kind of clothes and head dress, that the angels said they would falsely accuse each other, that the pilgrims are not from the same families or cultures, and that they ask each other for forgiveness. All of these elements link back to previous statements in the discourse. God's words recall all of these things and provide cohesion to the sermon as a whole.

¹³ Reference to the beginning of the Muslim pilgrimage, the "hadji".

X3.4.4 – Narrative/Value: God will forgive the pilgrims of their sins.

<p><i>A naxe, "A n ba, a tan nan ya, a n ba, n bara wo findi seede ra to, naxan birin na yi kene ma, a nun naxan n xui suxuxi yi ki to, n bara ya fa e ma, n bara e yunubi xafari, e xa gbilen e xonyi n tan Ala dijexi ra."</i></p>	<p><i>He said, "Oh my father, that is it, Oh my father, I have made you a witness today, those here in this [prayer] place, and those who obey my words today, I have looked on them, I have forgiven their sins, so they can return to their homes with a forgiving God."</i></p>
--	--

The final stanza of God’s speech to the angels proclaims that God will forgive the sins of those who are participating in the *Donkin Sali* (“Prayer of Id el Kibir”). The phrase *a tan nan ya* (lit. “it is before my eye” fig. “that is it”) presents the conclusion of God’s quotation. The use of this phrase is similar to that of *na na a ra* discussed previously. The conclusion of the matter is that he promises forgiveness for the pilgrims.

X3.4.5 - Value: We are fasting so we can be among the saved ones God talked to the angels about.

<p><i>Na na a to, won fan naxa sun xarɔ, alako na masenyi ne tima Ala yi temui naxe, a wasuma malekee be, "Wo nu naxee ma, e n matandima, i m'a to e xui suxuxi boxi fari?" A xa li won fan na na ya ma. Hali won mu fa sese kana, kɔnɔ a xa li won fan na xui suxui kui, alako Ala na a fala a bara ya fa a xui suxumae xarɔ. Won gbe xa lu na kui. Ala xa na raba won be.</i></p>	<p><i>That is the reason we also fasted yesterday, so that when God gives his speech, he will boast to the angels, "Those who you said they will disobey me, do you not see how they obey on the earth?" It should happen that we also be among them. We should ruin anything, but it should happen that we also be in obedience because God said he forgives the obedient ones yesterday. May we be among them. May God do that for us.</i></p>
--	--

The Imam concludes this section by returning to the initial question raised in X3.4.1. He had asked why people fasted “yesterday,” and he had given a hint that the reason was connected in someway to something that had happened “yesterday.” After having narrated what had taken place between God and the angels (X3.4.2-X3.4.4), he concludes the section with a stanza that begins with the phrase *na na a to* (lit. “that is it see,” fig. “that is the reason”), which claims that this is the answer to his initial question. He also links this final stanza with the initial stanza of the section by using the term *xarɔ* (“yesterday”) as an *inclusio* for the stanza.

Another discourse tool that the speaker uses to mark the conclusion of this section consists of four blessings. The first two of these blessings have a peculiar form in that

they do not mention the name of God and that the typical verb aspect marker used in blessings is not used in the “main” verb of the proposition. Both of these cases are analogous. The second one reads as follows:

Table 6 – Atypical blessing in X3.4.5

A xa li won fan na na ya ma.
 3S DES arrive 1P also be that eye at
 “May it happen that we also be among that.”

The third blessing is also peculiar in that it does not mention the name of God, but it does use the typical verb aspect marker with the main verb.

Table 7 – Atypical blessing in X3.4.5.12

Won gbe xa lu na kui.
 1P POS DES remain that in
 “May ours be in that.”

The fourth blessing utilizes the standard blessing formula quite common in Susu.

Table 8 – Typical blessing in X3.4.5.13

Ala xa na raba won be.
 God DES DP do 1P for
 “May God do that for us.”

All four of these blessings basically ask for the same thing, but the variety of forms seems to follow a crescendo which culminates in the standard form. As already seen in X3.3.6, the blessing formula typically serves as a conclusion marker. In this case the speaker concludes his discussion of the reason for the fast during *Id el Kabir*.

X3.5.1 – Value: Clarifications about the pilgrimage (Pilgrims do not fast, but they do other things.)

<p><i>Ngaxakerenyie, wasi nan na ki,</i> <i>Alahutala naxa[n] fixi won ma.</i> <i>Hiyila ne xa rafà,</i> <i>won ne sunyi.</i> <i>E tan mu sunma.</i> <i>E ne na to,</i> <i>e wali na munse ra?</i> <i>Geme mawolife, tawafufe, xun bife,</i> <i>xuruse kɔn naxabafe.</i></p>	<p><i>Brothers, that is enough,</i> <i>what God has given us.</i> <i>At the pilgrims return,</i> <i>we will be fasting.</i> <i>They do not fast.</i> <i>Today, they there,</i> <i>what is their work?</i> <i>Throw rocks, circle the ka'aba, shave the head,</i> <i>cut the throat of the animal.</i></p>
--	---

The speaker introduces the next section by addressing the people as “brothers,” and telling them that they have discussed the preceding point enough. He goes on to contrast the pilgrims’ work and the non-pilgrim’s work. While the latter are to fast, the

former are do different activities. This clearly distinguishes between those that are on the pilgrimage and those who have stayed home.

X3.5.2 – Value: Clarifications about the pilgrimage (Pilgrims do not offer a "lagiyanyi.")

Kɔnɔ e tan mu lagiyanyi bama.
Hiyila mu lagiyanyi bama.
Mixie nan tun m'a kolon hiyila
lagiyanyi ba mara.

But they do not offer the "lagiyanyi."
The pilgrim does not offer the "lagiyanyi."
People just do not know that the pilgrim is not a
person who offers the "lagiyanyi".

The last activity mentioned in the previous stanza, that of “cutting the throat of an animal,” triggers the speaker to insert a brief stanza to clarify that the pilgrims do not offer the same sacrifice as the people back home. He uses three crescendo lines that continue to add specificity to the declaration. The three lines do not augment the information given, but simply emphasize the point. The second line provides the common noun *hiyila* (“pilgrim”) which is represented by the pronoun in the first line. The first two lines use the same object-verb combination *lagiyanyi bama* (“offer the sacrifice”), while the final line changes the same two roots into a nominal construction indicating the “person who offers the sacrifice.”

X3.5.3 – Value: Clarifications about the pilgrimage (Pilgrims should go on the Humura at a separate time from the Hiyi, but it is permissible.)

1 - *I na siga hiyi,*
i naxa 'humura' raba,
i naxa hiyi raba.

When you go on the "hijra,"
you did the "humura,"
you did the "hijra."

2 - *Ala naxɛ, a tan nan a fala i be,*
konyidi na humura raba Ala be,
a a niyafɛ i be
i xa siga hiyi,
i humura fan sa na fari.

God says, he himself tells you,
when a servant does the "humura" for God,
he makes it happen for you
that you go on the hijra,
you add the "humura" to that.

3 - *A naxɛ, "Awa, di hiyi bara siga na kui.*
Xa n bara tin biyasi keren,
i lanma ne nu,
i fan xa humura raba a xati ma,
i gbilen i xɔnyi.
I man fa hiyi fan naba a xati ma,
i gbilen i xɔnyi,
yi fe fa ba won tagi.

He says, "OK, the "hijra" "son" went on that.
If I granted one trip,
you should have,
you also should do the "humura" by itself,
you [then] return home.
You also should do the "hijra" by itself,
you [then] return home,
[after] having completed this.

Kɔnɔ i to bara tin,
n to bara tin i be,
i na hiyi sɔtɔ,
i xa humura sɔtɔ yi biyasi keren na.

But since you wanted,
since I wanted for you,
when you received the "hijra"
you should also receive the "humura"
in the same trip,
you killed two birds with one stone."

I bara xɔni firin gɔnɔ gɛmɛ keren na."

In this stanza the author addresses another detail regarding the activities done on the pilgrimage. It would appear that pilgrims have the habit of making a secondary journey (“hamura”) during their pilgrimage to Mecca. In the second sub-stanza the Imam, through indirect speech attributed to God, says that God enables the pilgrim to do the pilgrimage, and then the pilgrim adds the “hamura” to it. Finally in the third sub-stanza, the speaker, using direct speech attributed to God, reprimands the pilgrims for this. However in the final two sentences God condones this practice, with a proverb saying that the pilgrim has “killed two birds with one stone.”

From a discourse perspective one should note the juxtaposed usage of direct and indirect speech. The speaker repeats the same quotation formula in both cases, namely *Ala naxe* (“God says”), but the pronouns indicate that the first case is indirect speech while the second is direct speech. The technique of closing the section with a proverb undoubtedly adds an artistic flair to a unit that would otherwise be relatively bland.

X3.5.4 – Value: Clarifications about the pilgrimage (Pilgrims should sacrifice the “habiyun” for the poor.)

<i>1 - “I lanma ne i xa kɔbiri ba.</i>	<i>You should set aside some money.</i>
<i>I lamani fima ne,</i>	<i>You will give the “lamani”</i>
<i>naxan fima n ma yi jamane misikinee ma,</i>	<i>which will be given to me</i>
	<i>in this poor foreign land.</i>
<i>E xa a don,</i>	<i>They should eat it,</i>
<i>i xuruse naxan kon naxabama.”</i>	<i>the animal whose throat you will cut.</i>
<i>2 - Na xili ne habiyun.</i>	<i>That is called the “habiyun.”</i>
<i>Hadiya na a ra,</i>	<i>It is the pilgrimage,</i>
<i>lagiyanyi mara.</i>	<i>it is not a “lagiyanyi.”</i>
<i>Hiyila fe firin na na.</i>	<i>There are two things the pilgrim must do.</i>
<i>A m’a xun.</i>	<i>It is not one of them.</i>
<i>Lagiyanyi bafe m’a xun.</i>	<i>Offer a “lagiyanyi” is not one of them.</i>
<i>Won tan naxan fan mu hiyi</i>	<i>For us who are not pilgrims,</i>
<i>lagiyanyi bafe na won tan nan xun.</i>	<i>offering a “lagiyanyi” is something we do.</i>

This first sub-stanza continues the direct speech of God that was started in the previous stanza, but he deals with a different subject, that of making a special sacrifice during the pilgrimage for the poor. In the second sub-stanza the Imam contrasts this special sacrifice called the “*habiyun*” with the normal sacrifice called the “*lagiyanyi*” made during *Donkin Sali*. This contrast is highlighted in the last five lines where the speaker drops the concept of two separate types of sacrifice, and emphasizes the two different types of people making a sacrifice, the *hiyila* (the pilgrim”) and the *naxan fan mu hiyi* (“who is not in pilgrimage”).

Table 9 – Contrast between types of worshippers in X3.5.4

Hiyila fe firin na na.
 pilgrim things two are there
 “There are two things for the pilgrim [to do].”

A m'a xun.

3S NEG 3S head

“It is not [on his] head.” (i.e. “It is not his duty.”) (N.B. It = offering *lagiyanyi*)

Lagiyanyi bafe m'a xun.

lagiyanyi offering NEG 3S head

“Offering the *lagiyanyi* is not [on his] head. (i.e. “It is not his duty.”)

Won tan naxan fan mu hiyi,

1P CONTRASTIVE who also NEG pilgrimage

“We however who are not in pilgrimage,”

lagiyanyi bafe na won tan nan xun.

lagiyanyi offering is 1P CONTRASTIVE EMPHATIC head

“Offering the *lagiyanyi* is [on] our head however.”

Looking at this contrast one notices the lexical repetition of the expression *xun* (“head”) used figuratively to indicate responsibility, the expression *lagiyanyi bafe* (“offering a *lagiyanyi*”), and the term *hiyi* (“pilgrimage”). The distribution of this lexical repetition adds a component of aesthetic symmetry as seen in the following table:

Table 10 – Symmetry of lexical repetition in X3.5.4.9-13

A	<i>Hiyila</i> (“pilgrim”)
B	<i>Lagiyanyi bafe...xun</i> (“offering a <i>lagiyanyi</i> ”)
A	<i>Hiyi</i> (“pilgrimage”)
B	<i>Lagiyanyi bafe...xun</i> (“offering a <i>lagiyanyi</i> ”)

X3.5.5 – Value: Non-pilgrims offer a "lagiyanyi."

1 - *Won fan siga sali kene ma.*

E ne na xun bife to.

E ne na e xa xuruse faxafê to,

e naxan sanbaxi Ala xa misikinêe ra

hiyi nun humura be.

We also go to the prayer place.

They are there shaving heads today.

They are there killing their animal today,

that they send to God's poor

for the hadj and the hijra.

2 - *Won fan na sali kene ma.*

Won fan na sali,

won xuruse faxa.

Won tan gbe lagiyanyi na ra

Won benba Ibrahimia xa sunna,

won tan na nan nakamalima.

Ala xa won nɔ na rabade.

We also are in the prayer place.

We also, when we pray,

we kill an animal.

Ours is a “lagiyanyi.”

Our ancestor Abraham's circumcision,

we are fulfilling that.

May God enable us to do that.

The speaker uses an interesting structure in this stanza to contrast the religious rites of the pilgrims and those who stayed home. He begins by saying that *won* (“we”) go to the prayer place. He then shifts to the pilgrims’ actions of shaving their head and killing an animal for the special sacrifice of the pilgrims. In the fourth line, the Imam returns to the actions of the non-pilgrims indicating that they pray and kill an animal. He explains that the rationale behind their sacrifice, the *lagiyanyi*, is to fulfill their ancestor Abraham’s circumcision rite.

The symmetry in this presentation displays the differences and the similarities between the two groups of people. Much has been said during the sermon to differentiate the two groups, and yet at the same time various aspects show the unity between them. In this particular stanza the pilgrims are not said to be praying (even though they do pray during the pilgrimage), while those at home are praying at the prayer place. The pilgrims shave their heads, but the non-pilgrims do not (at least as a formal part of *Donkin Sali*). The action they both perform is a sacrifice, but the two sacrifices have different purposes.

The structure of this section puts these differences and similarities in a parallel construction that facilitates the audience’s understanding of the phenomenon. The table below highlights this structure by noting the parallel elements. The elements A and A’ use similar vocabulary. Both lines of B use the same verb aspect, and both lines B’ use the same verb aspect. The information about the sacrifices given in the C lines does not use parallel grammatical structures; their resemblance is only in their analogous meanings.

Table 11 – Similarities and differences presented in X3.5.5

<i>A - Won fan siga sali kene ma.</i>	<i>We also go to the prayer place.</i>
<i>B - E ne na xun bife to.</i>	<i>They are there shaving heads today.</i>
<i>B - E ne na e xa xuruse faxafe to,</i>	<i>They are there killing their animal today,</i>
<i>C - e naxan sanbaxi Ala xa misikinee ra</i>	<i>that they send to God’s poor</i>
<i>hiyi nun humura be.</i>	<i>for the hadj and the hijra.</i>
<i>A’ - Won fan na sali kene ma.</i>	<i>We also are in the prayer place.</i>
<i>B’ - Won fan na sali,</i>	<i>We also, when we pray,</i>
<i>B’ - won xuruse faxa.</i>	<i>we kill an animal.</i>
<i>C’ - Won tan gbe lagiyanyi na ra</i>	<i>Ours is a “lagiyanyi.”</i>
<i>Won benba Ibrahima xa sunna,</i>	<i>Our ancestor Abraham’s circumcision,</i>
<i>won tan na nan nakamalima.</i>	<i>we are fulfilling that.</i>

The speaker concludes this stanza with a formal blessing. He asks God to enable the worshippers to offer a *lagiyanyi*. This prayer stems from the fact that most Susu do not have the financial means to purchase an animal for this sacrifice. It is in this light that the Imam prays for God’s assistance.

X3.5.6 – Value: Donkin Sali is a happy day for good deeds, not bad ones.

<i>1 - Ngaxakerenyie, seewe na Musulumue nan be to.</i>	<i>Brothers, joy is for the Muslims today.</i>
<i>Nalaxinyi na e tan nan be to,</i>	<i>Happiness is for them today,</i>
<i>naxee Ala xui suxuxi.</i>	<i>those who obey God's voice.</i>
<i>Neme na e tan nan be to,</i>	<i>Nourishment is for them today,</i>
<i>ba e tan,</i>	<i>because they,</i>
<i>e mu to lɔxe findima Ala matandi lɔxe xa ra.</i>	<i>they do not make today</i>
	<i>a day to disobey God.</i>

<i>2 - E bere min lɔxe mara,</i>	<i>It is not their drinking day,</i>
<i>e fare boron lɔxe mara,</i>	<i>it is not their dancing day,</i>
<i>e boore rapaaxu lɔxe mara,</i>	<i>it is not their hating day,</i>
<i>e gbe ɲɔxe lɔxe mara.</i>	<i>it is not their vengeance day.</i>

<i>3 - E sabarixi na ra to,</i>	<i>They are calm today,</i>
<i>e e boore xeebu.</i>	<i>they greet each other.</i>
<i>E e boore ki.</i>	<i>They give to each other.</i>
<i>Ala xa won findi na mixie ra.</i>	<i>May God make us that kind of people.</i>

The author provides two sub-stanzas here that each use a form of lexical/grammatical repetition. The first sub-stanza mentions three things (joy, happiness, and nourishment) that are available *nan be to* (“for them today”).

Each main proposition terminates in the same manner. The second sub-stanza uses four lines that end in *lɔxe mara* (“day” “it is not”). The four evil practices of drinking, dancing, hating, and taking vengeance are contrasted with the next three lines that say that Muslims are calm, they greet each other, and they give to each other. The first line of this third sub-stanza connects back to the first sub-stanza with the use of the word *to* (“today”). The three actions mentioned in both sub-stanzas seem to be parallel as well (i.e. being calm – joy, greeting each other – happiness, giving to each other – nourishment).

The author concludes this stanza with another blessing. He asks God to help them be *na mixie* (“that people”), referring to the kind of good Muslims that he has described.

X3.6.1 – Exhortation: Obey God's will on this happy day (do not disobey God, have mercy on others, offer sacrifices, help others).

<i>1 - Ala xa konyie, won ma xutube kui,</i>	<i>God's servants, in our sermon,</i>
<i>wo nde nan ya?</i>	<i>who are you?</i>
<i>Won naxan masenma won boore be,</i>	<i>That which we tell each other,</i>
<i>Ala matandi lɔxe mu to ra.</i>	<i>this is not a day to disobey God.</i>
<i>Won tan nan seewa lɔxe a ra.</i>	<i>We are in a day of joy.</i>

<i>2 - Kɔno yi na seriye kui:</i>	<i>But in this law:</i>
-----------------------------------	-------------------------

<i>I naxa Ala matandi, i kinikini, i serexe i halale ra. Ala matandie tan, won nu nee keren mara. Nee tan, Ala ne loxe naxe Misimilie xa seewa, nee tan Ala nan matandima. N ba, won xa jalaxin. Won xa kata, Ala feere naxan fixi won ma yi ki, won xa fan won boore ra. Won bara "Maaka" fala. Won xa fan won boore ra be.</i>	<i>You should not disobey God, show compassion, make an honest sacrifice. We are not the same as disobeyers of God. They, [when] God says day that Muslims should rejoice, they disobey God. My father, we should be happy. We should try, with the means God gives to us, we should be good to each other. We have spoken of "Mecca." We should be good to each other here.</i>
--	--

Having spoken of the ideal Muslim in the context of *Donkin Sali*, the speaker now exhorts his audience to reflect on who they are and how they are going to conduct themselves. He juxtaposes *matandi* ("disobey") and *seewa* ("rejoice") using first one and then the other five times (X3.6.1.4, 5, 10, 11, 12). In an effort to convince his audience of their moral responsibility, he contrasts "talking about Mecca," and "doing good to each other here." This type of lexical juxtaposition serves the Imam well as he exhorts his audience to obedience of God's law.

X3.6.2 – Exhortation (via rhetorical questions): We should be united like pilgrims.

<i>1 - Munfera Ala dunuja Misimilie birin kixi, e sa fa ya, e boore man yire, e sese xonyi mu dendexen na, e xan e boore, e wakili e boore ra?</i>	<i>Why does God give to Muslims from all over the world, they come together from their respective places, to a place that is not home for any of them, they forgive each other, they help each other?</i>
<i>2 - Munfera won tan naxee kelixi boxi keren ma, munfera wo tan naxee xui keren falama, munfera won tan naxee kelixi jamaane keren ma, munfera wo tan mu luma xui keren, wo tan mu lanma fe keren ma?</i>	<i>Why do you who come from the same land, why do you who speak one language, why do you who come from the same country, why do you not agree in speech, [why] do you not be unified?</i>

Having juxtaposed Mecca and "here" in the last stanza, the now speaker returns to the pilgrim motif. With two elaborate rhetorical questions, he contrasts the behavior of the pilgrims in Mecca with that of the Muslims at home. The pilgrims are obviously presented as the model to follow, since they are the ones who are "working for each other." The Muslims at home, on the other hand, receive criticism via a rhetorical question because they are not united.

From a discourse perspective, the author balances these two rhetorical questions very nicely. The first line in both sub-stanzas begins with the word *munfera* (“why”) which forms the question proper. The first sub-stanza refers to the Muslims of the whole world, while the second refers to those of one country, understood as the “here” in the preceding stanza. Each sub-stanza is balanced with the same number of lines. The first three lines in each sub-stanza deal with the origin of those being addressed. The pilgrims are from other places, while those at home are from the same land and language group. The last two lines of the each sub-stanza point to the desired or undesired behavior that is being addressed. The pilgrims are helping other, and the Muslims at home are not being of one accord.

X3.6.3 – Hypothetical: If Guinean Muslims obeyed Islam, their land would have well-being and peace.

<p>1 - <i>Wo tan, i na wo konti,</i> <i>mixi keme yo keme,</i> <i>tongo solomanaani, a nun solomanaani,</i> <i>nun solomasaxan,</i> <i>xa na mu a nun suuli,</i> <i>a birin a falama ne,</i> <i>"Layila hayilanla Mohamodu rasurulahi."</i></p>	<p><i>You, if you count yourselves,</i> <i>each hundred people</i> <i>ninety and nine,</i> <i>and eight,</i> <i>or and five,</i> <i>they all say,</i> <i>"Layila hayilanla Mohamodu rasurulahi."</i></p>
<p>2 - <i>Xa Lagine Musulumie Misilimiņa faxamu,</i> <i>e naxa sabari,</i> <i>e naxa gbesenxonnanteya lu,</i> <i>e naxa munfagiņa lu,</i> <i>‘wanlahi,’ a lima ne,</i> <i>bɔxi bara findi heeri bɔxi ra,</i> <i>a bara findi bɔjesa bɔxi ra.</i></p>	<p><i>If Guinean Muslims understood Islam,</i> <i>they calmed down,</i> <i>they quit bothering each other,</i> <i>they abandoned gossip,</i> <i>I swear, it would happen,</i> <i>the land would become a productive land,</i> <i>it would become a peaceful land.</i></p>
<p>3 - <i>Ba, won tan nan wuya ha,</i> <i>won findi fe kane ra be,</i> <i>fe bara kana na.</i></p>	<p><i>Because, we are very numerous,</i> <i>[who among us] are ruining things here,</i> <i>things are ruined there.</i></p>
<p>4 - <i>Xa won findi fe yailanyi ra be,</i> <i>fe bara yailan be.</i> <i>Ala naxa won wuya fu ra.</i> <i>Ala xa won findi seriye rakamali ra.</i> <i>Ala xa won kinikini won yete ma.</i></p>	<p><i>If we become people who fix things here,</i> <i>things would be fixed here.</i> <i>May God not multiply us in vain.</i> <i>May God make us fulfill the law.</i> <i>May God make us have compassion</i> <i>on ourselves.</i></p>

The Imam continues his direct appeal to the people to reflect on their behavior. In this hypothetical stanza he challenges them to consider the result of good Muslim conduct; it would make the land a productive peaceful place.

The author of the sermon brings out this concept in two parallel structures (X3.6.3.8-14 and 18-19). Both begin with *xa* (“if”) sentence/s, and end in result sentence/s that

use *bara*, the inchoatif verb aspect marker. To add intensity to these hypothetical structures, the speaker precedes both of them with a sub-stanza that focuses on the numerical force of the people in question.

The first of the three blessings that conclude the A-B-A-B stanza utilizes the numerical motif and prays that God will not make the people numerous in vain, or without obtaining the desired result. The last two blessings refer back to principles of good behavior referenced in the stanza.

X3.6.4 – Value: The way to salvation is to be religious and not hurt others.

<i>Muxu ne a falama wo be,</i>	<i>We say to you,</i>
<i>muxu a falama wo be fe fiixe nan fari,</i>	<i>we say to you with sincerity,</i>
<i>Wanlahi, kisi kira yo mu na,</i>	<i>I swear, there is no other salvation road,</i>
<i>fo won xuru diine ma,</i>	<i>except disciplining ourselves with religion,</i>
<i>won won boore haake matanga.</i>	<i>keeping ourselves from hurting each other.</i>

As the Imam continues to speak of the value of good conduct, he structures this stanza with lexical and grammatical symmetry. In the first two lines he utilizes *muxu*, the first person plural exclusive pronoun, as the subject, and in the last two lines he utilizes *won*, the first person plural inclusive pronoun, as subject. The third line, emphasized with an Arabic oath, utilizes a common noun as subject.

The second couplet has two lines no doubt because the author wants to express two ideal behaviors, that of following Islam and that of brotherly kindness. The first couplet could be reduced to a single line with regards to the semantic content, but the aesthetic value of the structural symmetry seems to lie behind the formation of a couplet with the second line simply expanding on the first. With two couplets at both ends of the stanza, the author has the opportunity to emphasize the eternal importance of the statement with the words *Wanlahi, kisi kira yo mu na*, (“I swear, there is no other salvation road.”) in between the two couplets.

X3.6.5 – Value: Two evil things among the Susu are a) gossipers, b) those who hate and hurt others out of envy.

<i>1 - Hali muxu tan, Sosoe to mu munafagi kolon.</i>	<i>Even us, Susu do not know gossip.</i>
<i>I ne Sosoe be munafagi,</i>	<i>If you say “gossip” to Susu,</i>
<i>a ꞑꞑꞑꞑ a ma,</i>	<i>he thinks that it means,</i>
<i>a mixi naxan sa mixi magima mixi xꞑ.</i>	<i>someone who runs to someone else.</i>
<i>2 - Sosoe man mu xꞑꞑꞑꞑꞑ kolon.</i>	<i>Susu also do not know hater.</i>
<i>I ne xꞑꞑꞑꞑꞑ,</i>	<i>You say hater,</i>
<i>e gere giri naxan ma</i>	<i>they fight that one</i>
<i>a mu dije,</i>	<i>he does not forgive,</i>
<i>a tan ama na nan na a xꞑꞑꞑꞑꞑ.</i>	<i>he says that is a hater.</i>

3 - *Ala tan xɔnyɪ, xɔnnante mu na xa ra.*
Munafagi mu na boore fan xa mu ra.

At God's place, that is not a hater.
That other one is not a gossip.

4 - *Xɔnnante na nde ra Ala xɔnyɪ?*
Mixi xa heeri xɔnɔma mixi naxan ma,

Who is a hater in God's place?¹⁴
Someone who is angry at someone else's

mixi naxan yeke a boore xa heeri ra,

well-being,
the person that laughs at his friend's well-

mixi naxan yeke a boore tide,

being,
the person that laughs at his friend's

mixi naxan yeke a ra.

importance,

E xa a fala a boore be "inuwali."

the person that laughs at him.

Mixi naxan yeke a ra,

They should tell each other "thank-you."

e xa a fala a boore be "soboti."

The person who laughs at him,
they should say to the other "that's right."

5 - *Munafagie, besɔnxɔnante na nde ra?*

Who is a gossip, trouble-maker?

Mixi naxan a panigexi,

The person who decides,

a xa a boore xa naafuli kana,

he should destroy his friend's prosperity,
even if it does not become his own.

hali a mu a tan be.

Muxu to xirixi a ra na ki,

Since we are dressed like that,

fo a lu alo muxu tan.

he also must be like us.

Na nan na ki, kɔbiri xa kana na[xan] yi,

That is why the money should be taken away
from whoever has it,

hali a mu lu a tan yi.

even if it does not become his own.

N to xirixi a ra na ki,

Since I am dressed like that,

a xa imamuna,

his being imam,

fo n na a ba na teku.

it is necessary that I take that away from him.

Muxu birin gbilen xanbi,

After we return,

hali a tan mu findi Imamu ra,

even if he does not become imam,

a naxan baxi,

the one who was removed,

na fan mu findi a ra.

that one also does not become imam.

Xɔnnante sɔnyɪ nan na ki,

That is a hater's personality,

a yeke a ra.

he laughs at him.

6 - *Ala xa neme mixi ra a ya xɔri.*

May God help people in front of him.

A na neme to mixi ma,

When he sees that person being helped,

a luxi ne alo e na te sa a tan ma.

it is like fire is being put on him.

Ala naxa won findi xɔnnante ra.

May God keep us from becoming a hater.

This long stanza consists of a symmetrical presentation of two types of undesired behavior, *munafagi* ("gossipers") and *xɔnnante* ("haters"). The first sub-stanza introduces the concept of gossip and leaves the audience to believe that gossip is more than simply talking bad about someone to someone else. The speaker does not explain the deeper sense of gossip till later in the section.

¹⁴ i.e. from God's perception.

The second stanza introduces the image of the “haters” and states that Susu minimize this behavior as superficial quarrelling. Again he leaves the impression that there is a deeper meaning yet to be explored. Both of these sub-stanzas begin with the same subject and verb in the first line, and continue with an analogous grammatical and lexical structure in the second line.

The third sub-stanza employs two rhetorical questions regarding the two categories of people in discussion, and clearly states that God’s perspective differs from the common view of these two behaviors.

Both the fourth and fifth sub-stanzas begin with questions which invite the audience to reflect on a deeper definition of *munafagie* (“gossipers”) and *xɔnnantee* (“haters”). These introductory questions link back to the third sub-stanza where they were asked the first time. The definition of a “hater” goes beyond someone who quarrels with others; it is someone who does not respect others or care for their well-being. The definition of a “gossiper” also goes beyond someone who simply talks bad about something; the very fact that someone desires to lower someone else to their own standing qualifies them as a “gossiper.” The expanded definitions emphasize in internal dimension.

The stanza concludes with two blessings. A statement after the first blessing explains its punitive motivation. The speaker requests a divine action that will torment those who misbehave in the manner previously described. The second blessing, on the other hand, requests God to help the audience not to follow the undesirable behavior in question.

X3.7.1 – Introduction to second part of Xutuba.

*Won ma xutuba rapɔnyi,
muxu munse yo xaranma won be?*

*In the conclusion of our “xutuba”
what will we read to ourselves?*

The *xutuba* typically consists of two distinct communication episodes. The imam delivers the first part, and then sits down for a few minutes before continuing with the second part. During this time the Imam can reiterate themes already presented, or he can introduce new issues. In this particular *xutuba* the second part employs multiple exhortation stanzas which refer back to issues discussed in the first half.

X3.7.2 – Exhortation: Fear God and love your neighbor as yourself.

*Won xa gaaxu Ala ya ra.
Won xa findi mixi gundi keren na.
Aligiyama mu sɔtɔma,
fo won tin Ala be.
I boore xa heeri xa rafan i ma.
I na tɔɔre to a ma,
a nimise lu i ma,*

*We should fear God.
We should become one people.
The afterlife can not be obtained,
except that we accept God here.
Your fellow man’s prosperity should please you.
If you see him suffer,
his sadness should rest in you,*

<p><i>alo tɔɔre na i tan soto,</i> <i>i nimisama ki naxe.</i> <i>I boore naxa fura,</i> <i>i palaxin.</i> <i>I boore naxa kaame,</i> <i>i palaxin.</i> <i>I boore naxa tɔɔɔ,</i> <i>i sɛɛwa.</i> <i>I wama heeri naxan xɔn ma i yete be,</i> <i>i na nan xanuma i ngaxakerenyi fan be.</i></p>	<p><i>like when you obtain suffering,</i> <i>and you are sad.</i> <i>When your fellow man is sick,</i> <i>do not be happy.</i> <i>When your fellow man is hungry,</i> <i>Do not be happy.</i> <i>When your fellow man is suffering,</i> <i>Do not be content.</i> <i>The good you want for yourself,</i> <i>you should love that for your relatives¹⁵ as well.</i></p>
---	--

This stanza consists of a series of exhortations to love one’s fellow man as yourself. The exhortations begins with the first person plural form *won* (“we”), and end with the second person singular form *i* (“you”), a clear attempt to make the application of the message more personal. Two intermediate lines put the subject of the exhortation in the third person.

In the middle of these exhortations using the positive subjunctive¹⁶ form *xa* (Subjunctive), there is a triplet which uses a rare negative imperative form. A subordinate clause referring to some type of suffering of the *boore* (“fellow man”) is followed by a negative imperative, two of which use the same verb *palaxin* (“to be happy”), while the third uses a synonym *sɛɛwa* (“to be joyful”). Positive imperatives are marked by the omission of the subject, but this negative imperative has the subject. This form could be confused with the second person aorist¹⁷ form that has the same surface structure, but the context clearly indicates that it is a negative imperative.

The final exhortation in the last two lines resembles a proverb. Instead of using the positive subjunctive to express the desired behavior as he did elsewhere in the stanza, the speaker employs the habitual verb¹⁸ to make this concluding exhortation. An overview of the forms used in this stanza demonstrates how the speaker uses the grammar to create a flowing variety in the discourse. The following table makes this flow clear to the reader.

Table 12 – Grammatical forms used in exhortations in X3.7.2

<u>Subj.</u>	<u>Verb form</u>	<u>Free translation</u>
1P	positive subjunctive	“We should fear God.”
1P	positive subjunctive	“We should become one people.”

¹⁵ Lit. “from the same mother”, Fig. “those with whom you have a relationship”.

¹⁶ The positive subjunctive verb in Susu is marked with the pre-object pre-verb particle *xa*, and indicates the desirous nature of an action. The negative subjunctive marker is *naxa*.

¹⁷ The aorist verb in Susu has a zero marker and indicates the action in question independent of manner and/or time.

¹⁸ The habitual verb in Susu is marked with a *-ma* suffix and indicates an action that takes place habitually. It can also be used to indicate an action that takes places in the future.

3S	positive subjunctive	“Your fellow man’s prosperity should please you.”
3S	positive imperative	“His sadness should rest on you.”
2S	negative imperative	“Do not be happy...”
2S	negative imperative	“Do not be happy...”
2S	negative imperative	“Do not be joyful...”
2S	habitual verb	“You should love that for your relatives.”

X3.7.3 – Exhortation: Do not do anything to make your neighbor angry.

1 - <i>Ala xa xεera naxε, "Wo naxa wo boore xɔn de. Wo nama gere de. Wo naxa wo boore raɲaaxu de."</i>	<i>God’s messenger says, “You should not hate each other. You should not fight. You should not make each other upset.”</i>
2 - <i>Na na a ra, a naxa tonyi dɔxɔ saabui birin na, saabui naxan a niyama Misimili firin xa raɲaaxu a boore ma. A mu lan muku, won nde xa sare mati i boore xa sare mati kui. Xa wo nu[n] i boore yule na makiti, saesoe bara ti a ya i, a se nde maxɔrinma a ma, i naxa a fala de, "Fa be, sare fanyi nan fa ya."</i>	<i>That means, he prohibited anything, anything which would make two Muslims be upset with each other. It is not right at all that one of us should try to sell something [to someone] while your fellow man is selling something to that same person. If you and your fellow merchant are at the market, a purchase is going on before you, he asks something of him, you should not say, “Come here, this is a good deal.”</i>
3 - <i>I na na raba, i bara xɔnnanteɲa sa wo tagi, i bara gere sa wo tagi. Wo nama na niya wo boore ra. Wo xa findi ngaxakerenmae ra Misilimɲa kui.</i>	<i>When you do that, you have put hate between you, you have put fighting between you. You should not do that to each other. You should become “relatives” in Islam.</i>
4 - <i>Ala xa won nɔ na ra.</i>	<i>May God help us to be able to do that.</i>

This exhortation stanza uses all three forms of the mitigated imperative. The two negative forms, *naxa* and *nama*, are typically considered to be synonymous, the later being the preferred form for older speakers of the language. In this passage the imam seems to use this free variation for aesthetic purposes. In the first sub-stanza he cites three commands of the prophet Mohammed using *naxa* first, *nama* second, and finally *naxa* again. In the final sub-stanza of the stanza he repeats a slightly modified form of the same structure. He uses *naxa* followed by *nama*, and then in the final command, which happens to be a positive one, he employs the *xa* form, i.e. the positive mitigated imperative.

In the middle of these two triplets the speaker chooses to use another type of imperative. This form consists of the verb *lan* preceded by the negative marker *mu* and followed by another verb using the positive mitigated imperative marker *xa*. The line in question reads: *A mu lan muku, won nde xa sare mati i boore xa sare mati kui*. (“It is not right at all, that one of us should try to sell something to someone while your fellow man is trying to sell something to the same person.”) This lexical form may be seen in the context of this unit as an attempt to emphasize the negative nature of this type of action.

The speaker organizes this stanza with a symmetrical usage of various types of mitigated commands. The following table helps to visualize this structure:

Table 13 – Symmetry of mitigated commands in X3.7.3

<i>naxa</i>	Negative subjunctive A
<i>nama</i>	Negative subjunctive B
<i>naxa</i>	Negative subjunctive A
<i>a mu lan...xa...</i>	Negative verb + positive subjunctive
<i>naxa</i>	Negative subjunctive A
<i>nama</i>	Negative subjunctive B
<i>xa</i>	Positive subjunctive

X3.8.1 – Blessings: May God help us all to be able to offer a "lagiyanyi."

<i>Won man xa a kolon</i>	<i>We should also know</i>
<i>lagiyanyi faxafe naxan won xun to,</i>	<i>the killing of the lagiyanyi</i>
	<i>that is upon us today,</i>
<i>won naxan masen,</i>	<i>that we present,</i>
<i>xa Ala m'a fixi naxee ma,</i>	<i>if God has not given it to certain ones,</i>
<i>Ala xa je gbete fi e ma,</i>	<i>may God give them another year,</i>
<i>e xa a soto.</i>	<i>that they may obtain it.</i>
<i>Ala xa won birin findi lagiyani ba ra.</i>	<i>May God make us all a lagiyanyi sacrificer.</i>

This concluding section begins and ends with semantically related blessings that form an *inclusio* around five exhortations or commands. The blessing formula in Susu consists of the name of God *Ala* in the subject slot, the subjunctive verb marker *xa*, a direct object, the main verb, and an optional expansion of the phrase. The interlinearization of the first blessing in this section exemplifies the syntactical structure of the blessing formula in Susu.

Table 14 – The blessing formula in Susu

<i>Susu:</i>	<i>Ala xa je gbete fi e ma.</i>
Gloss:	God SUBJ year other give them to.
Syntax:	SUBJECT SUBJ OBJECT VERB EXPANSION
Free :	“May God give them another year.”

In this particular blessing a resulting condition follows the blessing formula. The speaker pronounces the blessing that God give them another year, and then adds the result of that blessing, namely that “they might obtain it.”

A characteristic of this blessing, as well as the blessing found at the end of the *inclusio* in X3.8.7, is the presence of an introductory conditional statement that sets the background for the blessing. In the first four lines of this section the speaker introduces the hypothetical condition that perhaps some people present do not have the means to offer the *lagiyanyi* sacrifice. He then directs the blessing specifically to those people.

X3.8.2 – Exhortation: The one offering the "lagiyanyi" should kill the sacrifice.

<i>Lagiyanyi bama ne,</i>	<i>The sacrificer of the lagiyanyi,</i>
<i>i tan naxan a baxi,</i>	<i>you who sacrifice it,</i>
<i>a kɔn naxaba.</i>	<i>cut its throat.</i>
<i>Xa i mu nɔma,</i>	<i>If you can not,</i>
<i>i mixie yamari,</i>	<i>order others,</i>
<i>e kɔn naxaba i be.</i>	<i>they cut the throat for you.</i>

This first command provides specific instruction regarding who should actually kill the sacrifice. The first imperative clearly indicates that the person offering the sacrifice should cut the throat (*a kɔn naxaba*) of the *lagiyanyi* sheep. In the hypothetical situation that this person can not perform this act, perhaps because of sickness or old age, he can delegate others to do so in his place. This delegation forms the second imperative of the section (*i mixie yamari*). Following this direct command, the speaker indicates the result of this delegation, namely that they cut the throat for the one offering the sacrifice. In doing this he uses the same words of the first imperative, (*e kɔn naxaba*).

X3.8.3 – Exhortation: Do not put the blood of the sacrifice on your neck.

<i>Kɔnɔ i naxa a wuli so i kɔnyi ma.</i>	<i>But you should not put its blood on your neck.</i>
<i>Lagiyani wuli mu soma kɔnyi ma.</i>	<i>The blood of the lagiyanyi is not put on the neck.</i>

The second command of this section consists of two lines, the first of which is a negative command using the negative imperative marker *naxa*, and the second of which is a negative statement regarding the habitual action in question, namely that of putting the blood on one’s neck. In both lines the speaker uses the same verb (*so*) but with two different verb markers. Combined these two structures seem to reinforce each other to make the same negative command.

X3.8.4 – Exhortation: Do not hold on to someone who is touching the sacrifice when it is killed.

A firin nde mixi naxa i xa donma suxu.

Lagiyani faxe,

won mu tima tunbusu ra xa mu ra de.

Boore donma suxu keren a kɔn naxaba,

na m'a ya ma.

I tan nan a falama i xa denbaya be,

e mu donma xa mu suxuma,

wuli mu soma kɔnyi ma.

Secondly people should not hold your shirt.

*At the death of the lagiyani sacrifice,
we do not stand in a row at all.*

*Others holding the shirt of the one cutting
the throat,*

that is not to be done (lit. is not among it).

You say to your family,

they do not hold his shirt at all,

the blood is not put on the neck.

This command uses the same dual structure used in the previous command, namely that of a negative imperative followed by a negative statement using a habitual verb marker. Following these two reiterations of the command, a third statement uses a stative structure to emphasize the same thing. The action is described in a simple statement, and then a demonstrative pronoun representing the action is used in a negative stative statement: *Na m'a ya ma*. (“That (is) not among it.”) The three distinct grammatical structures are used in conjunction with each other to emphasize the same negative command.

Table 15 – One command using three grammatical structures

<i>Mixi naxa i xa donma suxu.</i>	Negative imperative
“People should not hold your shirt.”	
<i>Won mu tima tunbusu ra.</i>	Negative + habitual verb (-ma)
“We do not stand in a row.”	
<i>Na m'a ya ma.</i>	Pronoun + negative + implied copula
“That is not among it.”	

While this command constitutes the third command of the section (see X3.8.2 and X3.8.3), the speaker introduces it with the adverbial phrase *a firin nde* (“secondly”). This can be explained by underlining the couplet structure employed in the section. Of the five exhortations, the speaker presents the first in a positive structure, but the next four are stated using a negative structure. Furthermore, the last four are divided into two couplets. The second negative command of these two couplets is marked. X3.8.4 uses the adverbial phrase *a firin nde* (“secondly”), and X3.8.6 uses the adverb *man* (“also”).

Another indication that the four negative commands are divided into two couplets can be seen in the fact that the first couplet concludes with a summary of the first two negative commands. Both of these commands are presented using the negative habitual verb structure.

X3.8.5 – Exhortation: Do not save the head and feet as a holy part of the sacrifice.

<p><i>A falafe ba, a xunyi nun a sanyie a mu donma muku, fo Yonbente, nondi mara. Xa lagiyanyi ge faxade, naxan na i kenen, na don. Xa a nde nan jinma nunmare ra, a jin, a don. Ala xa won no na ra. I naxa fefe sa ne. Sese m'a ya ma. A a kon nan naxabama, serexe na a ra.</i></p>	<p><i>The saying that, his head and his feet should not be ate at all, except on Yonbente, that is not true. If the lagiyanyi sacrifice has been killed, that which you like, eat it. If some is to be cooked in the evening, cook it, eat it. May God enable us to do that. Do not put anything aside. There is nothing special in that. His throat is to be cut, it is a sacrifice.</i></p>
--	---

The essence of this command is that no part of the sacrifice should be set aside as something with special spiritual significance to be eaten at a later date. The speaker begins his argument by saying that the statement that such a practice should be followed is false. He counteracts that false idea with two positive imperatives saying that one should eat whatever part of the sacrifice desired. In both cases these imperatives are preceded with a conditional subordinate phrase. These two statements are then followed by a blessing wishing that the audience will be able to partake of such a sacrifice. The unit concludes with a strong negative imperative saying that no part of the sacrifice should be put aside. The speaker then repeats the same point with an affirmation using the negative stative structure *Sese m'a ya ma*. (“There is nothing among it.”), followed by another affirmation using the positive stative structure *Serexe na a ra*. (“It is a sacrifice.”)

In making this point the speaker uses a complex yet balanced variety of structures. The structures seem to go back and forth from a positive to a negative perspective in a balanced and symmetrical fashion. Negative and positive statives, as well as negative and positive imperatives are put in juxtaposition, while a blessing seems to mark the middle of the unit. The following table illustrates this balance of grammatical structures.

Table 16 – Grammatical symmetry between positive and negative structures

<i>Nondi mara.</i>	Negative stative	A
<i>Xa...na don.</i>	Conditional – Positive Imperative x 2	B
<i>Ala xa...</i>	Blessing	C
<i>I naxa fefe sa ne.</i>	Negative Imperative	B
<i>Sese m'a ya ma.</i>	Negative stative	A
<i>Serexe na a ra.</i>	Positive stative	A'

X3.8.6 – Exhortation: Do not distribute small pieces of the meat to others unless you give them enough for a meal along with sauce.

<p>1 - <i>Wo man naxa a dɔxɔ segere ma,</i> <i>i mixi fu ki lagiyani</i> <i>e mu bɔrɛ sɔtɔ.</i> <i>A wo xa xuruse faxa,</i> <i>wo xa kaametɔɛ ki.</i> <i>I na i xa lagiyani sube fi naxan ma,</i> <i>a fan xa bɔrɛ sɔtɔ.</i></p>	<p><i>You (pl.) also should not put it in a basket,</i> <i>you give 10 people lagiyani sacrifice (meat),</i> <i>they do not obtain sauce.</i> <i>When you kill the animal,</i> <i>you should give to the hungry.</i> <i>When you give lagiyani meat to people,</i> <i>he/she should also get sauce.</i></p>
<p>2 - <i>Fɔrɔmɛ xa mara,</i> <i>donse na a ra.</i> <i>Mixi ama nɛ,</i> <i>a hɔrɔmɛ se na a ra.</i> <i>Hɔrɔmɛ se mara de,</i> <i>lugase na a ra.</i> <i>A barayi na a faxama bɛ,</i> <i>luge na a donma bɛ.</i> <i>I na a fi naxan ma,</i> <i>a xa bɔrɛ sɔtɔ.</i></p>	<p><i>It is not a “prayer,”</i> <i>it is food.</i> <i>People say,</i> <i>it is a “spiritual thing.”</i> <i>It is not a “spiritual thing,”</i> <i>it is something to fill one up.</i> <i>Its (i.e. sacrifice) blessings are for the sacrificer,</i> <i>filling-up is for the eater.</i> <i>Whoever you give it to,</i> <i>he/she should obtain sauce.</i></p>

This unit also uses an interplay between negative and positive imperatives to exhort sacrificers to share their sacrifice in such a way that others can be fed adequately. The stanza begins with a complex negative command where the real impact is not in the main proposition with the negative imperative (“You also should not put it in a basket,”), but in the final two propositions where the negative result is reported (“you give 10 people lagiyani sacrifice meat, they do not obtain sauce.”) The point of these propositions is that people should not give meat without adding the ingredients for a sauce.

The next two imperatives in the unit are positive. They both begin with a subordinate clause that indicates the setting (i.e. “when you kill the animal” and “when you give lagiyani meat to people”). They use the mitigated imperative form to specify exactly what should be done. The first imperative is more generic, (“You should give to the hungry”), while the second is more specific (“he/she should also get sauce”).

The second half of this unit can be interpreted as concluding with a summary of the two commands mentioned in the second couplet, as was the case at the end of the first couplet. The speaker intertwines the two commands of not considering the meat something holy that should be treated ceremonially (X3.8.5), and using the feast to meet the needs of the hungry (X3.8.6). He uses negative stative verbs indicating that the meat is not something holy, and positive stative verbs identifying the meat as something to eat physically.

The first part of the summary uses an ABAB parallel structure with two lines in the middle that either introduce the second couplet (cf. *hɔrɔmɛ*), or which give the background reason for the necessity of stating both the couplets, namely that people were saying that the meat was a holy object. The following table illustrates this parallel structure.

Table 17 – Parallel structure in X3.8.6

A	“It is not a prayer,
B	it is food.”
C	“People say
	it is a spiritual thing.”
A	“It is not a spiritual thing,
B	it is a something to fill one up.”

The second part of the summary continues to intertwine the two concepts by using two parallel lines denoting the beneficiary of the spiritual and the physical benefits of the sacrificial meat. Blessings are reserved for the person offering the sacrifice, and physical satisfaction for those who eat the sacrifice. On this note the speaker concludes the unit by noting in the final two lines that sauce should be given along with the meat to truly meet the needs of the hungry. The final line uses the phrase *bɔrɛ sɔtɔ* (“obtain sauce”) which is used two other times in the unit. This use of repetition denotes the centrality of the concept in this unit.

X3.8.7 – Blessings/Exhortation: May God enable us to be able to give to others.

Ala xa won nɔ na ra.

Mixi yo naxa a dɔxɔ segere ma.

I na a so mixi yi,

a mu gan li,

Ala xa won tanga na ma.

Ala xa temui gbete fi won ma.

May God enable us to do that.

No one should put it in a basket.

When you give it to someone,

it is not enough to cook,

may God protect us from that.

May God give us another time.

This concluding blessing of the entire unit, which closes the *inclusio* opened in X3.8.1, repeats a phrase used in X3.8.6 (“No one should put it in a basket”) and thus underpins the coherency of this conclusion with the preceding exhortation. Three blessings, all using the same formula, are employed in this blessing stanza. Each blessing links to other parts of the section. The first blessing, *Ala xa won nɔ na ra* (“May God enable us to do that”), is found in stanza X3.8.5. The second blessing, *Ala xa won tanga na ma* (“May God protect us from that”), links directly to the preceding subordinate clauses which constitute the antecedent of the demonstrative pronoun. The third blessing, *Ala xa temui gbete fi won ma* (“May God give us another time”),

repeats the concept in the first blessing of X3.8.1 which in the same vein asks God for another “year.”

The whole section X3.8 demonstrates a balanced grammatical symmetry that presents a clear and coherent discourse. The following table attempts to capture this symmetry.

Table 18 - Grammatical structure of X3.8

Inclusio (opening)	X3.8.1 – Blessing (“May God give them another year.”)
Positive Exhortation	X3.8.2 – “The sacrificer should kill the sacrifice.”
(First couplet)	
Negative Exhortation	X3.8.3 – “Do not put the blood on your neck.”
Negative Exhortation	X3.8.4 – “Do not hold on to the sacrificer.”
(Second couplet)	
Negative Exhortation	X3.8.5 – “Do not save the head and feet as holy.”
Negative Exhortation	X3.8.6 – “Do not distribute meat without sauce.”
Inclusio (closing)	X3.8.7 – Blessing (“May God give us another time.”)

X3.9.1 – Introduction to blessings.

<i>Won ma namijɔnme naxe a duba lɔxe nan to.</i>	<i>Our prophet says that today is a day of prayer.</i>
<i>Won xa duba won yete be a nun won ma bɔxi.</i>	<i>Let us pray for each other and for our country.</i>

These two lines clearly mark the beginning of a new section that the speaker defines as a *duba* (“prayer/blessing for someone”). The first line refers to the commandment from Mohammed that prayers be said on this holiday, and the second line is a simple invitation for the audience to pray for each other and for their country.

X3.9.2 – Value: We come to you God and we trust you.

<i>Ala, muxu bara i makula,</i>	<i>God, we have begged you,</i>
<i>muxu i makulama ne,</i>	<i>we will beg you,</i>
<i>muxu xaxili tixi i ra.</i>	<i>Our spirit depends on you.</i>
<i>Xaxili tide gbete mu na muxu be, fo i tan.</i>	<i>We have no other dependence outside of you.</i>

The prayer begins with a direct vocative address to *Ala* (“God”), and then a description of the speaker and audience’s state of mind before God. This unit consists of two couplets, both of which use the same verb in both lines but in a different grammatical form. The sole explanation seems to be aesthetic variety.

X3.9.3 – Blessings: Deliver us from our enemies and make us happy.

<i>I xa muxu yaxuie ramini taa,</i>	<i>May you cast our enemies out of town,</i>
<i>i xa muxu raseewa.</i>	<i>may you make us happy.</i>

An interesting grammatical feature of this prayer lies in the choice of the author to use the second person singular to address God. Typically the Susu blessing or prayer formula uses the third person singular with God as the subject, but this prayer seems to juxtapose the two grammatical forms as will be seen in X3.9.5 and X3.9.7.

X3.9.4 – Value: We have not done harm to others, and we are where you put us.

<i>Muxu mu mixi yo xən,</i>	<i>We have not hated anyone,</i>
<i>muxu mu mixi yo ratixi.</i>	<i>we have not stopped anyone.</i>
<i>Muxu na muxu xənyɪ,</i>	<i>We are at our dwelling,</i>
<i> i dɛndɛxɛn fixi muxu ma.</i>	<i> which you have given us.</i>
<i>Ala muxu lan be.</i>	<i>God assembled us here.</i>

This stanza also refers to God in the second person in the first four lines, but in the final line the author switches to the third person singular. Perhaps the speaker does this as a “conclusion” of the second person section, or perhaps he does it as an “introduction” to the following section which begins with the third person singular.

X3.9.5 – Blessings: Help us to be good and convert those who are evil.

<i>Ala xa muxu rafan,</i>	<i>May God make us love each other,</i>
<i>muxu xa muxu boore xanu be.</i>	<i>may we love each other here.</i>
<i> Mixi ɲaaxie naxee na muxu ya ma,</i>	<i> The evil people who are among us,</i>
<i>Ala xa i findi nee dandanma ra.</i>	<i>may God make you their healer.</i>
<i> Xa naxan mu yalanma,</i>	<i> If someone does not heal,</i>
<i>Ala xa won tanga na masiboe ma.</i>	<i>may God protect us from that harm.</i>
<i>Mixi ɲaaxi yuge ɲaaxi, n Marigi i xa a ratanga,</i>	<i>An evil person with bad character,</i>
	<i> my Lord may you protect him,</i>
<i>a fan xa yalan,</i>	<i>may he also be healed,</i>
<i>a fan yuge xa fan,</i>	<i>may his character also become good,</i>
<i>a fan xa findi mixi fanyi ra.</i>	<i>may he also become a good person.</i>
<i>I xa na raba muxu be.</i>	<i>May you do that for us.</i>

This stanza continues the juxtaposition of blessing formulas that refer to God using the third person singular and those using the second person singular. This grammatical variety does not appear to have a particular semantic function (e.g. summary, emphasis), but rather seems to be employed to enhance aesthetic quality by changing the “rhythm” of the discourse.

Another switch in participant reference occurs in this section with reference to the audience. In lines 1, 2, 5, and 10 the first person plural is used in both the exclusive and inclusive forms to indicate the audience. The orator uses *muxu*, the exclusive form, when he speaks to God, and *won* when he speaks to the audience. However, in line 3 the orator uses a second person singular pronoun to refer to the audience. He does this not to limit his message to only one person, or to exclude himself from the exhortation, but to emphasize the personal nature of his exhortation.

X3.9.6 – Value: Good people live in peace. God does not forgive trouble makers. We are not trouble makers.

<i>Ba xa wo nun mixi fanyi dɔxɔ,</i>	<i>Because if you live with good people,</i>
<i>i bɔŋɛ bara sa.</i>	<i>your heart is at peace.</i>
<i>Kɔŋɔ n Marigi,</i>	<i>But my Lord,</i>
<i>xa naxan bara findi xunnɔŋaaxui ra,</i>	<i>if someone becomes a troublemaker,</i>
<i>i xɔnyi i mu nɔma ya fade a ma.</i>	<i>at your dwelling you cannot care for him.</i>
<i>Muxu tan nu fa danxaniyaxi i tan nan ma.</i>	<i>We have believed in you.</i>
<i>A fe ŋaaxi naxan natexi,</i>	<i>The evil he planned,</i>
<i>muxu tan mu na natexi,</i>	<i>we did not plan it,</i>
<i>muxu xa a raba mixi ra.</i>	<i>that we should do it to people.</i>

The speaker uses grammatical parallelism in this unit consisting of two couplets. The first two sentences both begin with the subordinate conjunction *xa* (“if”), and are followed by the independent clause indicating the resulting action. The second two sentences both use the same completed verb¹⁹ aspect marker *-xi* (completed action/state) in their independent clauses. This parallelism binds the four sentences together as a coherent unit.

X3.9.7 – Blessings: Protect us. Make us good. Give us more time on earth.

<i>I tan Ala, xa findi sɔɔri ra,</i>	<i>God, may you become a soldier,</i>
<i>naxan tima muxu nun nee tagi.</i>	<i>who stands between us and them.</i>
<i>Muxu sutura kɔɛ,</i>	<i>Protect us at night,</i>
<i>i xa muxu sutura yanyi.</i>	<i>may you protect us in the daytime.</i>
<i>Ala xa won matinxin.</i>	<i>May God make us straight.</i>
<i>Ala xa temui gbete fi won ma.</i>	<i>May God give us another time.</i>

This unit begins with a vocative address to God, a feature that can be seen three other times in this section (X3.9.2 – line 1, X3.9.5 – line 6, X3.9.6 – line 3), and which reminds the audience that this is indeed a prayer addressed to God. Grammatical parallelism characterises the two couplets of the unit juxtaposing the second person singular blessing formula with the third person blessing formula. The two sentences of the first couplet both use the *i xa* (“may you”) structure, but the second sentence adds a parallel line using the non-mitigated imperative. They are closely related semantically employing the same verb with the contrastive adverbs “night” and “day.” The final line of the stanza concludes the section with the same words used at the end of the previous section, *Ala xa temui gbete fi won ma*. (“May God give us another time.”)

An overall picture of this entire section shows a repeated use of parallel couplets and parallel lines as a cohesion and organizing device at the discourse level. The author

¹⁹ The completed verb in Susu is marked by the *-xi* suffix and indicates an action or a state that is completed and fixed. It can also be used with nouns in an adjectival fashion.

employs both semantic parallelism and grammatical parallelism to develop a balanced discourse. The following table indicates the type of parallelism used in each stanza of the section.

Table 19 – Parallelism used in section X3.9

X3.9.1	Semantic parallelism <i>duba</i> (“blessing”) used in both lines
X3.9.2	Semantic parallelism <i>makula</i> (“beg”) used in both lines of first couplet <i>xaxili</i> (“spirit”) used in both lines of second couplet
X3.9.3	Grammatical parallelism <i>I xa</i> (“may you”) used in both lines
X3.9.4	Semantic parallelism <i>Muxu mu mixi yo</i> (“We did not...”) used in both lines of first couplet <i>xɔnyi / be</i> (“dwelling” / “here”) used in parallel lines of second couplet
X3.9.5	Grammatical parallelism <i>Ala xa</i> (“May God”) used in three lines of first couplet <i>I xa</i> (“May you”) used in two lines of second couplet
X3.9.6	Grammatical parallelism <i>Xa</i> (“if”) used in both lines of first couplet <i>-xi</i> (completed aspect marker) used in both lines of second couplet
X3.9.7	Grammatical parallelism <i>I xa</i> (“May you”) used in two lines of first couplet <i>Ala xa</i> (“May God”) used in two lines of second couplet

A summary of grammatical devices used in the *xutuba*

After having studied various grammatical devices in the context of a particular Susu *xutuba*, it might be helpful to summarize these discourse techniques in two categories. The first category regards devices used to structure the text in a clear and aesthetically pleasing manner, and the second category deals with techniques that emphasize certain functional aspects of the text. In addition to these categories, it should prove helpful as well to give an overview of the different types of imperatives used in this *xutuba* since imperatives form the backbone of hortatory speech. A typology of blessings has been included as well since they constitute an important component of religious discourse.

Discourse devices for text structure

Use of couplets

Couplets constitute a common structural feature in this *xutuba*, which suggests a strong poetic component in Susu religious discourse. The sermon begins with a stanza (X3.1.1) which can be analyzed in two different ways, both of which divide the unit into couplets. = The final section (X3.9) of the sermon consists entirely of a series of seven couplets using semantic and grammatical parallelism. In one particular case

(X3.8.4, X3.8.6) the couplets are marked with ordinal adverbs to highlight this structure.

Parallelism

Most of the couplets employ some form of parallelism. Two lines of the same couplet can be linked by lexical repetition (e.g. X3.2.1), or two couplets can be linked by repeating a lexical item (e.g. X3.5.4). The same phenomenon can occur with grammatical structures. In X3.9.6 for example, the first couplet uses the same grammatical structure in two lines, and the second couplet does the same thing with a different grammatical structure.

The speaker also uses another form of parallelism that is quite sophisticated, and requires a conscious elaboration of grammatical structures. A case of chiasmic parallelism in X3.3.3 inverts the syntactical constituents of two lines to say the same thing in different ways. A similar case is found in X3.4.1. The presence of this type of chiasm in a rigid SOV language is remarkable.

Contrastive parallel elements

The speaker in this *xutuba*, favoring as he does the notion of couplets or pairs, contrasts at least five different kinds of structures. In X3.5.3 direct speech and indirect speech are juxtaposed. God speaks of the same issue both times, but the author puts the parallel elements in contrastive forms. Another example can be seen in the last two lines X3.8.5. The speaker says the same thing, first using a negative stative structure, and then with a positive stative structure. A similar technique appears in X3.6.2 with juxtaposed rhetorical questions. The first refers to the positive behavior of the pilgrims in Mecca, and the second refers to the negative behavior of the Muslims that did not do the pilgrimage.

A somewhat different use of contrasting parallel elements involves the use of free variation. Two forms in free variation are contrastive in form even though they have the same meaning. The negative imperative marker *naxa*, for example, is used alongside of *nama*, another older form that means the same thing (X3.7.3). The contrast in form serves only an aesthetic value. The speaker makes a similar choice in X3.4.1 where he uses three different verb aspect markers with the same verb in three consecutive lines. The variation of these aspect markers does not contribute to a development of the thought; it is simply used as a discourse device to develop cohesion and perhaps to emphasize the point.

Discourse unit markers

This Susu *xutuba* uses three different explicit unit markers. The first, an *inclusio*, begins and ends a unit with an identical word, phrase, or concept. The unit can be a small unit like the one found in X3.2.2, or it can span a wider portion of text such as the one that opens at the beginning of X3.3.1 and closes at the beginning of X3.3.5. The second device used to mark the end of units is the traditional blessing formula as

found at the conclusion of X3.4.5 and X3.5.5. A final device used only once in this *xutuba* (X3.5.3), yet quite convincingly, consists in a proverb as a conclusion marker.

Discourse devices for text emphasis

A smaller set of discourse devices attempt to emphasize particular points or notions in the text.

Word order

Susu grammar allows for very little word order variation. Temporal adverbs are one exception and can be placed before or after the verb. The speaker in this *xutuba* uses that option in the last two lines of X3.4.1. He puts the same adverb *xɔɔ* (“yesterday”) before the verb in one line and after the verb in the next line. In X3.4.2 he puts the same adverb before and after the main verb, a quite unusual construction in Susu which clearly underlines the importance of “yesterday” in his discourse.

Foreign words

Another way that the Susu emphasize a concept is with the use of a foreign word. This is particularly true with Arabic words in the Muslim context. The speaker quotes a prophet using a short Arabic phrase (X3.3.5), and then goes on to explain the citation. In X3.6.5 the speaker uses the Arabic word for “I swear” to emphasize his point. The only non-Arabic foreign word used in the sermon is the French word for “pillar” in reference to the five basic doctrines of Islam, which are identified in Arabic. The reason why these words are used is not to enhance the transmission of information, but to emphasize the importance of that information.

Participant reference

In the first few lines of X3.9.5 the speaker switches from first person plural to second person singular while his audience remains the same. With this technique he seeks to emphasize the personal nature of the application of the point in question.

Summary constructions

Two typical constructions are used in this sermon to mark a summary. The first construction, *na na a ra* (“that is it”), summarizes a short portion of text (X3.7.3), or a whole section (X3.3.5). Another construction, *a tan nan ya* (“it is before eyes”), is found in X3.4.3.

Imperative typology in a Xutuba

Careful analysis of this hortatory text demonstrates that the Susu have an impressive repertoire of grammatical techniques to express commands and/or exhortations. These can be divided into two categories, primary and secondary. The primary techniques

feature verb aspects that are only used in imperatives, while the secondary techniques are typically used in non-imperative constructions.

Primary imperatives

The Susu imperative is marked by the absence of the second person singular in the subject slot, rather than an affix. To mark a second person plural imperative, the subject pronoun is present, but there is a null affix on the verb. This marking can be ambiguous, but usually the context makes the imperative nature of the verb clear.

A second type of primary imperative is marked by the presence of a pre-verb, pre-object particle *xa*.²⁰ This form functions as a mitigated imperative, useful in situations where the speaker is emphasizing the desirable nature of the action in question, or where he/she wants to be polite.

Negative imperatives or prohibitions are marked differently than the negative *mu* (“not”) that would be used in declarative sentences. The negative mitigated imperative is marked with the pre-verb, pre-object particle *naxa*.²¹ An older form that has the same meaning and use is *nama*.

Non-mitigated negative imperatives are rare, but this *xutuba* presents a clear example in X3.7.2. The context indicates the intent of the speaker to prohibit someone from being happy about his/her neighbor’s misfortune. Unlike the positive imperative counterpart, the second person singular subject pronoun is present in the negative imperative.

The following table uses the verb *sigá* (“to go”) to show the Susu imperative verb paradigm. The second person singular pronoun is *i* (“you”) and the second person plural pronoun is *wo* (“you” Plural).

Table 20 – Susu imperative verb paradigm.

<u>Non-mitigated:</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
2 nd person singular	<i>sigá</i>	<i>i sigá</i>
2 nd person plural	<i>wo sigá</i>	<i>wo naxa sigá</i>
<u>Mitigated:</u>	<u>Positive</u>	<u>Negative</u>
2 nd person singular	<i>i xa sigá</i>	<i>i naxa sigá</i>
2 nd person plural	<i>wo xa sigá</i>	<i>wo naxa sigá</i>

Secondary imperatives

The habitual verb in Susu marked with a *-ma* (Habitual) suffix is quite useful in forming secondary imperatives. In certain contexts the habitual verb along with the

²⁰ The same morpheme is also used as a nominal possessive.

²¹ The same morpheme is also used as a narrative verbal aspect marker.

standard negative marker *mu*, can serve as a prohibition. In X3.8.3 this form is used in a sentence that follows another sentence that has a primary imperative, but it is conceivable that this form could be used without the other sentence. Another way to clearly mark a negated habitual verb as a negative imperative is to add a negative adverb (e.g. *dede*, *muku* – see X3.8.5), or some other type of negative particle (e.g. *xa* – see X3.8.4).

The aorist verb in Susu also serves as a secondary imperative in certain structures. In X3.8.4, for example, the speaker makes a positive declarative statement using an aorist verb, and then adds a negative stative *na m'a ya ma* (“that is not among it”). The end result is a prohibition to do what was stated.

Another way to use the aorist verb to form an imperative is by coupling it with what on the surface seems to be a primary imperative, but which semantically does not express the actual command. The speaker provides a good example in X3.8.6 where he begins with a negative imperative stating that meat should not be put in a basket. Careful analysis reveals that the following sentence using an aorist verb communicates the real prohibition that meat should not be given without the necessary condiments to make it into a sauce. A final way that the speaker uses an aorist verb as a secondary imperative can be seen in X3.8.2 where he precedes the declarative statement with a negative condition.

The following table summarizes these structures and provides examples of each case.

Table 21 – Secondary imperative structures

Negative Habitual (context)

Lagiyān wuli mu soma kōnyi ma. *The blood of the lagiyanyi is not put on the neck.*

Negative Habitual + Negative adverb

a xunyi nun a sanyie a mu donma muku. *his head and his feet should not be ate at all,*

Negative marker + “xa” + Negative Habitual

e mu donma xa mu suxuma, *they do not hold his shirt at all,*

Positive Aorist + Negative Stative

Boore donma suxu keren a kōn naxaba, *Others holding the shirt of the one cutting*
the throat,

na m'a ya ma. *that is not to be done (lit. is not among it).*

Negative Imperative (secondary) + Negative Aorist

Wo man naxa a dōxō segere ma, *You (pl.) also should not put it in a basket,*
i mixi fu ki lagiyanyi *you give 10 people lagiyanyi sacrifice (meat),*
e mu bōre sōtō. *they do not obtain sauce.*

Conditional + Positive Aorist (secondary) + Positive Aorist

Xa i mu nōma, *If you can not,*
i mixie yamari, *order others,*
e kōn naxaba i be. *they cut the throat for you.*

Blessing typology in a Xutuba

Blessings serve an important function in Susu culture, much as they do in the discourse grammar. While a blessing can be used at any point during a conversation or during a sermon, the most prominent function of a blessing is to introduce and to conclude a discourse. With the exception of the first two introductory sections in this *xutuba*, the speaker concludes each section with a blessing in the classic form (X3.3.5, X3.4.5, X3.5.6, X3.6.5, X3.7.3, X3.8.7, X3.9.7). Some stanzas use a blessing or blessings as a conclusion as well (X3.5.5, X3.6.3). Section X3.8 not only ends with a blessing, but it also begins with two blessings (X3.8.1). From a higher perspective, section 9 concludes the entire sermon with a long series of blessings.

Third person formulas

The Imam in this sermon constructs his blessings in multiple ways. The most typical blessing formula has God as the subject, followed by the predicate using the *xa* (Subjunctive) verb aspect marker.

<i>Ala</i>	<i>xa</i>		<i>na</i>	<i>raba.</i>
God	SUBJUNCTIVE		that	do.

“May God do that.”

At least in one occasion the negative subjunctive marker *naxa* (Negative Subjunctive) occurs in the same overall structure (X3.6.5).

A variation to this classical form adds another proposition using the positive subjunctive after the blessing formula. This second proposition does not reflect an ellipsis, but rather the result of the main verb in the blessing formula.

<i>Ala</i>	<i>xa</i>		<i>a</i>	<i>mali,</i>
God	SUBJUNCTIVE		him	help

“May God help him,”

<i>a</i>	<i>xa</i>		<i>maale</i>	<i>sɔɔ.</i>
3S	SUBJUNCTIVE		rice	obtain.

“that he may obtain rice.”

The stanza X3.9.5 contains an example of this structure.

This form can be further modified by preceding it with a conditional statement as found in X3.8.1.

<i>Xa</i>	<i>Ala</i>	<i>m'a</i>		<i>fixi</i>	<i>naxee</i>	<i>ma,</i>
If	God	NEG-3S		gives	who	to

“If God has not given it to certain ones,

<i>Ala</i>	<i>xa</i>		<i>ɲe</i>	<i>gbete</i>	<i>fi</i>	<i>e</i>	<i>ma,</i>
God	SUBJUNCTIVE		year	other	give	them	to

“may God give them another year,”

<i>e</i>	<i>xa</i>	<i>a</i>	<i>sɔtɔ.</i>
3P	SUBJUNCTIVE	it	obtain.

“that they may obtain it.”

Second person formulas

In the final section of this xutuba, a section reserved for the concluding blessings of the religious event in question, the speaker uses a somewhat atypical blessing formula. He replaces the third person singular reference to God in the subject slot with the second person singular pronoun which the context clearly identifies with God. This more personal form appears 5 times in section 9 (see X3.9.3, X3.9.5) interchangeably with the third person blessing formula which also appear 5 times.

One interesting variation of this second person formula is the addition of a vocative address to God (X3.9.5, X3.9.7). Like the classic blessing formula, the speaker sometimes adds another proposition after the blessing using the positive third person subjunctive (X3.9.5). The most unusual variation consists of preceding the second person blessing formula with a direct imperative. This structure appears in X3.9.7.

Muxu sutura kɔɛ,
 1P protect night
 “Protect us at night,

i xa muxu sutura yanyi.
 you SUBJUNCTIVE 1P protect daytime
 “may you protect us at daytime.”

One could postulate an ellipsis in the first proposition, or perhaps simply an unusual usage of the imperative coupled with a second person blessing formula. The speaker does not use this form or an analogous form anywhere else in the sermon with reference to God.

Cited Bibliography

- GRIMES, Barbara (ed.) (2000) *Ethnologue (Volume 1 - 14th edition)*. Dallas, Texas: SIL International.
- HOUIS, Maurice (1963) *Etude descriptive de la langue susu*. Dakar: Ifan.
- LONGACRE, R.E. (1983) *The Grammar of Discourse*. New York and London: SIL Plenum Press.