Negative constructions in Nyesam [ɲésàm]
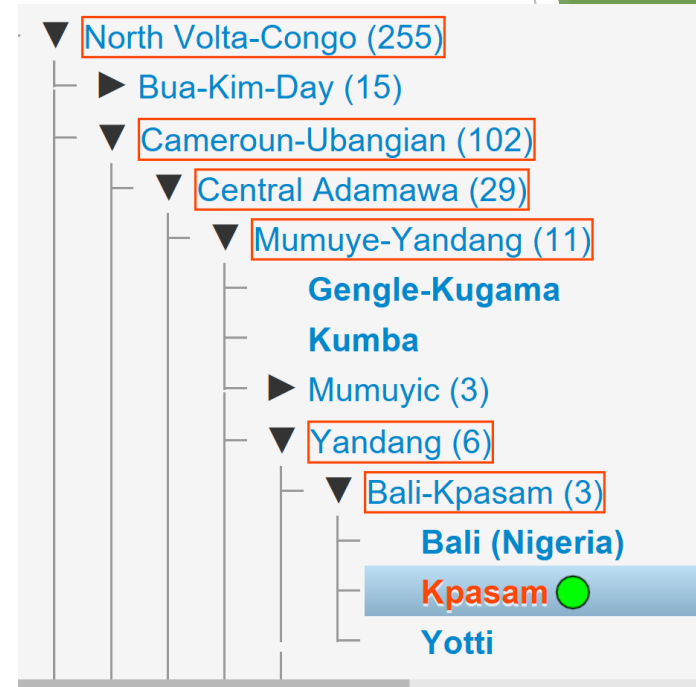
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Nyesam

- Spoken in three villages of the Adamawa state of Nigeria (Kpasham, Dakli, and Dem).

- Approximately twenty thousand speakers.

Source: Glottocode: kpas1242; ISO: 639-3 (pbn).

Overview

▶ General features of the language

▶ Negation in TAM system

▶ Other Negative forms

General features

- 22 Consonants & 7 Vowels

- Lexical and grammatical tone (TBU: mora).

- Monosyllabic Noun and Verb stems.

- Canonical syllable stem shapes: CV(V), CV(V)C

- Syntactic word order: SVO

- Head-initial noun phrases

- Clause-final negation, question, and (some) TAM markers.

TAM

Nyesam distinguishes two grammatical **tenses**: Future (-áì) and non-future (unmarked).

It is characterized by progressive [-õŋ] and perfective [-(ʔ)ẽ] **aspect** markers.

Attested **moods** include the indicative, interrogative, and imperative.

Negation

▶ Is generally formed with a discontinuous negative marker which elements are [ɲá] (placed before the verbal element) and [–ā] (located clause finally).

(1) wǔná káám ɲá   máá   pè-ā

people many NEG   know thing-NEG

many people do not know this

(2) méné ‌n̄bé   ɲá   ɓíní   dǐ mēnē nswè-ā

   body   man   NEG one   ?   body woman-NEG

   the body of the man is not like the body of the woman

▶ **N.B:** [ɲá] is placed after a subject NP but before a subject with pronominal properties, e.g. personal indexes.

(3) m̀-má 'I know'   (4) ɲá-m-má-ʔā

                            NEG-1SG.SBJ-know-NEG

                            I do not know

Progressive [-õŋ]

(5) á   mő.őŋ   wṳ̀nà   bèsābē

 3SGPP   give.PROG   people   money

 he is giving people money

(6) ɲá.á   mő.őŋ   wṳ̀nà   bèsāb.ā

 NEG.3SGPP give.PROG   people   money.NEG

 he is not giving money to people

(7) ɲá.á   mő.őŋ   bèsābē wṳ̀n.ā

 NEG.3SGPP give.PROG   money people.NEG

 he is not giving money to people

Perfective [-(ʔ)ẽ]

(8) bézà   zēg.ẽ̄
    dog   bark.PFV
    the dog has barked

(9) bézá   ɲá   zāg.ā
    dog   NEG   bark.NEG
    the dog has not barked

Perfective marker is dropped under negation.

(10)   m̀.kí.āŋ.ʔẽ̄

1SG.see.3SGOBJ.PFV

I have seen him

(11)   m̀.kíē   kábā   dǐāŋ   ʔẽ̄

1SG.see   return   3SGPOSS   PFV

I have seen his return

(12)   ɲá.m.kíē   kábā   dǐāŋ.ʔã̄

NEG.1SG.see return   3SGPOSS.NEG

I have not seen his return

Negative Imperative

Formed with a discontinuous negative marker which elements are [ɓá-INFL] and [ā].

The first element is inflected by person and number and it is placed before the verbal element. The latter is located clause finally.

a. ɓá-ŋ...ā

    NEG-2SG...NEG

b. ɓá-ɪ...ā

    NEG-2PL...NEG

Imperative (a)

Form	Morphemes	Traslation
kíé.m	see.1.SG.OBJ	Look at me!
kìé.wú.mēn.ā	see.head.body.2.SG.POSS	Look at yourself!
kíā.n	see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ	Look at her/him!
kʲá.n	see.3.SG.N-HUM.OBJ	Look at it!
kíé.ròk	see.1.PL.OBJ	Look at us!
-	-	-
kí.ōn	see.3.PL.OBJ	Look at them!

Negative imperative (a)

Form	Morphemes	Translation
ɓá.ŋ kíé.m.ā	NEG.2SG.PP see.1SG.OBJ.NEG	Don't look at me!
ɓá.ŋ kíē wú.mēn.ā	NEG.2SG.PP see.head.body.2SG.POSS.NEG	Don't look at yourself!
ɓá.ŋ kí.ā̄n.ʔā̄̄	NEG.2SG.PP see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ.NEG	Don't look at her!
ɓá.ŋ kʲ.áŋ.ʔā̄̄	NEG.2SG.PP see.3.SG.N-HUM.OBJ.NEG	Don't look at it!
ɓá.ŋ kíé.rō.ā	NEG.2SG.PP see.1.PL.OBJ.NEG	Don't look at us
ɓá.ŋ kí.ōŋ.ʔā̄̄	NEG.2SG.PP see.3.PL.OBJ.NEG	Don't look at them!

Imperative (b)

Form	Morphemes
í-kíē.m	2PL-see.1.SG.OBJ
í-kíā.n	2PL-see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ
í-kʲá.n	2PL-see.3.SG.N–HUM.OBJ
í-kíé.ròk	2PLsee.1.PL.OBJ
î-kìé.wú.mēn.ā	2PL-see.head.body.2.SG.POSS
î-kî.ōn	2PL-see.2.PL.OBJ

Negative imperative (b)

Forms	Morphemes
ɓá.ē kíé.m.ā	2PL-see.1.SG.OBJ
ɓá.ē kí.ɑ́n.ʔɑ̿	2PL-see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ
ɓ.è kʲ.ɑ́n.ʔɑ̿	2PL-see.3.SG.N–HUM.OBJ
ɓá.e kíé.rō.ā	2PLsee.1.PL.OBJ
ɓá.ē kí wú.mēn.ā	2PL-see.head.body.2.SG.POSS

Negative Interrogatives

▶ Negative Polar questions are formed with the addition of a final QM –á.

▶ N.B: Both the second element of a negative construction and the QM are segmentally the same. Suprasegmental features vary.

(13) kálém   mòx   swẽ̀ẽ̀

kalem   eats food (tuwo)

(14) kálém   ɲā   mòx   swẽ̀-à

kalem   NEG   eat   food-NEG

Kalem does not eat food.

(15) kálém   mòx   swẽ̀ẽ̀   -á   ?

kalem   eats   food   QM

does Kalem eat food?

(16)

a. *kálém   ɲā   mòx   swẽ̀   -ā̄ -á

    kalem NEG   eat   food-NEG-QM

    does Kalem not eat food?

b. kálém ɲā   mòx   swẽ̀   -á

    kalem NEG   eat   food-QM

    does Kalem not eat food?

Remarks

Distribution of the morphemes:

Both the NEG marker and QM occupied a clause-final slot.

Whenever there is a negative question (i.e. NEG + QM), only the QM –á is realized.

Other NEG constructions

Non-verbal predication

(17) wṵ́ná ásám sómē /sómā wōn ásám

   people kpasham many

   there are a lot of people in Kpasham

(18) sōmā wȭ ɲá ásám.ā

   many people NEG kpasham.NEG

   there are not a lot of people in Kpasham

Attributive verbs

(19)   wũ̀ná   zwé

people   are good

(20)   wũ̀ná   ɲá   zwē   -ā

people   NEG   good NEG

people are not good

Genitive constructions

(21)   móó   bà   -ān
1SG   child   2SGPOSS
I am her son

(22)   ḿ   ɲá   bà.ān.ʔā̄
1SG   NEG   child.2SGPOSS.NEG
I am not her son

(23)   ā   ɲíná-m
3SGPP mother-1SGPOSS
she is my mother

(24)   ā   ɲá   ɲíná   -m   -ā
3SGPP NEG   mother   1SGPOSS   NEG
she is not my mother

(25) swɛ̌ɛ̀ ɗáé

your food

(26) ɓá.ŋ   mõ̀x swɛ̌ɛ̀ ɗá.ā

NEG.2SG   eat   food 2SGPOSS.NEG

don't eat your food

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…Thank you…