

# TAM system Nyesam [nésàm]

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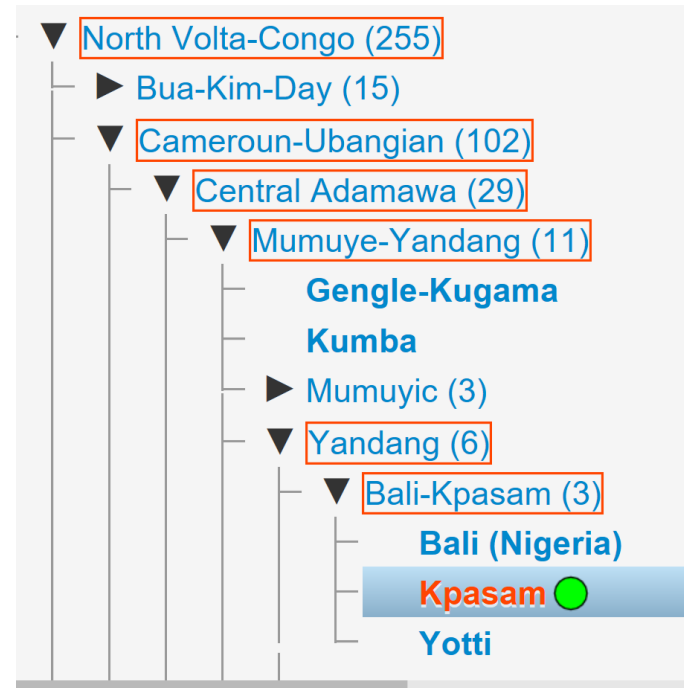


# Overview

- General features of the language
- Verbs and VP structure
- Pronominal forms
- Tense, Aspect, and Mood
- Negation

# Nyesam

- Known as Kpasham (Glottocode: kpas1242; ISO: 639-3 (pbn)).
- 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).

# General features of Nyesam

- 23 Consonants & 6 Vowels
- Implosives & labial-velar consonants.
- Lexical and grammatical tone. Three tonemes (H M and L). Contour tones are a result of multiple tones assigned to one TBU.
- SVO
- Human vs. non human
- Alienable vs. inalienable

# Verb forms

- Underived verb forms are monosyllabic and disyllabic (compositional meaning for others).
- No characteristic tone melody is associated with this grammatical category.
- No infinitive marker.
- Citation forms are singular imperatives.

# Syntactic make up of VPs

[Subject NP] NEG- [Pronominal Subject] Verb [D.Object] [Ind.Object] -NEG

(1) Kálém mó ɓè mí

kalem give goat water

Kalem gives the goat water

(2) (áròk) tādē mó ɓè mí

1PL.EMPH 1PL give goat water

we are the ones giving the goat water

# Typology of pronominal forms

The category of Nyesam ‘pronouns’ is better understood as a set of personal indexes or S-TAM-P morphs as defined by Anderson (2012, 2015, 2017).

In Nyesam they can be bound (morphologically fused to the root) or unbound (free).

# Typology of pronominal forms (2)

The language marks a distinction between third person singular human and third person singular non-human while plural forms are neutralized, i.e. the 3PL is the same form for human and non-human entities.

There are not dual, **negative**, or exclusive pronominal forms.  
Differences between grammatical gender and honorific distinctions have not been attested.



# S-TAM-P Morphs

Person	Emphatic	Basic	Copula	Imperfective	Perfective
1SG	ám	m̀	moo	mòm	m̀
2SG	áũŋ	̀n	ɲau	ɲaŋ	ɲáō + ̀n
3SGHUM	áwon	a	au	a	áwá
3SGNHUM	be	be	bo	be	?
1PL	árók	dê	tau	tadê	táō + dê
2PL	ái	e/I	ɲau	ɲaŋ	ɲáō + í
3PL	áũná-won	né	nau	né	náō + né

S/TAM/P morphs in subject function do not constitute constructional units with the following verb. They are syntactically noun-like and therefore form phonological words.

# Tense, Aspect, and Mood in Nyesam

- **Tense:** Past/present and Future

Periphrastic use of adverbs and AUX type constructions for FUT

- **Aspect:** Ongoing action (sub type of Imperfective) and completed event.

Pronouns (S-TAM(P) morphs), verb inflection (PROG), and clitics (PFV)

- **Mood:** Imperatives

Distinction between singular and plural.

Tone marks the difference between Human and Non-human

# Tense

- Utterances with reference to both **present** and **past** are formed with the addition of temporal adverbials such as 'yesterday', 'last week', 'a moment ago', etc.

(3)    ì-mók      tùó  
      1SG-eat    tuwo  
      I eat tuwo

(4)    ì-mók tùó zè  
      1SG-eat tuwo yesterday  
      I ate tuwo

(5) báa'-m                      mònēswá-é k̄ā      mí-nàŋ      táē  
brother.1SGPOSS      think-PFV      that      water-DEF      cold  
he feels that the water is cold

(6) bá-ám                      mònēswá-é zè      k̄ā      mí-nàŋ      táē  
brother.1SGPOSS      think-PFV      yesterday that      water-DEF      cold  
he felt yesterday that the water was cold

## Tense (2)

- Utterances with reference to a **future** event are formed with an AUX-de (allomorph /re/), derived from the verb stem ‘to go’ in the following ways:

a) **Subject + AUX + V**

(7) á jé kàp síí.lá

3SG AUX break tree.fire

he will break firewood SAM\_2018\_ST\_CG\_01\_019

**b) Subject + AUX + de + V**

(8)    ñ      jé      dé      jé      zùwó mēnē      bā-lwí  
2SG    AUX ?      go      up      towards      son-of-god  
You will go to heaven

# Aspect

- Nyesam distinguishes perfective (-(?)e) and progressive (-on) aspect markers.
- **Perfective** expresses an action as a whole, it can apply to events in the past, present, or future. Perhaps it is more a clitic as it can be attached to different constituents (not simultaneously) in a phrase.
- **Imperfective** (or Progressive) expresses habitual and/or ongoing action. Always attaches to verbs.

# Perfective

(9) m̀-*bw-áŋ* = ʔé  
1SG.meet.2SGOBJ = PFV  
I met her

(10) m̀-*lébé* = é  
1SG give birth = PFV  
I gave birth



# Perfective

(11)

m̀- jíṗ n̄bé -n̄n̄ṅ = ẽ

1SG kill man -DEF = PFV

I killed the man

ṅáō n̄-jíṗ n̄bé-n̄n̄ṅ = ẽ

áwá jíṗ n̄bé-n̄n̄ṅ = ẽ

táū d̄e jíṗ n̄bé-n̄n̄ṅ = ẽ

(àí) ṅáō í-jíṗ n̄bé-n̄n̄ṅ = ẽ

náō né jíṗ n̄bé-n̄n̄ṅ = ẽ

you(SG) killed the man

s/he killed the man

we killed the man

you(PL) killed the man

they killed the man

# Imperfective

(12) ɲánɲ sùgò-nē-ónɲ  
2SG contradict.3PLOBJ.PROG  
you are contradicting them

(13) nē gá-ón á díè  
3PL say.PROG LOC house  
they were talking at her house

(14) á mǒ-ốη wũnà bèsābē  
2SG give.PROG people money  
he is (usually) giving people money

(15) nán mǒ-ốη wũnà bèsābe  
2SG give.PROG people money  
he is (now) giving money to people

(16) m̀- jé đế bễ-ốη dēróa  
1SG AUX write.PROG letter  
I will be writing a letter to you





# Imperative (a)

Form	Morphemes	Traslation
kíé-m	see 1SGOBJ	Look at me!
kìé wú-mēn.ā	see head-body.2SGPOSS	Look at yourself!
kíā-n	see 3SGHUMOBJ	Look at her/him!
kìá-n	see 3SGNHUMOBJ	Look at it!
kíé.ròk	see 1PLOBJ	Look at us!
-	-	-
kí.ōn	see 3PLOBJ	Look at them!

## Imperative (b)

Form	Morphemes
í-kíē-m	2PL-see-1SGOBJ
í-kíā-n	2PL-see-3SGHUMOBJ
í-kíá-n	2PL-see-3SGNHUMOBJ
í-kíé.ròk	2PL-see.1PLOBJ
î-kíé wú-mēn.ā	2PL-see head-body.2SGPOSS
î-kí.ōn	2PL-see.2PLOBJ

Negation is generally formed with a discontinuous negative marker which elements are [ná] (placed before the verbal element) and [-ā] (located clause finally).

- (22) á      jé-é,              ná      bwá lòhà dī.áŋ-ā̄  
3SG go.PFV,          NEG meet bag 3SGPOSS-NEG  
he comes/came, (he) can/could not find his bag



(23) méné n̄bé      ɲá      bíní      d̄i      mēnē      nswè-ā  
Body man      NEG      one      as      body      woman-NEG  
the body of the man is not like the body of the woman

(24) m̄-má      ‘I know’

(24b) ɲá-m-má-?ā  
NEG-1SG-know-NEG  
I do not know

## NEG Perfective?

(25) bészà zēg.ē̄  
dog bark.PFV  
the dog barked

(26) bészá ná zāg.ā  
dog NEG bark.NEG  
the dog did not bark

Perfective marker is dropped under negation.

(27) m̄.kí.āŋ.ʔē̄

1SG.see.3SGOBJ.PFV

I have seen him

(28) m̄.kíē                      kábā dīāŋ                      -ʔē̄

1SG.see return 3SGPOSS PFV

I have seen his return

(29) ɲá.m.kíē                      kábā                      dīāŋ.ʔā̄

NEG.1SG.see return                      3SGPOSS.NEG

I have not seen his return

# Negative Imperative

Formed with a discontinuous negative marker which elements are [ḡá-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.     ḡá-ḡ...ā  
          NEG-2SG...NEG
- b.     ḡá-I...ā  
          NEG-2PL...NEG

## Negative imperative (a)

Form	Morphemes	Translation
ḅá-ŋ kíé.m-ā	NEG-2SG see.1SGOBJ-NEG	Don't look at me!
ḅá-ŋ kíē wú.mēn-ā	NEG-2SG see head-body.2SGPOSS-NEG	Don't look at yourself!
ḅá-ŋ kí.ā̄ŋ-ʔā̄	NEG-2SG see.3SGHUMOBJ-NEG	Don't look at her!
ḅá-ŋ kì.áŋ-ʔā̄	NEG-2SG see.3SGNHUMOBJ-NEG	Don't look at it!
ḅá-ŋ kíé.rō-ā	NEG-2SG see.1PLOBJ-NEG	Don't look at us
ḅá-ŋ kí.ōŋ-ʔā̄	NEG-2SG see.3PLOBJ-NEG	Don't look at them!

## Negative imperative (b)

Forms	Morphemes	Translation
ḡá-ē kíé.m-ā	NEG-2PL see.1SGOBJ-NEG	Don't look at me!
ḡá-ē kí.ǎn-ǎ̄	NEG-2PL see.3SGHUMOBJ-NEG	Don't look at her!
ḡ.è kì.ǎn-ǎ̄	NEG.2PL see.3SGNHUMOBJ-NEG	Don't look at it!
ḡá-e kíé.rō-ā	NEG-2PL see.1PLOBJ-NEG	Don't look at us!
ḡá-ē kí wú.mēn-ā	NEG-2PL see.head.body.2SGPOSS-NEG	Don't look at yourselves!

- Thank you!

m̀ pá usoko