

# Negation in Wam (Kugama), an Adamawa language of Nigeria

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Miestamo, Matti. Questionnaire for describing the negation system of a language [revised August 2016]

# General information on Wam



– *ná: wàm* ‘the Wam language’  
(KUGAMA)

- Spoken in a number of villages in Mayo-Belwa LGA and Fufore LGA of Adamawa State
- Yendang group of the Adamawa language family
- 5000 speakers (Ethnologue)

## Previous research on Wam

- First field trip conducted in Yola, the capital of Adamawa State, in January 2014 as part of research for my BA and later for my MA theses at St. Petersburg State University, Russia
- Second fieldwork mission to Wam communities in March – June 2017, and third (but not last) during April – May 2018 as part of my PhD project from Labex EFL (project LC2 “Areal phenomena in northern sub-Saharan Africa”)

## Clausal declarative negation

- Symmetric negation

The negative marker  $\tilde{a}$  is added at the end of the corresponding positive clause. This type of negation is restricted to non-verbal predications involving the identificational copula / focus marker  $\grave{a}$ .

(1)       $\grave{a}$            $w\grave{e}p\bar{o}k\bar{i}$            $\grave{a}\text{-}r\acute{e}$   
COP      farmer          COP-3SG  
'He is a farmer'

(2)       $\grave{a}$            $w\grave{e}p\bar{o}k\bar{i}$            $\grave{a}\text{-}r\acute{e}$            $\tilde{a}$   
COP      farmer          COP-3SG      NEG  
'He is not a farmer'

## Clausal declarative negation

- Asymmetric negation

It is expressed by a **discontinuous negation marker** [ɲa\_ã]. The discontinuous negation marker is found in verbal and **non-verbal** (locative) predications.

(3)     *dě*                     *bátō*  
         3SG.HUM             bush  
         ‘He is in the bush’

(4)     *dě*                     *ɲā*                     *bátō*                     *ã*  
         3SG.HUM             NEG                     bush                     NEG  
         ‘He is not in the bush’

## Clausal declarative negation

- Asymmetric negation

It is expressed by a **discontinuous negation marker** [ɲa\_ã]. The discontinuous negation marker is found in **verbal** and non-verbal predications.

(5)    *ā*                    *lū-wà*            *màrī*  
1SG                    sleep-?            a lot  
‘I sleep a lot’

(6)    *mé*                    *ɲā*                    *lū*                    *màrī*                    *ã*  
1SG                    NEG                    sleep                    a lot                    NEG  
‘I do not sleep a lot’

# The first element of the discontinuous negation marker [ɲa]

mé	1SG	ɲā	→	<b>míē</b>	1SG.NEG
dě	3SG.HUM	ɲā	→	<b>děē</b>	3SG.HUM.NEG
dìɲsì	‘tree’	ɲā	→	dìɲ <b>sìē</b>	‘tree.NEG’
dzìmā	‘needle’	ɲā	→	dzì <b>māā</b>	‘needle.NEG’
dýéké	‘house’	ɲā	→	dýé <b>kéē</b>	‘house.NEG’
sējámōkū	‘tale’	ɲā	→	sējámō <b>kūō</b>	‘tale.NEG’

# The first element of the discontinuous negation marker [ɲa]

Future clause [S + à]

- (7)      *Mūsā*                      *sōkī*  
Musa.FUT                      dance  
‘Musa will dance’ / ‘Musa can dance’

Future negative clause [ɲā + à]

- (8)      *Àlī*              *ɲā*                      *mòkī*              *hē*              *ā̄*  
Ali              NEG.FUT              eat              here              NEG  
‘Ali will not eat here / Ali cannot eat here’

# Negation in non-declaratives

- **Imperative**

(9) [bàkū-mū]

*bàkī-mū*

help-SG

‘Help! (addressed to one person)’

(10) [bàkū-nū]

*bàkī-nū*

help-PL

‘Help! (addressed to several persons)’

- **Prohibitive**

Prohibitive is introduced by *sè-*, which is followed by a pronominal addressee suffix. And it ends in the negative marker *ã*.

(11) *sè-mū bàkī ã*

PROH-SG help NEG

‘Don’t help!  
(addressed to one person)’

(12) *sè-nū bàkī ã*

PROH-PL help NEG

‘Don’t help!  
(addressed to several persons)’

## Negation of non-main clause

Negation of a complex sentence is formed by a discontinuous negation marker [ja\_ã]. The second element *ã* is placed at the end of a sentence regardless whether a main or a subordinate clause is negated. Negation of the main or non-main clause is marked by *ja*, which occurs immediately after subject.

- (13) *á kã-té bã dĕ ja tì éré ã*  
1SG see-PFV that 3SG NEG PROG come NEG  
'I saw that he is not coming'

- (14) *mé ja mâ-tĕ má Yálō bá lūmō ã*  
1SG NEG notice-PFV that Yalo in market NEG  
'I didn't notice that Yalo was in the market'

## Coordination of two negatives [ḅḅ]

The coordination of two negated elements is expressed by *ḅḅ*. It occurs in verbal and non-verbal clauses.

(15)	à	wàpḅkī	à-mé	ā̃	à	wàbèkī	<i>ḅḅ</i>	à-mé	ā̃
	COP	farmer	COP-1SG	NEG	COP	hunter	NEG.CRD	COP-1SG	NEG

‘I am not a farmer, neither am I a hunter’

## The particle [mā]

[mā] in Wam is probably related to the modal particle *ma* ‘too, also, even, still’ in Hausa [Newman 2000:327]:

(16) à wèpōkī à-ré **ã**, Àlī **mā** ‘He is not a farmer, neither is Ali’

(17) -mé **nā** sǎ̀ nágūrǎ **ã** ‘I do not speak Yendang’  
-mē **mā** ‘Neither do I’

(18) -‘I like football’  
- mē **mā** ‘Me too’

## Contrastive negation

The suffix *-r̃* occurs only in verbal predication.

- (19) *dě*                      *ɲā*                      *pō*                      *ā̃,*                      *dě*                      *bē-r̃*  
3SG.HUM                      NEG                      farm                      NEG                      3SG.HUM                      hunt-FOC?  
‘He does not farm, he hunts’

- (20) *ɓ̀*                      *ɲā*                      *gbēɲtēlē*                      *ā̃,*                      *ɓ̀*                      *sīrīrī*  
3SG.NHUM                      NEG                      wide                      NEG                      3SG.NHUM                      narrow  
‘It is not wide, it is narrow’

## Indefinites

- ‘**nothing**’ – clausal negation and *óse* ‘anything’ (it originates from *sè* ‘thing, something’);

(21) *dé*                      *nā*              *kèm-rī*      *óse*              *ã*  
3SG.HUM                  NEG              say-PFV      anything      NEG  
‘He said nothing’/ ‘He did not say anything’

(22) *óse*                      *nā*                      *támé-rē*              *ã*  
anything                  NEG                      please-3SG.OBJ      NEG  
‘Nothing pleases him’

## Indefinites

- ‘nobody’ – clausal negation and *úwēm* ‘anybody’ (it originates from *wēm* ‘person, somebody’);

(23) *dě*            *nā*            *kà-tē*            *úwēm*            *nè*            *ā̃*  
3SG.HUM    NEG            see-PFV            anybody            there            NEG  
‘He did not see anybody there’

## Indefinites

- ‘**nowhere**’ – clausal negation and *śtē̄* ‘anywhere’ (it originates from *tē̄* ‘place’)

(24)	<i>mó</i>	<i>ṅā</i>	<i>hōkī-ḍ</i>	<i>śtē̄</i>	<i>ā̄</i>
	2SG	NEG.FUT	find-3SG.NHUM	anywhere	NEG
	‘You will find it nowhere’				

- ‘never’ - clausal negation [ɲa\_ã];  
- clausal negation [ɲa\_ã] and *meti* - ‘ever’

(25)      *mé*      *ɲã*                      *yémikī*      *à*      *bò*      *ã̃*  
 1SG      NEG.FUT      forget      PREP      it      NEG  
 ‘I will never forget it’ (lit. ‘I will not forget it’)

(26)      *mò*      *mētī*                      *ákī-wā*      *Légōs*      *á?*  
 2SG      ever      go-?      Lagos      QM  
 ‘Have you ever been in Lagos?’

(27)      *mé*      *ɲã*      *mētī*                      *ákī*      *Légōs*      *ã̃*  
 1SG      NEG      ever      go      Lagos      NEG  
 ‘I have never been in Lagos’

## Negation and Focus

The first element of the discontinuous negation marker *na* is not used in cleft constructions with the focus marker / identificational copula *à*

(28) *à* *dyēkē* *dě* *māà-rié* *ã* *à* *būm* *dě* *māà-rié*  
FOC house 3SG.HUM build-PFV.? NEG FOC roundhut 3SG.HUM build-PFV.?

‘It is not a house he built but a roundhut’

(29) *à* *kpàm* *māà-rí* *dyēkéè* *ã*  
FOC chief build-PFV house.? NEG

‘It is the chief who did not build a house’

- Sentence-level negation in Wam;
- Derived negative lexemes (like ‘happy’- ‘unhappy’) were not found in Wam. Only sentence-level negation is possible: ‘The person is not happy’;
- I didn’t find possibilities of multiple marking of negation in Wam so far, e.g. ‘I couldn’t **not** to ask questions’