Negative constructions in Nyesam [ɲésàm]

Eveling Villa

evevd7@gmail.com
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.
Nyesam distinguishes two grammatical tenses: Future (-áì) and non-future (unmarked).

It is characterized by progressive [-õŋ] and perfective [-(ʔ)ē] 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) wũná káám ɲá máá pè-ā
people many NEG know thing-NEG
many people do not know this
(2) méné ŋbé ɲá bíní dì měnē 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) mà-má ‘I know’

(4) ɲá-m-má-ʔā
NEG-1SG.SBJ-know-NEG
I do not know
Progressive [-õŋ]

(5) á mó.õŋ wùnà bèsābē
3SGPP give.PROG people money
he is giving people money

(6) ná.á mó.õŋ wùnà bèsāb.ã
NEG.3SGPP give.PROG people money.NEG
he is not giving money to people

(7) ná.á mó.õŋ bèsābē wùn.ã
NEG.3SGPP give.PROG money people.NEG
he is not giving money to people
Perfective [-(?\~)\~]

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

(9) bézá  jná  zāg.\~
     dog   NEG  bark.NEG
     the dog has not barked

Perfective marker is dropped under negation.
(10) m.kí.āŋ.ʔē
1SG.see.3SGOBJ.PFV
I have seen him

(11) m.kíē kábā dǐāŋ ʔē
1SG.see return 3SGPOSS PFV
I have seen his return

(12) ná.m.kíē kábā dǐāŋ.ʔã
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form</th>
<th>Morphemes</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kíé.m</td>
<td>see.1.SG.OBJ</td>
<td>Look at me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kíé.wú.mēn.ā</td>
<td>see.head.body.2.SG.POSS</td>
<td>Look at yourself!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kíā.n</td>
<td>see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ</td>
<td>Look at her/him!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kʲá.n</td>
<td>see.3.SG.N-HUM.OBJ</td>
<td>Look at it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kíé.ròk</td>
<td>see.1.PL.OBJ</td>
<td>Look at us!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kí.ōn</td>
<td>see.3.PL.OBJ</td>
<td>Look at them!</td>
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</tbody>
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## Negative imperative (a)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>bá.ŋ kíé.m.ā</td>
<td>NEG.2SG.PP see.1SG.OBJ.NEG</td>
<td>Don’t look at me!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bá.ŋ kíē wú.mēn.ā</td>
<td>NEG.2SG.PP see.head.body.2SG.POSS.NEG</td>
<td>Don’t look at yourself!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bá.ŋ kí.ʔān.?ā</td>
<td>NEG.2SG.PP see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ.NEG</td>
<td>Don’t look at her!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bá.ŋ k̕.áŋ.?ā</td>
<td>NEG.2SG.PP see.3.SG.N-HUM.OBJ.NEG</td>
<td>Don’t look at it!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bá.ŋ kíé.rō.ā</td>
<td>NEG.2SG.PP see.1.PL.OBJ.NEG</td>
<td>Don’t look at us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bá.ŋ kí.ʔōŋ.?ā</td>
<td>NEG.2SG.PP see.3.PL.OBJ.NEG</td>
<td>Don’t look at them!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Imperative (b)

<table>
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<tr>
<td>í-kíē.m</td>
<td>2PL-see.1.SG.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>í-kíā.n</td>
<td>2PL-see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>í-kʲá.n</td>
<td>2PL-see.3.SG.N-HUM.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>í-kíé.ròk</td>
<td>2PL-see.1.PL.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>í-kìé.wú.mēn.ā</td>
<td>2PL-see.head.body.2.SG.POSS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>í-kí.ōn</td>
<td>2PL-see.2.PL.OBJ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Negative imperative (b)

<table>
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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ɓá.ē kíé.m.ā</td>
<td>2PL-see.1.SG.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓá.ē kí.án.?ã</td>
<td>2PL-see.3.SG.HUM.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓ.è kį.án.?ã</td>
<td>2PL-see.3.SG.N-HUM.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓá.e kíé.rō.ā</td>
<td>2PL-see.1.PL.OBJ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ɓá.ē kí wú.mēn.ā</td>
<td>2PL-see.head.body.2.SG.POSS</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 swēē
kalem eats food (tuwo)

(14) kálém ṣnā mòx swē-à
kalem NEG eat food-NEG
Kalem does not eat food.

(15) kálém mòx swēē -á ?
kalem eats food QM
does Kalem eat food?
(16)

a. *kálém Ḷā mòx swè -ā -á
does Kalem not eat food?

b. kálém Ḷā mòx swè -á
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) wǔná ásám sómē /sómā wōn ásám
people kpasham many
there are a lot of people in Kpasham

(18) sōmā wō njá ásám.ā
many people NEG kpasham.NEG
there are not a lot of people in Kpasham
Attributive verbs

(19) wùná zwé
    people are good

(20) wùná já zwē -ā
    people NEG good NEG
    people are not good
Genitive constructions

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

(22) ṃ ŋá bà.ān.?ā
1SG NEG child.2SGPOSS.NEG
I am not her son

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

(24) ā ŋá ŋíná -m -ā
3SGPP NEG mother 1SGPOSS NEG
she is not my mother
(25) swêè dâé  
your food

(26) bá.ŋ mɔx swêè dâ.ə  
NEG.2SG eat food 2SGPOSS.NEG  
don‘t eat your food
References


