

Negation in Kam (Niger-Congo, Central-eastern Nigeria)

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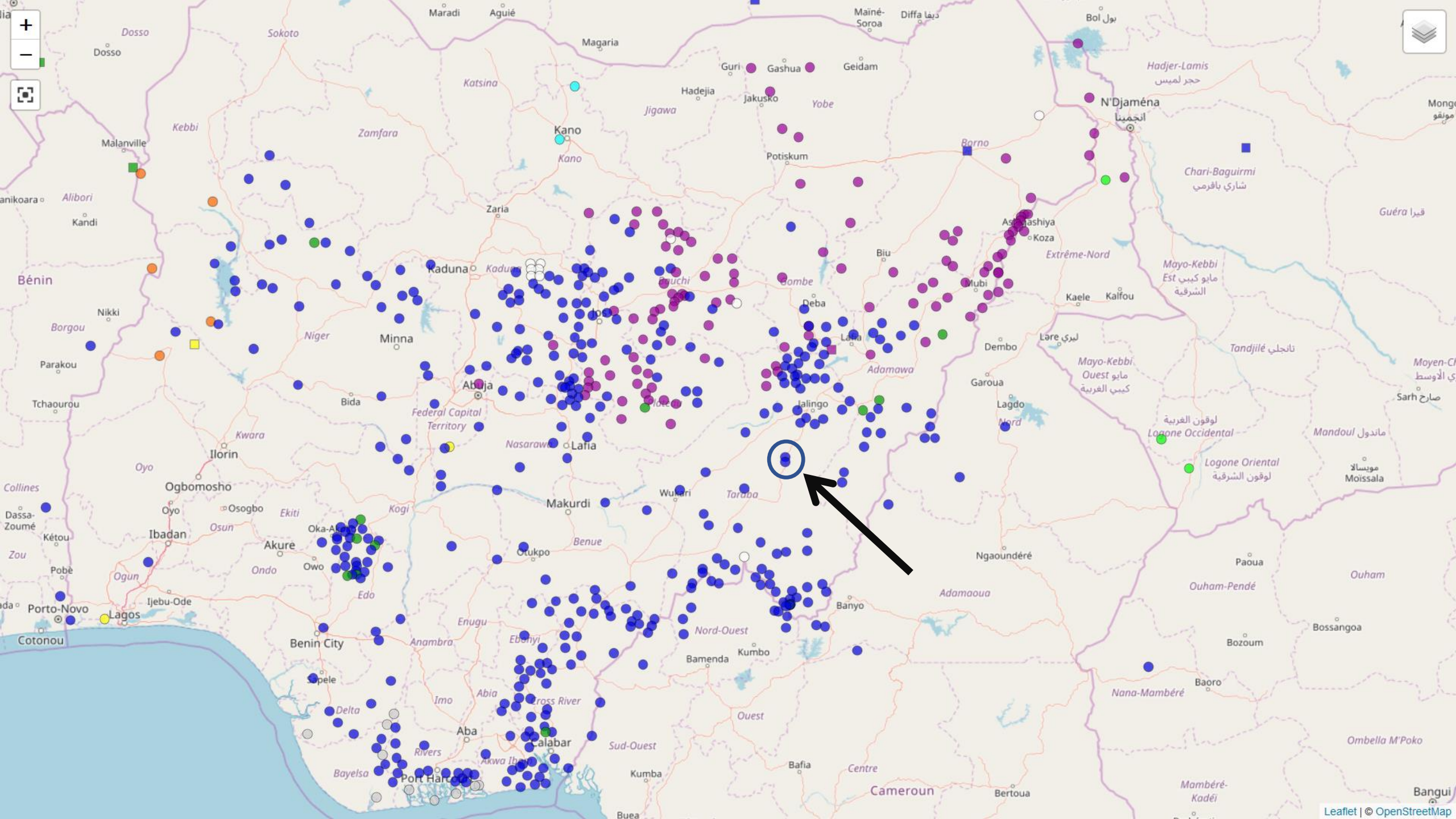
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SWL 2018, Paris, 05-09-2018 (Negation workshop)

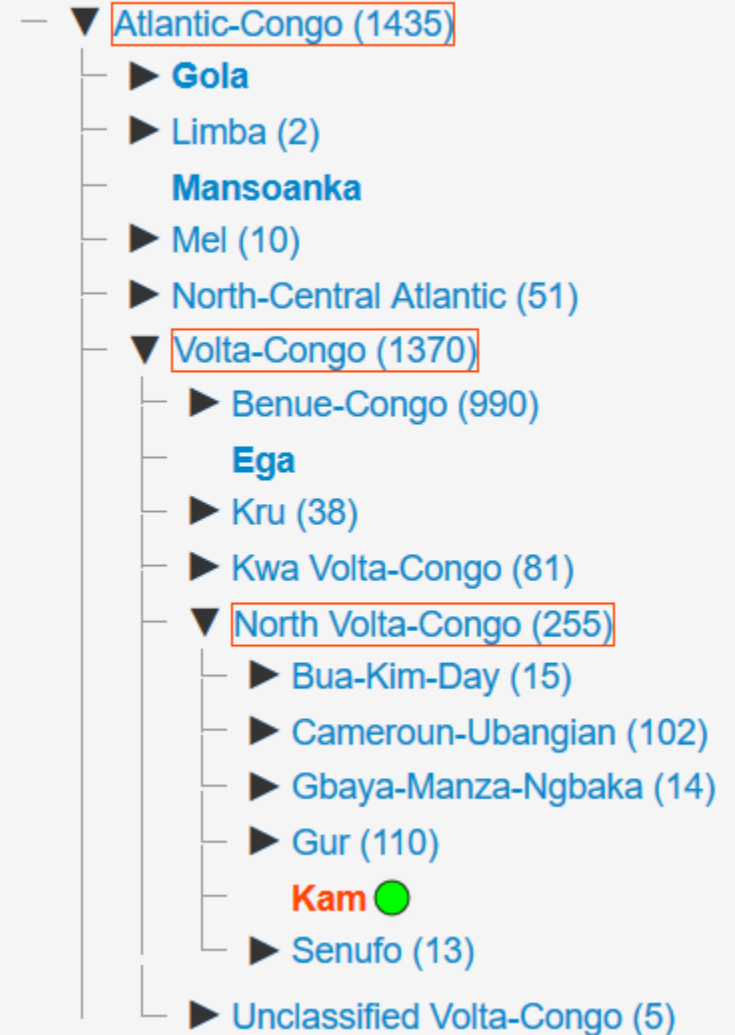


Kam (āṇwòm): some background



- Sub-level isolate of Adamawa(-Ubangi-Gbaya-Gur-...) (or North Volta-Congo), Niger-Congo ... ?
- Previously published research: practically nothing (about 150 words collected in Meek 1931 and in Kleinewillinghöfer 2015)
- This project: a grammar and lexicon (currently 1,350 items) of Kam, PhD project, third year just started.

Classification



The language and its speakers (nīŋwòm)

- Some 20,000-25,000 speakers in some 27 villages
- Identify with Jukun people (Kororofa kingdom)
- Close cultural association with Jirim (Chamba Daka)
- Other groups in the environment
 - Mumuye (Adamawa)
 - Hausa and Fulani
 - Recently: Goza refugees from Borno (Glavda, Chadic)
 - Commercial: Tiv, Yendang,...
- Actual affiliation:
 - Benue-Congo?
 - Jukun?
 - Adamawa?
 - Other?
 - For now: Niger-Congo as a practical classification.

Data

- Earlier elicited materials (basic morphosyntax + lexicon)
- Transcribed (fragmentarily) folk tales and oral history (about 30 minutes)
- Translation questionnaire with 'stories', based on workshop questionnaire to fill holes
- Phasal polarity questionnaire (Kramer 2017)

Scope of presentation

- Polar responses
- Constructions with sentence-final *hìn*
 - Standard negation
 - Negation of identity
 - Negation of (predicative) adjectives
- Some Hausa borrowing
- Constructions with *sìrī* (negation of existence)
- Negative imperatives
- A note on phasal polarity
- An 'if-not'/'lest' connector

Basic polar response system

- Basic system:

Yes	No
m	m m
o	o o
a	a a (cf. Hausa)

- Responding to negative statements (and questions):

- usually, agreement with polarity

letter M cāŋī **jèn.** | **m̄,** cāŋī jèn.
letter M finish **not.yet** | **yes,** finish not.yet
'The letter M isn't finished yet. No, it hasn't finished yet.'
(session_271, text)

- Informants claim this is due to Hausa influence, but I'm not sure how and if I could validate this

Other responses

- Negative

- **màsìrī**: absolutely not (?)

màsìrī, mà àyī rī cù? ìm rì hìn k̄a.
never also 3PL PROG catch 1SG POS? NEG COND

‘Never, not even if they would not catch me.’

(session_286, elicitation)

- Positive (not Kam-specific)

- tɔ = so!
- yawwa = oh yes!
- mhm, εhε = aha!
- velar click with closed mouth
- inhaling + raising eyebrows = agreement

Main negation construction: ... *hìn*

- *hìn*

- Phonologically peculiar: /h/ and /ɪn/ or /ĩ/ or simply /hn/ + tone unclear
- Sentence-final position, although followed by sentential mood particles (kà COND; yì°/yī Q) → ambiguity and no marking of scope

ī rī wūrī kībā, wò ī nyārī bì à **hìn**
1PL PROG want that blood 3PL.POSS drip soil this **NEG**

‘We don’t want blood to flow down.’

(session_084, text)

ū tībī nyè kī tīb à ànyá rì, nyálīb zùb **hìn**
3SG touch hand with fish this person **EMPH** because thief **NEG**

‘He didn’t touch the fish with his hand because he was a thief.’ or ‘He touched the fish (with his hand), but not because he was a thief.’ or ‘He didn’t touch the fish because he was not a thief.’

(session_084, text)

Indefinites and existential quantification are not polarity-sensitive

ñ dōg nyī mì hìn, kòm tī?-āyì.
1SG see **thing** **INDEFNEG** place cover-STAT
'I saw nothing, the place was too dark.'

nyà mà pī à hìn
person too come ? NEG
'Nobody came.'

hìn + TAM categories

- Perfective aspect/past tense *à* is usually left unexpressed (possibly should be reanalyzed)

àwū	kīm	ĩfàm	à	vs.	àwū	kīm	ĩfàm	hìn
3SG	eat	meat	PF		3SG	eat	meat	NEG

‘He ate meat.’

(29-01-2018, whatsapp elicitation)

- Other TAM categories are expressed together with *hìn*
 - Future tense (floating L tone after verb + other future constructions are not well understood)
 - Progressive aspect (preverbal *rì* particle)
 - Need and desire (‘accept’ verb in progressive aspect)
 - Interrogatives and conditionals (particles following *hìn*)

Negation of identification: also *hìn*

Equation

àṅàgbàn	ā	mǐ	m̄	ā	hìn
woman	this	mother	1SG.POSS	COP	NEG

‘This woman is not my mother.’

Inclusion

Jóhn,	àwū	málám	à	hìn
John	3SG	teacher	COP	NEG

‘John is not a teacher.’

Negation of adjectival attribution

- Some property concepts: similar to verbs or nouns
- Core adjectives have two different forms: simple vs. reduplicated

reduplicated = predicative form = form in isolation = basic form	simple = attributive form = verbalized form = negative form	negated forms	English translation
wù-wù°	wù	wù hìn	ripe
kpì-kpèsī	kpèsī	kpèsī hìn	smooth
mù-músī	músī	músī hìn	full
lìl-lèg	lèg	lèg hìn	sharp

Negation of adjectival attribution

àŋgwō? house	ā this	tìntàm big:PRED	→	àŋgwō? house	ā this	tàm big:NEG	hìn NEG
àŋgwōnyī village	kà here	lìllèm good:PRED	→	àŋgwōnyī village	kà here	lèm good:NEG	hìn NEG

Long form + hìn?

àŋgwō? ā **tìntàm** ì **hìn**
house this **big:PRED** ? **NEG?**
'This house is very big.'
(session_071, elicitation)

ànyàvān ā **dùb** **hìn,** àmā àwū **dūddūb** ī **hìn**
man this **tall:NEG** **NEG** but 3SG **tall:PRED** ? **NEG?**
'This man isn't tall, but he's very tall.'
(session_287, elicitation)

Elsewhere: translated as 'This house is big oh!'

→ Possibly, not ì *hìn*, but rather *mhm*, the 'positive response' word; or related to surprise

Double negation construction with mà ... hìn?

- Construction with mixed intuitions (better vs. wrong)

àwū mā lèg ī gēnērātòr sām̄r-āyì hìn
3SG ? hear COMPL generator spoil-STAT NEG
'He didn't hear that the generator exploded.'

→ Interpretation 1 (Rahab): Hausa borrowing 'too, also, even, still', not a 'correct' translation

→ Interpretation 2 (Babangida, David): no difference in meaning, but preferred, 'clearer' form (only elicitation?)

Hausa negation: bà wēi ... ba

- Informants say it comes from Hausa, but everyone would also use it in Kam (= even non-Hausa speakers)

bà	wēi	ī	bīr	ū	vērī	kī	bāg	bà
NEG	?	IMPRS	cut	3SG	kill	with	knife	NEG

'It wasn't necessary to kill them with a knife.'

- Possibly functionally specialized? (Not much experimentation yet)

Existential negation, with *sìrī*

‘positive’ copula *dī(bī)* → negative copula *sìrī*

Existential and locational negation

àyī	dībī	lèb	à	→	àyī	sìrī	āzā?ā	gbàṅ	wàn	rī
3PL	be	inside	PF		3PL	be.NEG	side	palace	king	EMPH?
‘They are inside.’					‘They are not at the king’s palace.’					

Possession with copula (vs. possession with verb)

ñ	dī	rī	tjòm	(rī)	→	ñ	sìrī	wō	rī
1SG	be	with	hoe	(EMPH?)		1SG	be.NEG	dog	EMPH
‘I have a hoe.’					‘I don’t have a dog.’				

Other uses of s̀irī: verbs of removal or destruction

wō kāsī kwī à **s̀irī**
dog break stick this **be.NEG**
'The dog broke this stick.'

bàrī tāsò à **s̀irī**
clean plate this **be.NEG**
'clean your plate'

gbènì daũ jū **s̀irī**
open heap yam **be.NEG**
'open the yam heaps'

Negation of imperatives

- bipartite negation construction: *kī ... gā*; ~~separate melody?~~

kī *nīm* *gā!*
NEG eat NEG
'Don't eat!'

(*nīm* = L underlyingly; M tone spread)

nyò *kī* *wōs* *ù* *gā.*
2PL NEG forget 3SG NEG

'(The person that told the story,) don't you forget him!'

(*wōsī* = L-M underlyingly, M tone spread + rightward shift/push of underlying L tone)

Phasal polarity

- Not yet = jèn

àyī rī bìn bèn **jèn**
3PL PROG talk **not.yet**
'They are not yet talking.'

- already = n^dò?òrì

Sólómónnīm nyī à **n^dò?òrì**
Solomoneat thing PF **already**
'Solomon already ate.'

- No longer = nàŋ hìn ('until NEG?') still = tàncòŋ ('always')

ñ nīm nyī **nàŋ** **hìn**
1SG eat thing **until?** **NEG**
'I'm no longer eating'

ñ rì nīm nyī **tàncòŋ**
1SG PROG eat thing **always**
'I'm still eating'

~~Apprehensive ‘lest’ morpheme~~ ‘if not, in case’ connector *sīkā*

ī nā?ī kà, **sīkā** àyī sāmīrī kòm.
1PL leave here **in.case** 3PL spoil place

‘We leave here, lest they spoil the world.’

(session_191, text)

ī bàng chāngā yì? **sìkà** ī nyēkò sò?ī pèh sù ā.
that beer finish Q **if.not** IMPRS will search come ? ?

‘(that) the beer is finished? If not, it could have been brought.’

Note on ‘never’ and ‘ever’

ā nyēb ā **dùddò?à** Lāgōs yì?
2SG go PF **see:FOC?** Lagos Q
‘Have you ever visited Lagos?’
(22-05-2018, elicitation)

hār īnà, nyìm mā, ñ jōŋ ā mā,
until today 1SG too 1SG sit PF too
m̄ bōr yēŋ ā rī **hìn.**
1SG climb horse PF? EMPH **NEG**

‘Until today, even I have never climbed a horse.’
(session_191, text)

Yawwa!