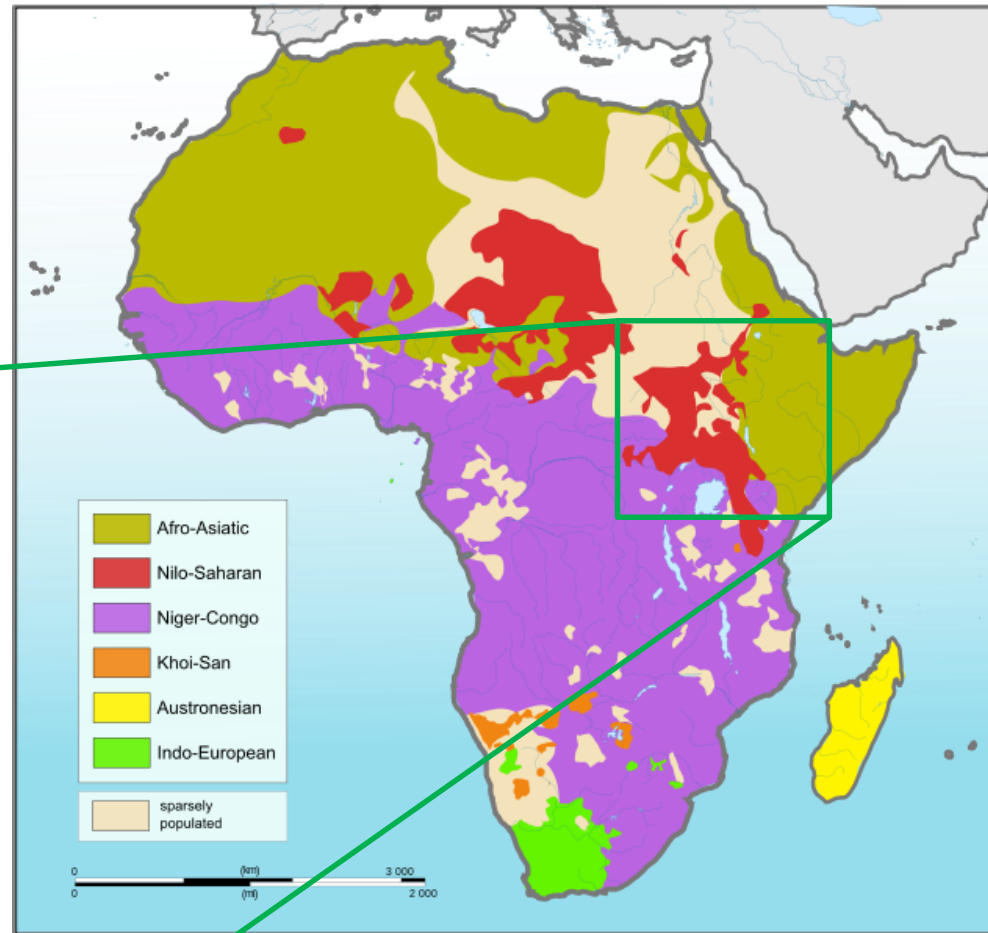# Negation in Lopit

**Jonathan Moodie**

**University of Melbourne**

# Overview of this presentation

- an introduction to the Lopit language

- standard negation *ɲa*

- negation with modality

- the persistive negative verb *ɲei*

- negative imperative

- negative interrogative

- negative existentials and quantifiers

- lexical negatives

- negation in Eastern Nilotic languages

# African Languages

| Phylum | Number of languages | Number of speakers |
|---|---|---|
| Afro-Asiatic | 366 | 362 m |
| Niger-Congo | 1524 | 431 m |
| Nilo-Saharan | 205 | 42 m |
| Khoisan | 24 | 0.5 m |

# Eastern Nilotic Languages

**Nilo-Saharan** (205)

   **Central Sudanic** (65)

   **Eastern Sudanic** (106)

      **Eastern** (27)

         **Nubian**

         **Surmic**

      **Nilotic** (63)

        **Eastern** (16)

         **Southern** (16)

           **Kalenjin, Nandi**

         **Western** (22)

           **Dinka, Nuer, Luo**

   **Maban** (9)

   **Saharan** (9)

   **Songhay** (9)

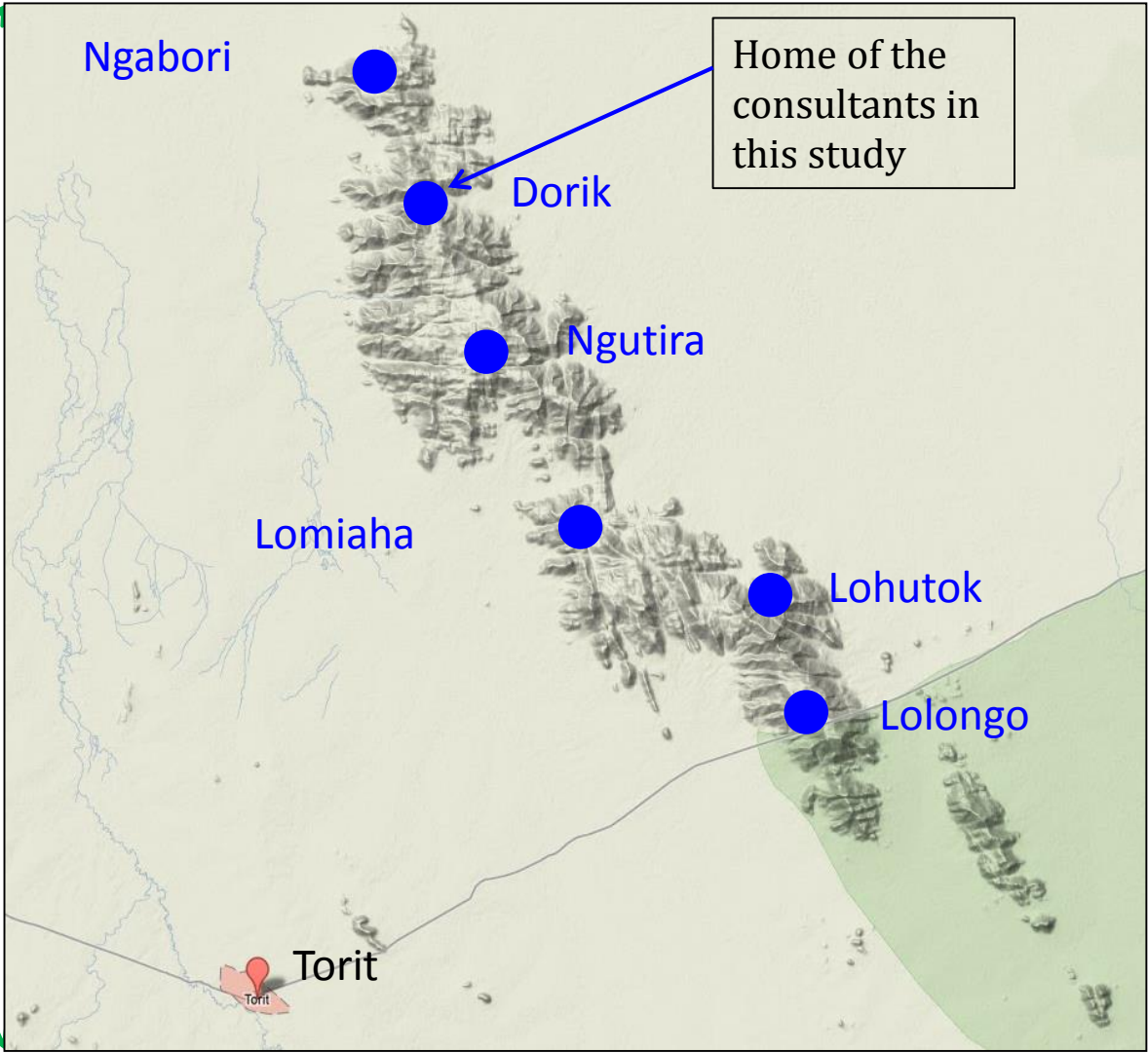| | | Speakers (000) |
|---|---|---|
| **Bari** (3) | | |
| | **Bari** (S Sudan) | 480 |
| | **Kakwa** (Uganda) | 190 |
| | **Mandari** (S Sudan) | ? |
| **Lotuxo-Teso** (13) | | |
|   **Lotuxo-Maa** (8) | | |
|     **Lotuxo** (5) | | |
| | **Dongotono** (S Sudan) | 1 |
| | **Lango** (S Sudan) | 38 |
| | **Lokoya** (S Sudan) | 12 |
| | **Lopit** (S Sudan) | 50 |
| | **Otuho (Lotuko)** (S Sudan) | 140 |
|     **Ongamo-Maa** (3) | | |
| | **Maasai** (Kenya, Tanzania) | 1,300 |
| | **Ngasa** (Tanzania) | - |
| | **Samburu** (Kenya) | 240 |
|   **Teso-Turkana** (5) | | |
|     **Teso** (1) (Uganda) | | 1,900 |
|     **Turkana** (4) | | |
| | **Karamojong** (Uganda) | 700 |
| | **Nyangatom** (Ethiopia) | 14 |
| | **Toposa** (S Sudan) | 100 |
| | **Turkana** (Kenya) | 1,000 |

# The Lopit People

Lopit is spoken by around 50,000 people living in the Lopit mountains in Eastern Equatoria province in South Sudan.

There are six dialects grouped into 'northern' and 'southern' Lopit

Ngabori

Dorik

Home of the consultants in this study

Ngutira

Lomiaha

Lohutok

Lolongo

Torit

# Characteristics of Lopit (and Eastern Nilotic) languages

- 9 vowel, Advanced Tongue Root (ATR) system

- grammatical and lexical tone

- tripartite number marking system

- **VSO word order**

- **subject (and some object) agreement marking on the verb**

- marked-nominative case system (with tonal case marking)

- **aspect & mood, but no grammatical tense**

- **sequential (or narrative) markers**

- adjectival and adverbial concepts are expressed with stative verbs

- WITH-language, not AND-language (inclusory constructions)

# Verb morphology

| initial prefixes | bound agreement pronoun | modal prefixes | aspectual and causative prefixes | R O O T | suffix | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| interrogative x- | person, number of subject (and object) | irrealis ŋai- | causative iti- | R | imperfective | -a, -o |
| sequential x- | | potential ma- | perfective (x)i- | O | continuative | -ita |
| subordinator l- | | conditional mai- | perfective ŋa- | O | ventive | -u, -ni |
| | | deontic tV- | persistive lV- | T | itive | -ei, -ri |
| imperative te-, ite-, xate- | | | | | dative | -(V)k |
| hortative ali- | | | | | instrumental | -ri, -ije |
| infinitive x-, ŋa- | | | | | middle voice | -a, -o |

á-ŋaî-ŋà-t:óxo-ǐ      lèfà     tòxòní      bèrèn

1SG-IRR-PFV-kill-VEN    PST     person.ABS     before

'I should have killed him before!'      Ikudo story

# The verbal nature of negation in Lopit

Negation is expressed with auxiliary verb, /ɲa/ and /ɲei/. I am calling it a verb because it displays the following behaviour:

- The negative verb is clause initial

- It has, under some circumstances, the normal pronominal prefixes (a, i, e)

- When used in a subordinate clause, the subordinate prefix is used /l-i-ɲa/, 'SBO-3-not.be'

- The same modal prefixes can be as found on other verbs.

- The interrogative prefix /x-/ can be used as with other verbs.

These points will discussed as I present the various kinds on negation found in the language.

# Standard negation

Standard negation is expressed with an auxiliary verb, /ŋa/.

When it is used with a lexical verb, this verb moves away from the first position in the clause (to a position after the subject) and is prefixed with the subordinate marker *l-*, 'SBO'.

The main verb maintains its person/number marking. The word order can be regarded as AUX S V O.

The affirmative:

è-fánù        xáɟàŋáʔ
3-come.PL     flies.NOM
'The flies came.'

The simple negative:

**í-ɲà**        xáɟàŋáʔ        **l**-è-fánù

**3-not.be**    flies.NOM      **SBO**-3-come.PL
'The flies did not come.'

# Standard negation

When used in simple declarative clauses, the verb /iɲa/ does not show the normal person agreement marking.

| person | | singular | plural |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 1ˢᵗ | a- | ɛɪ- |
| | 2ⁿᵈ | ɪ- | ɪ- |
| | 3ʳᵈ | ɛ- | ɛ- |

á-wú    náŋ    à    tòrít
1SG-go    1SG.NOM    to    Torit
'I'm going to Torit.'

î-ɲà    náŋ    l-á-wú    à    tòrít
1-not.be    1SG.NOM    SBO-1SG-go    to    Torit
'I'm not going to Torit.'

*a-ɲà    náŋ    l-á-wú    à    tòrít
1SG-not.be    1SG.NOM    SBO-1SG-go    to    Torit
('I'm not going to Torit')

NB: /iɲa/ = No

# Standard negation

Standard negation in Lopit can be described as asymmetric with a finite negative verb - A/Fin/NegVerb (Miestamo (2008)).

It differs from most of the examples given by Miestamo (2008, 81-87) in that, in Lopit, both the negative verb and the lexical verb are finite. They both show pronominal agreement marking.

The only example given by Miestamo where both verbs are finite is for Halkomelem (2008, p83). The main difference for this example is that the lexical verb is marked for irrealis (subjunctive).

| Halkomelem (Galloway 1993: 176, 185) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| a. | lɛ́m-cəl | b. ʔə́wə-cəl | lɛ́m-ɛ̀l |
| | go-1SG | NEG-1SG | go-1SG.SBJN |
| | 'I go.' | 'I do/will not go.' | |

Lopit is unusual in that there is no change in the lexical verb (apart from the subordinate marker) in changing from the affirmative to the negative.

Otuho is similar to Lopit in this respect (see below)

# Negation in subordinate clauses

When the negative verb is used in a subordinate clause, the subordinate marker /l-/, 'SBO', is used. This is normal for all verbs except modal predicates and those with the persistive (aspect marker /lV-/).

| î-ɲà | náŋ | l-á-wù | à tòrít | **l-í-**ɲà | íjé | l-í-wù |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-not.be | 1SG.NOM | SBO-1SG-go | to Torit | **SBO-2-**not.be | 2SG.NOM | SBO-2-go |
| 'I'm not going to Torit if you don't go.' | | | | | | |

| á-wù | náŋ | à tòrít | **l-í-**wù | íjé |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1SG-go | 1SG.NOM | to Torit | **SBO-2-**go | 2SG.NOM |
| 'I'm going to Torit if you go.' | | | | |

# Negation with modality

There are two ways of using the negative with the irrealis.

The simple negative:

| **î-ɲà** | nang | l-a-pot | toromile |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1-not.be** | 1SG.NOM | SBO-1-clean.N | car.ABS |
| 'I didn't clean the car.' | | | |

The irrealis affirmative:

| a-**ŋaî**-pot | naŋ | toromile |
|---|---|---|
| 1-**IRR**-clean.N | 1SG.NOM | car.ABS |
| 'I should/would clean the car.' | | |

1. The simple negative and the irrealis on the lexical verb:

| **î**-ɲà | naŋ | a-**ŋaî**-pot | toromile |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1**-not.be | 1SG.NOM | 1-**IRR**-clean.N | car.ABS |
| 'I should/would not clean the car.' | | | |

2. The irrealis on the negative verb with the lexical verb:

| **a-ŋaî**-ɲà | naŋ | **l**-a-i-pot | toromile |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1-IRR**-not.be | 1SG.NOM | **SBO**-1-PFV-clean | car.ABS |
| 'Had I not cleaned the car, ….' | | | |

When negation is expressed with a modal prefix on the negative verb, the normal pronominal prefixes are used.

# The persistive form of the negative

There is a second form of the negative verb, /ŋei/, which is only used in persistive expressions. The normal pronominal agreement marking is used.

The simple negative:

**íɲà**    xáɟàŋáʔ    **l**-è-fánù
**not.be**    flies.NOM    **SBO**-3-come.PL
'The flies did not come.'

The persistive negative:

è-**ɲêi**    xáɟàŋáʔ    è-**lé**-fánù
3-not.be    flies.NOM    3-**PERS**-come.PL
'The flies have stopped coming.' (lit. 'the flies are not still coming')

Note that there is no subordinate marker on the main verb [èléfánù]. The affirmative form of this sentence is as follows.

è-**lé**-fánù    xáɟàŋáʔ
3-**PERS**-come.PL    flies.NOM
'The flies are still coming.'

# The persistive form of the negative

Here is a second set of examples of the negative verb, /ŋei/, this time with first person marking.

The simple negative:

| íɲà | náŋ | l-á-mát-à | kòfí | l-ò-lót-ù | patrik |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not.be | 1SG.NOM | SBO-1SG-drink-IPFV | coffee.ABS | SBO-3-go-VEN | Patrick |

'I wasn't drinking coffee when Patrick came.'

The persistive negative:

| á-ɲeî | náŋ | á-lá-mát-à | kòfí | l-ò-lót-ù | patrik |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-not.be | 1SG.NOM | 1SG-PERS-drink-IPFV | coffee.ABS | SBO-3-go-VEN | Patrick |

'I wasn't still drinking coffee when Patrick came.'
'I had finished drinking coffee when Patrick came.'

Note that there is no subordinate marker on the main verb [álámátà]

# The negative verb /ŋei/ as a verbal noun

The negative verb, /ŋei/, can also be used as a verbal noun (this is normal for infinitives, which have the same form as the verb root for this kind of verb).

| è-sám | ɍ́nɛ́ | àɾá xátì | **ɲeî** | nà | mòt:èɟà | l-è-mír | ìɲɛ̀ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3-be.rich | 3SG.NOM | but | **VN.not.be** | of | friends | SBO-3-defeat | 3SG.ABS |

'He is rich but suffers from having no friends.'
(lit. 'He is rich but lacking of friends defeats him')

In this situation, there is no persistive marking on any verbs.  Nevertheless, the sentence has a imperfective or continuative sense.

# The negative imperative

There is a special construction for negative imperatives. It uses the word /idek/ and a verb prefix /xai-/.

The prefix /xai-/ appears to be a kind of imperative prefix. Unlike normal imperatives, there is no distinction between singular and plural.

The word /idek/ can be glossed as the imperative form of the verb /idek/, 'leave' (i.e. as IMP.leave).

| | |
|---|---|
| te-cá | |
| IMP-dance | |
| 'Dance!' | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| ídèk | xaì-cá | díxà |
| NEG.IMP | IMP-dance | like that |
| 'Don't dance like that!' | | |

| | |
|---|---|
| ìró | |
| IMP.speak | |
| 'Don't talk!' | |

| | |
|---|---|
| ídèk | xai-ìró |
| NEG.IMP | IMP-speak |
| 'Don't talk!' | |

# The negative imperative

The verb /idek/ can mean 'abandon', 'leave off', 'give up', 'don't do' as illustrated in the following.

| a-ídék | náŋ | rìɲà | tìfi | xìɟɔ́ | è-díxà | nàŋ | xɔ́ɲɛ́xítɛ̀ |
|--------|-----|------|------|-------|--------|-----|------------|
| 1SG-leave | 1SG.NOM | VN.watch | TV | COMP | 3SG-ache | 1SG.ABS | eyes |

'I gave up watching TV because it hurts (my) eyes.'

The verb can also be used in the sense of 'move away from'.

| a-ídék | náŋ | xàŋ | àrá | móíté? |
|--------|-----|-----|-----|--------|
| 1SG-leave | 1SG.NOM | home | IMM.PST | morning |

'I left home this morning.'

The use of a lexical negative verb with a meaning of 'stop' or 'leave' for a negative imperative (or prohibitive) is not uncommon in the world's languages (Aikhenvald, 2010, p. 171).

# The negative interrogative

Negative polar interrogatives can be formed using the negative verb /ɲa/ together with the question marker /x-/.

x-í-tːóxò          íjé
Q-2-finish.N        2SG.NOM
'Have you finished?'

x-ó-ɲà          xàtí      íjé            l-í-tːóxò
Q-2-not.be      but      2SG.NOM    SBO-2-finish
Haven't you finished (yet)?'

Here is another example....

x-ó-ɲà          xàtí      l-í-wú          à    xàŋ
Q-2-not.be    but      SBO-2-go        to   home.ABS
'Aren't you going home?'

Note that the word /xóɲa/ does not inflect for person.

# The negative interrogative - tag questions

Polar interrogative can be expressed with an interrogative tag based on the verb /ɲa/. The tag question is /x-ò-ɲá ífá/, 'Q-3-not.be PST'.

| ò-wú | íɲɛ́ | à | sùk | x-ò-ɲá | ífá |
|------|------|---|-----|--------|-----|
| 3SG-go | 3SG.NOM | to | market | Q-3-not.be | PST |

'She went to the market, didn't she?'

However, unlike English, the tag does not change for polarity, temporal situation or person.

| íɲá | íɲɛ́ | l-o-wu | à | sùk | x-ò-ɲá | ífá |
|-----|------|--------|---|-----|--------|-----|
| NEG | 3SG.NOM | SBO-3-go | to | market | Q-3-not.be | PST |

'She didn't go to the market, did she?'

| ò-wú | ìsó | íɲɛ́ | à | sùk | x-ò-ɲá | Ífá |
|------|-----|------|---|-----|--------|-----|
| 3SG-go | FUT | 3SG.NOM | to | market | Q-3-not.be | PST |

'She will go to the market, won't she?'

| í-ŋàínò | íjé | à | sùk | x-ò-ɲá | ífá |
|---------|-----|---|-----|--------|-----|
| 2-go | 2SG.NOM | to | market | Q-3-not.be | PST |

'You went to the market, didn't you?'

Thus /xoɲa/ is similar to /iɲa/ in the simple negative.

# Negative existential predicates

The negative verb can also be used as a negative existential copula and [íɲá] can be translated as 'there is not' or 'there is no'.

| íɲà | xìfjóŋ |
|-----|--------|
| NEG | water.ABS |
| 'There is no water.' | |

Other, similar constructions are used to express a lack of something or a negative existence. Lopit does not normally use a verb with a meaning of 'be absent'. Some constructions involve interrogative pronouns.

| íɲà | ɲò | dè | xàɟì |
|-----|------|-----|-------|
| NEG | what | in | house |
| 'The house is empty.' | (There is no-one in the house) | | |

# Negative quantifiers and indefinites

Lopit does not have words which correspond to words like 'nobody', 'nothing', or 'nowhere'.

The equivalent meanings of these words are usually expressed using the negative verb /ŋa/ in combination with words like /nabo/, 'one.F'; /xure/, 'some.F', and /ɲo/, 'what'.

í-ɲá        ŋaí     tè      ìnî
3-not.be    who     in      here
'There is no-one here.'

á-gígílò      náŋ        í-ɲà       lóbò      tóxóní     l-ò-lòt-ú
1SG-believe   1SG.NOM    3-not.be   one.M     person     SBO-3-go-VEN
'I think that nobody (M) is coming.'
(lit. 'I think (that) not (even) one person is coming.')

Here, the quantifier is placed in front of the noun to give the phrase [lóbò tóxónî].

This is a pragmatically marked position since quantifiers normal follow nouns. This gives special emphasis to the word /lóbò/.

# Lexical negatives

Lopit has a number of verbs which can express negative concepts without the use of the negative verb.

These include the verbs /riŋ/, 'not know'; /tumo/, 'not know', 'be ignorant of'; /miŋa/, 'not see'; and /diak/, 'not complete'.

| a-tumo | náŋ | ròɽî | xùná | jànì | ìná |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1SG-not.know | 1SG.NOM | things | of.F.PL | tree | this.F |

'I don't know anything about this tree.'

| á-ríŋ | mà | náŋ |
|---|---|---|
| 1SG-not.know | POT | 1SG.NOM |

'I'm not sure.'  (lit. I might not know')

| é-xì-rwátà | xìɟɔ́ | íjé | x-í-míŋà-rì |
|---|---|---|---|
| 3-PFV-escape | and | 2SG.NOM | SEQ-2-not.see-IT |

'He escaped and you missed seeing it.'

Note that /tumo/ is a transitive verb.

# Negation in other Eastern Nilotic languages

The neighbouring language, Otuho (Lotuko) also has a negative verb, *beng*. This verb shows pronominal agreement for both the negative verb and the lexical verb. There is no subordinate marker in Otuho.

| Otuho | **a**-beng | dwo | ni | **a**-lo |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **1SG**-not.be | IMM.PST | 1SG | **1SG**-go |
| | 'I didn't go there.' | | (Muratori, 1938, p. 339) | |

Most other EN languages use a negative prefix or particle.

| | Lopit | Otuho | Maa | Turkana | Ateso | Bari |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| verb | ɲa | beng | | | | |
| prefix | | | (m)mi- | na-; pe- | | |
| particle | | | | | mam(ʊ) | ti; tine |

# Negative imperatives in other Eastern Nilotic languages

Other EN languages use prefixes or particles to express negative imperatives. It appears that only Lopit uses a special negative imperative verb based on a verb meaning 'stop' or 'leave'.

Most other EN languages use a negative prefix or particle.

|  | Lopit | Otuho | Maa | Turkana | Bari |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| verb | idek | | | | |
| prefix | | xe- | m-; ém- | nyi- | |
| particle | | | | | ko |

# Summary

Lopit has two forms of a negative verb. The most common is the verb /ɲa/ and this is used for most negation expressions. This is most commonly used as the particle-like /iɲa/.

There is also the verb /ɲei/ which is used in negative constructions involving an ongoing or persistive activity.

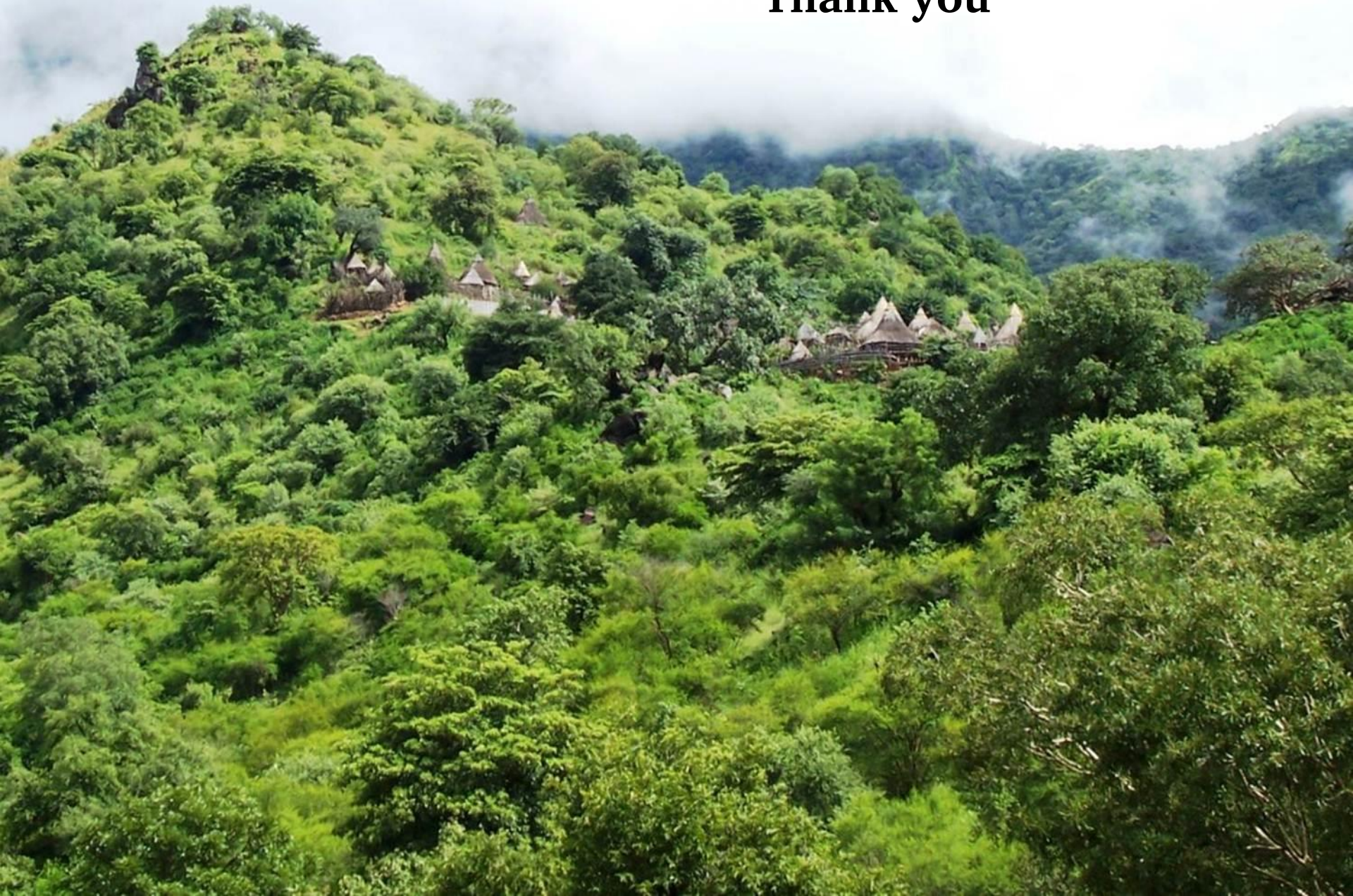The negative verbs behave like other verbs in many respects:
- Clause initial
- Marked for person (sometimes)
- Take the subordinate and interrogative marker
- Can be marked for (some types) of mode and aspect.

They also behave like the other auxiliary verbs:
- Clause initial and result in moving the lexical verb after the subject
- The lexical verb maintains its person marking

Lopit uses a special negative imperative verb based on a verb meaning 'stop' or 'leave' in combination with a special prefix /xai-/ in the lexical verb .

Thank you

# Other examples of 'auxiliary' verbs in Lopit

The negative verb could be described as a kind of auxiliary verb. When it is used, the word order changes from VSO to AUX S V O. This also occurs with the small number of verbs which could be called auxiliary verbs.

One of these is the verb /ɟɔ/, 'say' which is used in connecting clauses, with both coordination and subordination. The form /xaɟɔ, xɔɟɔ/ is used in coordination to express the meaning of 'and then'. The subject moves in front of the main verb, which is marked with the sequential prefix /x-/.

| e-îdóŋ | mórwó | [xɔ̀ɟɔ́ | múnú | níá | x-ò-jːeî] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3-PFV.throw.at | stone.ABS | and.then | snake.ABS | that.F | **SEQ**-3-die |
| 'He threw a stone and (then) the snake died.' | | | | | |

The form /laɟɔ, lɔɟɔ/ is used in subordinating clauses to express the meaning of 'when' or 'if'. This time the main verb is prefixed with the subordinate marker.

| [lɔ̀ɟɔ́ | ínɛ́ | **l**-ɔ-pːʊra | imʊnɛ] | ɔ-pːʊra | de | sali | ina |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| when.3 | 3SG.NOM | **SBO**-3-bake | bread.ABS | 3-bake | on | hearth.ABS | this.F |
| 'When she makes bread, she bakes on this fireplace' | | | | | | | |

# /òlòxóɲà/, /èléxìɲá/, 'not yet'

The word /òlòxóɲà/ includes the negative verb /ɲà/ and it can be interpreted as meaning 'not yet'. This is illustrated in the following examples.

```
x-í-tːɔxɔ́        íjé        ìgɛ̀m           ......     òlòxóɲà
Q-2-finish.PFV   2SG.NOM    work..ABS                  not yet
'Did you finish work?'                ...... 'Not yet'    AC:1:16:24
```

```
òlòxóɲà        náŋ          l-â-cá                 dɛ̀    tòrít
not yet        1SG.NOM      SBO-1SG.PFV-dance      at     Torit
'I have not yet danced in Torit'        BI:34:37
```

This word is sometimes expressed as [èléxìɲá], '3-PERS-PFV-not.be'. This supports its interpretation as 'not yet' or 'still not' (the persistive marker is /lV-/ )

```
a-í-jé-jén-à                    náŋ          x-ìró          nà          lòpít
1SG-PF-REDUP-know-IPFV          1SG.NOM      VN-speak       of.F        Lopit

                    èléxìɲá   xàtí      náŋ         l-a-î-jén           bìnó
                    not yet   but       1SG.NOM     SBO-1SG-PFV-know    very
'I have been learning to speak Lopit but I have not yet learned much.'   DL:13:08
```