A first approach to Tagom verbal inflection and clausal negation strategies

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1 Introduction

Tagom [tágóm], also known as Togom [tógóm], is one of the varieties of the Tegali language cluster, which forms, together with the Tagoi cluster, the Rashad group that belongs to the Niger-Congo phylum (Greenberg 1963, Schadeberg 1981, Williamson & Blench 2000, Quint 2009, Blench 2013, Dimmendaal 2018). Consider FIGURE 1 below. The language is spoken in South Kordofan state in the Tegali Hills and the Rashad area.

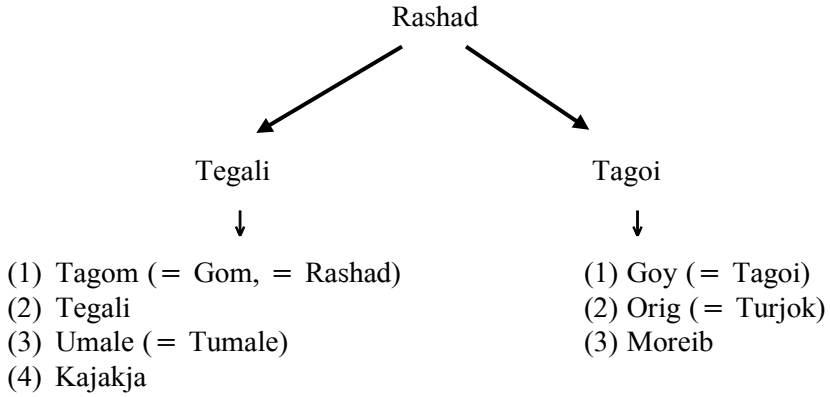

FIGURE 1: The Rashad languages (Aldawi & Nashid 2018: 129, based on Blench 2013: 574)

Fieldwork was carried out with native speakers of Tagom living in Khartoum. The primary data of this work were collected during fieldwork sessions held by the author in Khartoum between January 2017 and January 2023, including a mix of structured interviews and elicitation.

Two main consultants were involved: Ibrahim Adam Yousif (born in 1973), and Adil Abdalla Ibrahim Mohamed (born in 1963).

As for the writing of my data, I use a practical orthography that closely follows the IPA system and that was developed during a workshop on Tagom segmental phonology held in 2016 in Khartoum. Tone marking was not dealt with in this workshop, but tone is marked on words throughout this paper.

The current study focuses on the category of verbs and aims at giving a first overview of the typological characteristics of the Tagom verb. Furthermore, the study provides a description of the negation strategies that are used in Tagom.

This study is structured as follows. After the introduction, which explains briefly where the language is located in the Nuba Mountains, its speakers and its classification, SECTION 2 presents background information on some features of the phonology and morphology of the language. SECTION 3 gives detailed information on the verb, the copula and all the verbal operations associated with them. SECTION 4 gives a comprehensive presentation of the negation strategies in Tagom, addressed from a typological perspective, based on Miestamo's classification of negation (2013, 2017). SECTION 5 is a conclusion and summary of findings.

2 Background information

Tagom vowels can be categorized as the front vowels *i, ɪ, e, ɛ*; the central vowels *ɨ, ə, ʌ, a*; and the back vowels *u, ʊ, o, ɔ*. The vowels we analyzed from the wordlists and sentences in our database differ to some extent from those found by Stevenson (1956-57), Tucker & Bryan (1966) and Schadeberg (2013: 328), who all list eight vowels, namely *i, e, ɛ, ə, a, u, o*, and *ɔ*. Thus, the phonemic status of some of the vowels we identified is still questionable. The relevant vowels are bracketed in FIGURE 2. Ongoing research might show that they are indeed allophones of the eight vowels listed by Schadeberg and others.

i [ɪ] [ɨ] u [ʊ]

e ə o

ɛ [ʌ] ɔ

a

FIGURE 2: Tagom vowels

Vowel alternation is common in the phonology of Tagom; it is observed with TAM verbal conjugation, e.g., *wɔ́-frə́k* 'you (SG) went/got out'/*wə-frək* 'you (SG) go/get out', with *wɔ́/wə* being the prefix for 2SG attached to the TAM-marked root *frə́k/frək* 'get out' and the tone being responsible for TAM marking, as will be discussed in detail later. Vowel alternation is also connected to TAM marking, but further research is required to determine the exact conditions of its existence.

Tagom exhibits two register tones, a high tone and a low tone, which have a major role in its grammar marking (compare, e.g., *ŋʊ́-lə́m* 'you (PL) saw' with *ŋʊ̀-lə̀m* 'you (PL) see'). The existence of lexical tone still needs to be checked.

According to our data and the analysis thereof, Tagom has 22 consonants. TABLE 1 shows their place and manner of articulation:

	BI-LABIAL	LABIO-DENTAL	ALVEO-LAR	RETRO-FLEX	PALATAL	VELAR
PLOSIVES	p b		t d	ɖ	c ɟ	k g
PRE-NASALIZED	^{m}b <mb>		^{n}d <nd>			^{ŋ}g <ŋg>
FRICATIVES		f	s			
NASAL	m		n		ɲ	ŋ
LATERAL			l			
TRILL			r			
APPROXI-MANT	w				j <y>	

TABLE 1: Tagom consonantal system

The consonantal system differs from the one presented by Schadeberg (2013: 328f.), who lists 19 consonants, the retroflex /ɖ/ being missing. To provide evidence for /ɖ/, consider TABLE 2 (in word-initial position neither consonant is attested).

INTERVOCALIC		WORD-FINAL		AFTER CONSONANTS	
/d/	/ɖ/	/d/	/ɖ/	/d/	/ɖ/
kádɛ́	*àɖàm*	*éd*	*lɔ́ɖ*	*y-ɛ́ld-án-í*	*kòlɖókólɖò*
'fifth born'	'name'	'man'	'big/large'	'I coughed'	'calabash'

TABLE 2: The phonemes /d/ and /ɖ/

Schadeberg (2013: 328f.) considers /mb/, /nd/, /ŋg/ as sequences of consonants (instead of our analysis of these as prenasalized consonants). Tagom lacks the

/h/ phoneme. Schadeberg (2013: 239) claims that "Tagoi *h* generally corresponds to *s* in Turjok and Tagom, and *vice versa*; the correspondences are more complex in word-final position". The /s/ in Tagom has full distribution; it can be found word-initially (*sèrè* 'lie down'), intervocalically (*fànàssán* 'nine'), word-finally (*màs* 'stomach') and after consonants (*àbsún* 'clean'). The [ʃ] only appears in words borrowed from Arabic like *aʃa* 'name' and *ʃay* 'tea'.

Verbal roots in Tagom are bound roots. The simplest form of the verb is the singular imperative. There are two types of roots:

- Roots beginning with a vowel are attached with the imperative prefix *k-*.
- The *k-* prefix does not occur with a verb root that begins with a consonant, e.g., *frək* 'get_out 2SG.IMP'.

The inflected verb needs not only to be marked for TAM (see SECTIONS 3.1 and 3.2) but also for person. Thus, in addition to a series of independent personal pronouns (first presented in Aldawi & Nashid 2018: 138), Tagom has pronominal indexes which attach to the verb to inflect for person. Two series of personal prefixes, subject indexes and object indexes have been distinguished, with the structure CV- for verb roots beginning with a consonant and C- for verb roots beginning with a vowel.

PERSON	INDEPENDENT PRONOUNS (SUBJECT, OBJECT AND INDIRECT OBJECT)	SUBJECT INDEXES	(DIRECT AND INDIRECT) OBJECT INDEXES
1SG	*ŋì*	*y-/y(V)-*	*t(V)-*
2SG	*ŋɔ̀*	*w-/w(V)-*	*n^{w}-*
3SG	*ŋgɔ́*	*V-/Ø-*	*Ø-/n(V)-*
1PL (EXCL)	*ɲìndɛ́*	*n-/n(V)-*	*Ø-/t(V)ŋg-*
1PL (INCL)	*ɲìndɛ́*	*t(V)-*	*Ø-/t(V)ŋg-*
2PL	*ŋɔ̀ndá*	*ŋ(V)-*	*n(V)ŋg-*
3PL	*ŋèndá*	*k-/k(V)-*	*Ø-/n(V)ŋg-*

TABLE 3: Tagom personal pronouns and subject and object person indexes

Recent data has revealed variations regarding third and first person (INCL) object morphemes (see TABLE 3). The first person plural may be marked by Ø or *t(V)ŋg-*, as presented in example (6), the third person singular object may be marked by Ø or *n-* (30), and the third person plural may be marked by Ø or *n(V)ŋg-* (1). As the examples show, Tagom marks the plural object of second and third person in many examples with the morpheme *n(V)ŋg-* (compare, e.g.,

(1) and (2)). The conditions of the variations are unclear. Tonal marking probably plays a role, but further research is needed.

(1) *kíà* *ŋèndá* *nùŋg-ìyín*
child O3PL O3PL-have
'They have a child'

(2) *ŋì* *ŋɔ̀ndá* *núŋg-úŋú*
S1SG O2PL O2PL-saw
'I hit you (PL)'

Tagom follows a person hierarchy for pronominal indexes marked on the verb; this becomes obvious in transitive sentences in which the subject and object are occupied by different persons. In intransitive sentences the subject is always marked on the verb. In transitive sentences, either the subject or the object is marked on the verb but not both.

This person hierarchy may be summarized in the following rules, first sketched and formulated in Aldawi (2022: 8). The examples relating to these rules are listed in TABLE 4.

1) First and second persons take precedence over the third person (1, 2 > 3) independently of their argument role.
2) When a first or second person is the object argument of the verb, the object prefix takes precedence over the first/second person subject prefix (O > S).
3) When the subject and object are both third persons (whether singular or plural), it is the subject which is marked on the verb.

RULE	SUBJECT	OBJECT	PERSON INDEX ON THE VERB	HIERARCHY	EXAMPLE
1	1 or 2	3	Subject	1, 2 > 3	(3)
1	3	1 or 2	Object	3 < 1, 2	(4)
2	1	2	Object	S < O	(5)
2	2	1	Object	S < O	(6)
3	3	3	Subject	S > O	(7)

TABLE 4: Person hierarchy for person indexes in Tagom transitive verbs

When all the arguments are overt, the word order is SOV. In addition, we find the arguments indexed on the verb according to the formulated rules.

With regard to the word order for non-overt arguments, e.g., focus marking, relevant data still need to be gathered.

(3) *ŋɔ̀ndá* *ŋgɔ́* *ŋ-úŋú*
S2PL O3SG S2PL-hit:PST
'You hit him'

(4) *ŋgɔ́* *ŋì* *t-úŋú*
S3SG O1SG O1SG-hit:PST
'He hit me'

(5) *ŋì* *ŋɔ̀ndá* *núŋg-úŋú*
S1SG O2PL O2PL-hit:PST
'I hit you (PL)'

(6) *ŋɔ̀ndá* *ɲìndɛ́* *tíŋg-úŋú*
S2PL O1PL O1PL-hit:PST
'You hit us'

(7) a. *kíà* *yígìd* *ù-sù-wən* *Ø-úŋú*
child young PL-dog-PL S3SG-hit:PST
'The young boy (lit. child) hit the dogs'

b. *ágíà* *sù* *k-úŋú*
PL:child dog S3PL-hit:PST
'The children hit the dog'

As already mentioned by Stevenson (1956-57: 50), the basic word order in simple declarative sentences in the languages of Rashad group is SOV for transitive and SV for intransitive sentences, while pronominal subject and object indexes are prefixed to the verb. Tagom complies with this general trend and can therefore be characterized as a verb-final language. The basic word order in transitive sentences is further illustrated in example (8) (see also (3-7).

(8) *fâtənà* *pún* *Ø-wən*
fatima porridge S3SG-cook:PRS
'Fatima is cooking porridge'

Examples (9) and (10) illustrate the basic word order in intransitive sentences. While (9) is an SV construction, (10) additionally has a locative complement so that the word order is S LOC V.

(9) *fâtənà* *Ø-ŋìnànì*
Fatima 3SG-sing:PRS
'Fatima is singing'

(10) *fâtənà* *tà-súkú* *à-ndɛ̀*
Fatima LOC-market S3SG-go:PRS
'Fatima is going to the market'

As mentioned before in Aldawi (2022: 4-5), the few available studies on the Rashad languages are presented in the following references:

1) Stevenson (1956-1957) was the first linguistic scholar to deal with south Kordofanian languages. In his PhD thesis he lists a considerable amount of Rashad data.

2) At the third Nuba Mountain Languages conference, held in Cologne Sept. 27-29, 2017, Aldawi & Nashid presented an initial study on the noun phrase of Tagom, which was later published in the volume *Nuba Mountain Languages Studies: New Insights* (Schneider-Blum et al. 2018). The study mainly focuses on describing and analyzing the structure of the noun, including the language's number marking system. Furthermore, the morphosyntactic structure of the noun phrase with all its constituents (personal and possessive pronouns, demonstratives, adjectives, quantifiers and numerals) is discussed.

3) Bashir (2018), using an alternative recent approach suggested by Corbett (1991: 45), reclassified the Tagoi nouns as investigated by Stevenson (1956/57), Schadeberg (2013) and Alamin (2015). The approach Bashir used is based on agreement evidence and follows both semantic and morphological assignment rules.

4) The paper 'Verbal number in Tagom' (Aldawi 2022) is on pluractional marking as part of the derivational morphology of the language. The study was an attempt to answer all the questions associated with verbal number; its types, the strategies used to encode verbal number and the correlation between transitivity and verbal number in the language. In addition, it sheds light on the semantic connotations of verbal number in Tagom.

3 The verb

The current study is the second of its type (following Aldawi 2022) to focus on the category of verb in Tagom. A number of compulsory and optional affixes (i.e., inflectional and derivational) attach to the verbal root (which is a bound morpheme) and may adjust its meaning. Person indexes are compulsorily marked (complying with the rules of the person hierarchy) on the bound root, whereas other affixes, i.e., derivation, negation and interrogation, are optional. The linear order of verbal morphemes is presented in the

following sketch; there is no slot for TAM since it is marked suprasegmentally by tone.

1	2	3	4	5
NEG	PERSON	ROOT	DERIVATIONAL EXTENSIONS	QUES

Derivational extensions other than pluractional marking (for which see Aldawi 2022) will be presented in a separate study (Aldawi, in preparation).

Verb roots in Tagom have either a monosyllabic, disyllabic or polysyllabic structure, all of which are exemplified in TABLE 5. The examples in TABLE 5 were first presented in Aldawi (2022: 7).

	SYLLABLE STRUCTURE	ROOT	GLOSS
monosyllabic	CV	*yɔ*	'drink'
	CV	*ŋgɔ́*	'3SG' (independent pronoun)
	CVC	*rɪŋ*	'slaughter'
	CVCC	*gork*	'tie'
	CCVC	*frək*	'get out'
disyllabic	V.CV	*ɛna*	'stab'
	CV.CV	*sɛrɛ*	'lie down'
	V.CVC	*asʊd*	'cut'
	VC.CVC	*ʊndɛn*	'sleep'
	CV.CVC	*təwək*	'grind'
	CVC.CVC	*gʊlmək*	'hide'
polysyllabic	V.CV.CV	*amada*	'shave'
	VC.CV.CV	*imridi*	'wash'
	V.CV.CV.CV	*udobidi*	'cultivate'
	VC.CV.CV.CV	*ʊŋfʊyanɪ*	'whistle'

TABLE 5: Canonical structure of Tagom verb roots

3.1 TA in Tagom

Stevenson (1956-57: 49) argues that

> [t]he main tense forms appear to be: indefinite (present or future time) and past (two forms, one of which may be a perfect). In the main past tense, a vowel i-, e-, u-, is prefixed to the root, while the other (for which evidence exists only in

> Tumale and Tegali) is formed from the first by suffixing -e, -ɛ, or -i. Stress and vowel change also play a part in tense-formation, and sometimes the past is based on quite a different root from the present.

The vowel alternations of the verb root mentioned may occur in the different tenses. The rules that govern these alternations are still unclear and need further investigation.

The tense/aspect forms identified in this study correspond to the ones named by Stevenson. That is, different paradigms show that Tagom has a present opposing a past and a perfect. We regard future as a mood category rather than as tense/aspect (see SECTION 3.2.1). Consider the examples in TABLE 6.

PRESENT	PAST	PERFECT	GLOSS
yà-yɔ̀	*yɔ́-yɔ́*	*yɔ́-yɔ̀*	'1SG smoke'
y-àbɔ̀	*y-úbɛ́*	*y-úbɛ̀*	'1SG plant'
y-ɔ̀ndì	*y-úndí*	*y-úndì*	'1SG sleep'
kà-ndɛ̀	*ká-ndɛ́*	*ká-ndɛ̀*	'3PL walk'
Ø-rəŋə̀k	*Ø-érŋə́k*	*Ø-érŋə́k-ɛ̀*	'3SG eat'
Ø-ràná	*Ø-úrná*	*Ø-úrnà*	'3SG stand up'
Ø-ìnì	*Ø-íní*	*Ø-ínì*	'3SG kill'

TABLE 6: Some 1SG and 3SG forms of verbs in the attested tense/aspect forms

Tone marking is the most reliable marker to differentiate present from past and perfect in Tagom. Thus, the present is generally marked by low tones, past by high tones and perfect by high-low tones. Considering present and past/perfect, neither the vowel alternation observed with the pronominal prefixes (compare *yà-yɔ̀* with *yɔ́-yɔ́/ yɔ́-yɔ̀*) nor with the root (compare *y-àbɔ̀* with *y-úbɛ́/y-úbɛ̀*) can currently be explained; such alternations do not occur with all verbs (compare *kà-ndɛ̀* with *ká-ndɛ́* and *ká-ndɛ̀*). Furthermore, Stevenson (1956-57: 49) noticed that "[…] sometimes the past is based on quite a different root from the present". In addition, as Stevenson (1956-57: 49) reports for Tumale and Tegali, "the perfect is formed from the first [i.e. the past; M.A.] by suffixing -*e*, -*ɛ*, or -*i*". This vowel shows in Tagom only with a sub-group of verbs (see TABLE 6) and, as will be explained in SECTION 3.1.3 on the perfect, is morpho-phonologically conditioned.

Another marking option is consonant/vowel metathesis of the first syllable of the stem; consider, e.g., *rəŋə̀k* 'he kills' vs. *èrŋə̀k* 'he killed'. Both morpho-phonemic alterations may be witnessed in the same verb (compare *ràná* with *úrná/ úrnà*). When neglecting tone, past and perfect generally share the same form, but the past is marked by high tones, the perfect by a (H)HL sequence.

These three tense/aspect forms will be discussed in SECTIONS 3.1.1 - 3.1.3.

3.1.1 The present

Roughly speaking, present tense/aspect is marked by low tone across the verb on all syllables, as the paradigm in TABLE 7 shows. The vowel alternation of the prefix remains to be explained.

PERSON	PRESENT TENSE/ASPECT
1SG	*yì-wən*
2SG	*wì-wən*
3SG	*Ø-wən*
1PL (EXCL)	*nɔ̀-wən*
1PL (INCL)	*tɔ̀-wən*
2PL	*ŋɔ̀-wən*
3PL	*kɔ̀-wən*

TABLE 7: The verb *wən* 'cook' in the present tense/aspect

The present tense/aspect in Tagom expresses the notion of currently exerting a continuous action at the time of speaking, as exemplified in (11a). The habitual aspect on the verb is not differentiated, but the notion of habituality may be transmitted by an adverb, as in (11b).

(11) a. *yánɛ̀ kíà Ø-ùbìyà*
woman baby S3SG-breast_feed:PRS
'The woman is breastfeeding the baby [now]'

b. *yánɛ̀ ànɛ̀kúl kíà Ø-ùbìyà*
woman everyday baby S3SG-breast_feed:PRS
'The woman breastfeeds the baby every day'

(12) *ŋì tàbʊ̀n y-àbɔ́*
S1SG field S1SG-plant:PRS
'I am planting the field'

(13) *yánɛ̀ à-rà Ø-rədə̀k*
woman PL-cow S3SG-milk:PRS
'The woman is milking the cows [now]'

(14) *ŋgɔ́ Ø-ràná*
S3SG S3SG-stand_up:PRS
'He is standing up'

For the Tegali and Tumale languages, Stevenson (1956-57: 49) differentiated morphologically between a present and a future tense (two categories within indefinite). Our data show that the present tense/aspect in Tagom may also be used to refer to future actions, as in example (15), where the verb *yàndɛ̀* 'I go' is inflected for the present with reference to a future action. The adverbial phrase *úràgɔ̀tùm* 'next month' is facultative. Morphologically marked future tense will be discussed in SECTION 3.2.4.

(15) *ŋì* *tà-ʊŋŋa-gɔ̀* *(úràgɔ̀tùm)* *yà-ndɛ̀*
S1SG LOC-mountains-LOC moon:next S1SG-go
'I go/will go to the mountains (next month)'

3.1.2 The past

Roughly speaking, the past is marked with high tones on the whole verb, including the person-marking prefix. The prefix vowel is either *i*, *e* or *u*/ɔ. The past tense is illustrated by the verb *-frək* 'go/get out' for all persons in TABLE 8 and by examples (16), (17) and (18).

PERSON	PAST TENSE
1SG	*yú-frɔ́k*
2SG	*wɔ́-frɔ́k*
3SG	*ú-frɔ́k*
1PL (EXCL)	*nú-frɔ́k*
1PL (INCL)	*tɔ́-frɔ́k*
2PL	*ŋú-frɔ́k*
3PL	*kú-frɔ́k*

TABLE 8: The verb *-frək* 'get out' in the past tense

(16) *ŋì* *tàŋ-gɔ̀* *yú-frɔ́k*
S1SG village-DEM S1SG-get_out:PST
'I got out of the village'

(17) *ŋì* *tàbʊ̀n* *y-úbɛ́*
S1SG field S1SG-plant:PST
'I planted the field'

(18) *ŋèndá* *ɲìndɛ́* *tíŋg-íləm*
S3PL O1PL O1PL-see:PST
'They saw us'

The difference in the roots when occurring in the present or the past becomes obvious when comparing the structure of the verb 'milk' in these two tenses, i.e., *rədək* (13) and *értək* (19), and also the verb 'stand up' in the present and the past, i.e., *ràná* (14) and *úrná* (20); these are clear examples of consonant/vowel metathesis of the first syllable. In more detail: the CV syllable of the present tense/aspect is a VC syllable in the past. In addition, we can observe vowel alternation in these example pairs, as well as voicing alternation of the consonant of the root when comparing *rədək* with *értək*; this is morpho-phonologically conditioned.

(19) *yánɛ̀ rà Ø-értək*
woman cow S3SG-milk:PST
'The woman milked the cow'

(20) *ŋgɔ́ Ø-úrná*
S3SG S3SG-stand_up:PST
'He stood up'

3.1.3 The perfect

The perfect tense/aspect in Tagom designates a currently relevant state occurring as a result of a completed event.

PERSON	PERFECT TENSE/ASPECT
1SG	*y-úbɛ̀*
2SG	*w-úbɛ̀*
3SG	*Ø-úbɛ̀*
1PL (EXCL)	*n-úbɛ̀*
1PL (INCL)	*t-úbɛ̀*
2PL	*ŋ-úbɛ̀*
3PL	*k-úbɛ̀*

TABLE 9: The verb *-úbɛ̀* 'plant' in the perfect

Contrary to the statement by Stevenson (1956/57: 49) that the perfect in Tegali and Tumale is generally marked by a suffixed vowel, our analysis of the Tagom data show that only verbs ending in a consonant are suffixed by *-V*, while those verbs that already end with a vowel receive only a tone distinction. TABLE 9 presents a full paradigm of the verb *-úbɛ̀* 'plant' in the perfect.

Compare the structure of the verb 'plant' in the present (12) and in the past (17), i.e., *yàbɔ̀* and *yúbɛ́,* with the perfect form *yùbɛ́* in example (21), again

illustrating vowel change between the present and the past/perfect forms, as well as a change in tone marking between all three forms.

(21) *ŋì* *tàbòn* *y-úbɛ̀*
S1SG field S1SG-plant:PERF
'I have planted the field'

In examples (22) and (23), past and perfect forms are opposed. Note that the durative reading in example (22b) is due to the pluractional marker.

(22) a. *ŋì* *kíà* *y-ímrídí*
S1SG child S1SG-wash:PST
'I washed the child'

b. *ŋì* *ágìà* *y-ímrídánì*
S1SG PL:child S1SG-wash:PLUR:PERF
'I have been washing the children'

(23) a. *ŋì* *y-úndí*
S3SG S3SG-sleep:PST
'I slept'

b. *ŋgɔ́* *ítɛ̀* *Ø-úndénì*
S3SG small/little S3SG-sleep:PLUR:PERF
'He has been sleeping (for a while)'

c. *ŋgɔ́* *Ø-úndénénì*
S3SG S3SG-sleep:PLUR:PLUR:PERF
'He has been sleeping (for a long time) / he is a sleepy head'

3.2 Mood

This section distinguishes and discusses three mood types of the Tagom verb: the future, the imperative and the hortative. All three mood types have tonal present tense/aspect marking as a base.

3.2.1 The future

Stevenson (1956-57: 49) mentions that "Tumale has a future tense with the suffix *-rʊŋɐn*, based on the present […]". Tagom uses a cognate suffix to mark the future, i.e., invariably *-ùŋɛ́*. The first vowel of the suffix *-ùŋɛ́* triggers alternation of the prefix and the root vowels. As an example, consider the verbal root *-frə̀k* 'get out', marked for present. When inflected for the future, the verbal root changes to *-frùk* 'get out'; see example (24). This is also

illustrated in TABLE 10 with different verbs inflected for present and future. The exact process, with its conditioning factors, still has to be investigated.

(24) *ŋì* *tà-rè-gɔ̀* *yù-frʊ̀k-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*
S1SG LOC-outside-DEM S1SG-get_out-FUT
'I want to get out / I will get out'

PERSON	PRESENT	FUTURE	GLOSS (INFINITIVE)
1SG	*yà-ndɛ̀*	y*ù-ndù-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'walk'
2PL	*ŋà-ndɔ̀*	*ŋɔ̀-ndù-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'walk'
3PL	*kà-ndɛ̀*	*kɔ̀-ndɔ̀-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'walk'
1SG	*yà-yɔ̀*	*yɔ̀-yɔ̀-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'smoke'
1SG	*y-àbɔ̀*	*y-ʊ̀bɛ̀-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'plant'
1SG	*y-ɔ̀ndì*	*y-ɔ̀ndɔ̀-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'sleep'
3SG	*Ø-rəŋək*	*Ø-ɛ̀rŋək-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'eat'
3SG	*Ø-ràn̄à*	*Ø-ʊ̀rn̄à-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'stand up'
3SG	*Ø-ìnì*	*Ø-ànàn-ʊ̀ŋɛ́*	'kill'

TABLE 10: Present and future for different persons with different verbs

Unlike the examples presented in SECTION 3.1.1 where the present bears a future meaning, the verbs in (24) and (25) are marked for future. According to our consultant, these examples may have a volitive connotation, expressing the meaning of intention or the desire to do something.

(25) *ŋɔ̀ndá* *tà-ʊŋŋa-gɔ̀* *ŋɔ̀-ndù-ʊ̀ŋɛ́-(n)=ɛ́?*
S2PL LOC-mountains-DEM 2S:PL-go-FUT-EP=QUES
'Do you want to travel/go to the mountains?
Will you travel/go to the mountains?'

3.2.2 The imperative

"The imperative mood is a verb form used to issue direct commands and orders which are restricted to second person subject. Therefore, in many languages it only has two forms; one for the singular and one for the plural" (Bybee 1985: 171). This is also true for Tagom, where only these two forms of the imperative are used to issue direct commands.

Stevenson (1956-57: 49) mentions that "[i]n all the languages of this group the imperative is formed mostly by prefix **(k-)** and vowel suffix together". With "this group", Stevenson refers to the Tegali-Tagoi language group, also mentioned on p. 46 in Stevenson (1956-57).

Indeed, a considerable number of imperative verbs in Tagom start with the prefix *k-* (see TABLE 11). It attaches to verb roots that begin with an initial vowel. While there is no further marking of the second person singular imperative, the second person plural is marked by the syllabic suffix *-dʌ̀n*. Tagom shows no reflexes of the vowel suffix Stevenson (1956-57: 49) mentions and exemplifies.

2SG	2PL	GLOSS
k-ànà	*k-ànà-dʌ̀n*	'Kill!'
k-àmà	*k-àmà-dʌ̀n*	'Catch!'
k-ùndɔ̀nɔ̀	*k-ùndɔ̀nɔ̀-dʌ̀n*	'Sleep!'
k-ùrnà	*k-ùrnà-dʌ̀n*	'Sit down!'

TABLE 11: Imperatives for 2SG and 2PL with the prefix *k-*

The initial *k-* prefix does not occur with a verb root that begins with a consonant, as the examples in TABLE 12 show.

2SG	2PL	GLOSS
wès	*ŋɔ̀s*	'Drink!'
mìndà	*mìndà-dʌ̀n*	'Sit down!'
yɔ̀	*yɔ̀-dʌ̀n*	'Smoke!'
kà	*kà-dʌ̀n*	'Take!'
kɛ̀dà	*kɛ̀dà-dʌ̀n*	'Bring!'
ndɔ̀ / ndɛ̀	*ndɔ̀-dʌ̀n*	'Go!'
frə́k	*frə́k-dʌ̀n*	'Get out!'
kəlmì	*kəlmì-dʌ̀n*	'Hide!'

TABLE 12: Imperatives in 2SG and 2PL without the prefix *k-*

3.2.3 The hortative

Hortatives are verbal expressions used by the speaker to encourage an action. They occur in Tagom with 1PL (prefix *t(V)-*), 3SG (prefix *(V)-/Ø-*; zero marking occurs with verbs that have a vowel as the initial root sound) and 3PL (prefix *k(V)-*). The hortative indexes are the same indexes used in assertive sentences; see TABLE 8. This pronominal prefix attaches to the verb root with present tense/aspect tone marking, as illustrated in TABLE 13.

	HORTATIVE	GLOSS
1PL (INCL)	*tù-ndù*	'Let us go!'
	tà-mìn	'Let us sit down!'
	tɔ̀-yù	'Let us smoke!'
	t-ɛ̀ːs	'Let us drink!'
3SG	*ù-ndù*	'Let him go!'
	à-mìn	'Let him sit down!'
	ɔ̀-yù	'Let him smoke!'
	Ø-ɛ̀ːs	'Let him drink!'
3PL	*kù-ndù*	'Let them go!'
	kà-mìn	'Let them sit down!'
	kɔ̀-yù	'Let them smoke!'
	k-ɛ̀ːs	'Let them drink!'

TABLE 13: The hortative

3.3 The verb *-ɛyɛ* 'exist' vs. 'have'

The verbal root *-ɛyɛ* is considered a special verb form that can be used either transitively or intransitively, depending on its meaning and context.

It is used intransitively when it means 'exist' in existential and locative constructions (see SECTION 3.3.1).

The verb *-ɛyɛ* meaning 'have' is a fully inflected transitive verb (i.e., person, number and tense) used in possessive and experiencer constructions. The structure of the verb *-ɛyɛ* 'have' varies in possessive and experiencer constructions due to TAM marking (see SECTION 3.3.2).

3.3.1 The verb *-ɛyɛ* meaning 'exist'

Existential clauses in Tagom make use of the intransitive inflected verb *-èyɛ̀* meaning 'exist' to express the existence of an item, as exemplified in (26). They may have a locational adjunct, e.g., *súdàn-dà* 'in Sudan', as presented in example (27), with *-da* being the locative marker. The verb *-èyɛ̀* 'exist' is overtly inflected for number when it is used with plural nouns; consider example (26).

(26) *àlgìrìʃ-ɛ̀* *k-èyɛ̀*
money-PL S3PL-exist
'There is money'

(27) *súdàn-dà* *tòrùk* *Ø-èyè*
Sudan-LOC government S3SG-exist
'There is a government in Sudan'

Often, locative constructions in Tagom require a relational expression. The language uses different relational adverbials to refer to the specific location of an item (i.e., under, on, above, etc.). These words are used together with the locational object, which is marked by the locative suffix *-da*. The intransitive verb *-èyè* 'exist' inflected for person, number and tense follows the locative expression, so the structure is as follows:

Locative in Tagom:

SUBJECT + LOCOBJECT-*da* + LOCATIVE WORD + *-èyè*

TABLE 14 presents some of the relational words in Tagom that are used in locative constructions.

RELATIONAL ADVERBS	GLOSS
tɛ̀rɛ̀ŋ	'on'
tùgrùm	'under'
kíŋkɛ̀	'towards'
táryàw	'behind'
tààs	'in front of'

TABLE 14: Relationals

Consider examples (28) and (29) below.

(28) *kìtáb* *tàrbìsà-dà* *tɛ̀rɛ̀ŋ* *Ø-èyè*
book table-LOC on S3SG-exist
'The book is on the table'

(29) *bìs* *ùŋgrán-dà* *tùgrùm* *Ø-èyè*
cat bed-LOC under S3SG-exist
'The cat is under the bed'

3.3.2 The verb *-ɛyɛ* meaning 'have' in possessive and experiencer constructions

Possessive and experiencer constructions, though considered transitive, differ from other transitive constructions in that word order is OSV rather than SOV. The possessor is sentence-initial, while the possessee occurs between the possessor and the verb. Cross-referencing on the verb is with the possessor and, as we can see, it is the object index that is used. Recall that, in other

transitive sentences, we would expect the subject index, as presented in TABLE 4.

The full paradigm of *-ɛyɛ* is presented in TABLE 15 for present, past and perfect. Vowel alternations occur due to TAM variations.

PERSON	OBJ	PRESENT	PAST	PERFECT
1SG	*t(V)-*	*t-èyè*	*t-íyín*	*t-ìyín*
2SG	*n^{w}-*	*n-ɔ̀yɔ̀*	*n-íyín*	*n-ìyín*
3SG	*Ø-/n-*	*n-èyè*	*n-íyín*	*n-ìyín*
1PL INCL	*t(V)ŋg-*	*tèŋg-èyè*	*tìŋg-íyín*	*tìŋg-ìyín*
1PL EXCL	*Ø-/t(V)ŋg-*	*tèŋg-èyè*	*tìŋg-íyín*	*tìŋg-ìyín*
2PL	*n(V)ŋg-*	*nɔ̀ŋg-ɔ̀yɔ̀*	*núŋg-íyín*	*núŋg-ìyín*
3PL	*Ø-/nɪŋg-*	*nìŋg-èyè*	*nìŋg-íyín*	*nìŋg-ìyín*

TABLE 15: The verb *-ɛyɛ* 'have' in the present, past and perfect

Consider the following examples of the possessive construction:

(30) *ŋgɔ́* *àlgìrìʃ-è* *n-ìyín*
O3SG money-PL O3SG-exist:PERF
'He has money'

(31) *ŋgɔ́* *á-fɑ̂r-nè* *n-ìyín*
O3SG PL-house-PL[1] O3SG-exist:PERF
'He has houses'

(32) *ŋèndá* *kíà* *nùŋg-ìyín*
O3PL child O3PL-exist:PERF
'They have a child'

Experiencer constructions are a kind of possessive construction known as abstract possession. Heine (1997: 88) states: "In this kind of possession, the possessee is a concept that is not visible or tangible, like a disease, a feeling, or some other psychological state." The structure of the experiencer construction in Tagom is thus comparable to the possessive construction. The experiencer is the object of the sentence, as is the possessor in the possessive construction; what is being experienced is the subject, like the possessee in the possessive construction, and the marking on the verb *-èyè* 'have' cross-references the experiencer. Consider examples (33), (34) and (35) below.

[1] Several nouns are marked for the plural with the prefix *a-* and a suffix. For more information on nominal number marking see Aldawi & Nashid (2018: 135).

(33) *ŋɔ̀* *rà* *n-ɔ̀yɔ̀*
O2SG fear O2SG-exist
'You are afraid'

(34) *ŋì* *àŋàn* *t-èyɛ̀*
O1SG happiness O1SG-exist
'I am happy'

(35) *ŋèndá* *àlàm* *nìŋg-èyɛ̀*
O3PL hunger O3PL-exist
'They are hungry/lit. Hunger is on/with them'

3.4 The copula verb *-Vn*

The copula verb in Tagom is a monosyllabic auxiliary verb with the root *-Vn.* "Auxiliaries are verbs in that they satisfy the morphosyntactic definition of verbs […], e.g., they occur in the position of a verb, and they carry at least some of the inflectional information (subject/object 'agreement' and tense/aspect/mode marking) normally associated with verbs. […]. They are often semantically 'empty' […], or they express 'auxiliary' information such as tense, aspect, or mode, […]" (Payne 1997: 84).

The copula *-Vn* in Tagom has a stative meaning. It is a fully inflected verb, i.e., it is inflected for number and TA as shown in TABLE 16 and examples (36)-(40).

While, with almost all persons, the vowel of the copula changes consistently from /ɛ/ to /ɪ/ when comparing present to past and perfect, the vowel changes from /ɔ/ to /ʊ/ with 2PL, probably due to an assimilation process between the pronominal (consider *ŋɔ̀ndá* '2PL') and the copula. For this reason, we do not mark the morpheme boundary for 2PL:COP.

PERSON	PRESENT	PAST	PERFECT
1SG	*y-èn*	*y-ín*	*y-ìn*
2SG	*w-èn*	*w-ín*	*w-ìn*
3SG	*Ø-èn*	*Ø-ín*	*Ø-ìn*
1PL (EXCL)	*n-èn*	*n-ín*	*n-ìn*
1PL (INCL)	*t-èn*	*t-ín*	*t-ìn*
2PL	*ŋɔ̀n*	*ŋʊ́n*	*ŋʊ̀n*
3PL	*k-èn*	*k-ín*	*k-ìn*

TABLE 16: The copula in the present, past and perfect

The copula has a major role in the structure of certain predications. This includes predicate nominals (36)-(37) and predicate adjectives (38)-(40) (but, unlike in other languages, like English, it is not used to express progressive action). In the following, I briefly discuss each construction.

According to Payne (1997: 114), predicate nominals can be divided into two types, proper inclusion and equative clauses. While the former assigns a 'specific entity' to a certain class, the "[e]quative clauses are those which assert that a particular entity (the subject of the clause) is identical to the entity specified in the predicate nominal, […]". Both kinds are expressed in Tagom using the copula *-Vn*; see (36) for proper inclusion and (37) for the equative clause.

(36) *ŋì* *àfândí* *y-èn*
S1SG teacher S1SG-COP:PRS
'I am a teacher'

(37) *ŋgó* *ábá-èŋ* *Ø-èn*
S:3SG father-POSS:1SG S3SG-COP:PRS
'He is my father'

Consider Payne (1997) for his thoughts on predicate adjectives, before we present the relevant data of Tagom.

> Predicate adjectives are clauses in which the main semantic content is expressed by an adjective. If the language lacks a grammatical category of adjectives, there will be no grammatical distinct predicate adjective construction […]. Semantically, these clause types can be described as attributive clauses. (Payne 1997: 111f.)

In Tagom, adjectives do in fact exist and they may occur in modifying as well as in predicative function; the latter is of concern here. In (38), the adjective is *ɲàmɲàm* 'cold', it is *ndágànndágàn* 'yellow' in (39) and *ràs* 'pregnant' in (40). Like nouns, adjectives are also marked for number; in attributive clauses they agree in number with the subject. The color term *ndágànndágàn* in (39) is not a basic color term, but the reduplicated form of the nominal root for 'sorghum', i.e., *ndágàn*. In the same clause, the adjective is intensified with *álák*, considered an ideophone (see Aldawi & Nashid 2018: 144f.).

(38) *rəɲək* *yè* *ɲàmɲàm* *Ø-èn*
food DEM cold S3SG-COP:PRS
'This food is cold'

(39) *ìlìg-è* *yè* *ndágànndágàn-é* *k-èn* *álák*
pot-PL DEM yellow-PL 3PL-COP:PRS very
'These pots are very yellow'

(40) *ŋèndá* *ràs-ú* *k-ín*
PP:3PL pregnant-PL 3PL-COP:PST
'They were pregnant'

Moreover, the copula verb *-Vn* plays a major role in the negation of declarative (42b) and interrogative clauses (43b) and non-verbal predications (46b), as discussed in SECTION 4.

4 Negation

"[N]egation can be defined as an operator changing the truth value of a proposition *p* to its opposite *-p*" (Miestamo 2017: 405). In this section, we will have a look at how this is done in Tagom. We adopt Miestamo's (2017) typology, which distinguishes between symmetric and asymmetric negation, showing in paradigms and/or in the construction type. According to Miestamo (2017: 412), "[i]n symmetric paradigms, the paradigms used in the negative show a one-to-one correspondence to the paradigms used in the affirmative […] whereas in asymmetric paradigms such a one-to-one correspondence is not found and (usually) distinctions are lost in the negative". To illustrate the former type, Miestamo presents French imperfect and present paradigms with their corresponding negative paradigms. For the latter type, he presents examples from Bagirmi, with two tense/aspect paradigms in the affirmative, while there is only one paradigm to express negation. A constructional asymmetry exists when the negative construction not only adds a negative marker (as would be the case for constructional symmetry), but "shows other structural differences as well" (Miestamo 2017: 411), such as in the finiteness of the verb. "Constructional and paradigmatic asymmetry are largely independent dimensions and any combination of these parameters is possible" (Miestamo 2017: 413).

The type of negation that will be the focus of this section is "standard negation (negation of declarative main clauses with a verbal predicate" (Miestamo 2017: 405). This is dealt with in SECTION 4.1), while different sub-types of non-standard negation, including lexical negation, are discussed in SECTION 4.2).

Our description of negation will focus on three factors:

i. the type of the negative marker (morphological affixes vs. negative particles vs. negative verbs),

ii. the position of the negative marker, and
iii. the paradigmatic and constructional symmetry or asymmetry of negation vis-à-vis affirmation.

4.1 Standard negation

Standard negation is one type of clausal negation.

> The term standard negation was coined by Payne (1985), who defined it as 'that type of negation that can apply to the most minimal and basic sentences. Such sentences are characteristically main clauses and consist of a single predicate with as few noun phrases and adverbial modifiers as possible' (p.198). Today the term is used for the negation of declarative main clauses with a verbal predicate, more precisely for the pragmatically neutral and productive strategies that languages use for this function; […]. (Miestamo 2017: 408f.)

Miestamo (2017: 409-410) mentions three main types of negative markers, i.e., affixes, particles and verbs, which are used in standard negation.

Regarding Rashad languages, Stevenson (1956-1957: 50) states that "[n]egation is affected by a negative particle **(k-, g-)** preceding the main verb, together with the verb 'to be' at the end of the phrase. The main verb appears in a modified form and does not change for person". As our data show, declarative sentences in Tagom are negated with the prefix *k(V)-* preceding the verb root. The main verb is not marked for person. Recall that TA is transmitted by tone marking. The *g*-variant mentioned by Stevenson does not occur in Tagom. In addition, the inflected copula verb 'to be' (see SECTION 3.4) occurs at the end of the clause. That is, we are dealing here with constructional asymmetry.

The *k-* precedes verb roots that begin with a vowel (as can be seen, for example, with (43b) in SECTION 4.2.1), and *k(V)-* precedes verb roots beginning with a consonant, the latter exemplified with (41b) and (42b).

(41) a. *ŋgɔ́ tà-sʊ̀kʊ̀ á-ndɛ́*
S3SG LOC-market S3SG-go:PST
'She went to the market'

b. *ŋgɔ́ tà-sʊ̀kʊ̀ ká-ndɛ́ Ø-ín*
S3SG LOC-market NEG-go S3SG-COP:PST
'She did not go to the market'

(42) a. *ŋgɔ́ pùn Ø-wə̀n*
S3SG porridge S3SG-cook:PRS
'She is cooking porridge'

b. *ŋgɔ́ pùn kɛ̀-wə̀n Ø-ɛ̀n*
S3SG porridge NEG-cook S3SG-COP:PRS
'She is not cooking porridge'

However, when considering the attested paradigms for tense/aspect, we find that each category, i.e., present, past and perfect, has its own negated form, recognizable with the tonal marking on both the negation prefix and the main verb. That is, within negation, we find LL-marking with the present, HH-marking with the past, and HL-marking with the perfect. The quality of the vowel of the copula also differs between the present on the one hand and the past perfect on the other. These latter two are differentiated by tone again, i.e., the copula carries a high tone in the past, but a low tone in the perfect. Consider the three paradigms in TABLE 17. Thus, Tagom has paradigmatic symmetry regarding the negated tense/aspect forms. As we will see in SECTION 4.2.1, the future also has its own negated paradigm, but using a different strategy.

PERSON	PRESENT	PAST	PERFECT
1SG	*kà-ndɛ̀ y-ɛ̀n*	*ká-ndɛ́ y-ín*	*ká-ndɛ̀ y-ìn*
2SG	*kà-ndɛ̀ w-ɛ̀n*	*ká-ndɛ́ w-ín*	*ká-ndɛ̀ w-ìn*
3SG	*kà-ndɛ̀ Ø-ɛ̀n*	*ká-ndɛ́ Ø-ín*	*ká-ndɛ̀ Ø-ìn*
1PL	*kà-ndɛ̀ n-ɛ̀n*	*ká-ndɛ́ n-ín*	*ká-ndɛ̀ n-ìn*
1PL	*kà-ndɛ̀ t-ɛ̀n*	*ká-ndɛ́ t-ín*	*ká-ndɛ̀ t-ìn*
2PL	*kà-ndɛ̀ ŋ-ɔ̀n*	*ká-ndɛ́ ŋ-ún*	*ká-ndɛ̀ ŋ-ùn*
3PL	*kà-ndɛ̀ k-ɛ̀n*	*ká-ndɛ́ k-ín*	*ká-ndɛ̀ k-ìn*

TABLE 17: Negated paradigms of *ndɛ* 'walk' in the present, past and perfect

4.2 Non-standard negation

We include, under non-standard negation, the negation of non-declarative clauses (e.g., interrogatives and imperatives), the negation of clauses with non-verbal predicates and lexicalized negation. (Not discussed here but also belonging to non-standard negation is the negation of non-main clauses.) There are distinct strategies employed by the different types of non-standard negation, which are explained below.

4.2.1 Negation of future mood

The technique used to negate verbs inflected for the future is different than that used with standard negation attested for the present, the past and the perfect (see SECTION 4.1). While the main verb is not prefixed by the negation marker, but carries the information on person and mood, negation is transmitted by the particle *kɛ̀yɛ̀*. This particle is, in all likelihood, composed of the negation marker *k-* and *-ɛ̀yɛ̀*, the latter probably going back to the verb *-ɛ̀yɛ̀* introduced in SECTION 3.3, with its translational equivalents 'exist' and 'have'. However, in the context of negation, its form is invariable, i.e., it has lost its inflectional properties, as can be seen when comparing the b-sentences of (43)-(45). The particle generally occurs after the finite verb.

The relationship between the affirmative future and the negative future is constructionally asymmetric, since the final vowel attested in the affirmative future is dropped when *kɛ̀yɛ̀* follows. Consider the examples below:

(43) a. *ɲìndɛ́ tàgòlɛ̀-gɔ̀ ŋɔ̀-ndù-ùŋɛ̀*
S1PL Tegali-LOC S1PL-go-FUT
'We will travel to Tegali'

b. *ɲìndɛ́ tàgòlɛ̀-gɔ̀ ŋɔ̀-ndù-ùŋ k-ɛ̀yɛ̀*
S1PL Tegali-LOC S1PL-go-FUT NEG-exist
'We will not travel to Tegali'

(44) a. *ŋgɔ́ èd Ø-ànàn-ùŋɛ̀*
S3SG man 3S:SG-kill-FUT
'He will kill the man'

b. *ŋgɔ́ èd Ø-ànàn-ùŋ k-ɛ̀yɛ̀*
S3SG man 3S:SG-kill-FUT NEG-exist
'He will not kill the man'

(45) a. *ŋɛ̀ndá k-ɔ̀ndɔ̀n-ùŋɛ̀*
S3PL S3PL-sleep-FUT
'They will sleep'

b. *ŋɛ̀ndá k-ɔ̀ndɔ̀n-ùŋ k-ɛ̀yɛ̀*
S3PL S3PL-sleep-FUT NEG-exist
'They will not sleep'

4.2.2 Negation of non-verbal predications

The particle *kɛ̀yɛ̀*, introduced in the previous section, is also used for the negation of non-verbal predications. It is then followed by the inflected copula verb *-Vn* at the end of the clause. A full paradigm is presented in TABLE 18.

The relationship between affirmative non-verbal predications and their negative counterparts is constructionally symmetric, i.e., the main construction is maintained and only the negation particle *-ɛyɛ* is added. Consider the affirmative constructions and their negative counterparts in (46), (47) and (48).

PRESENT	GLOSS	PAST	GLOSS
k-èyè y-èn	'I am not'	*k-éyé y-ín*	'I was not'
k-èyè w-èn	'you are not'	*k-éyé w-ín*	'you were not'
k-èyè Ø-èn	'he is not'	*k-éyé Ø-ín*	'he was not'
k-èyè n-èn	'we (EXCL) are not'	*k-éyé n-ín*	'we (EXCL) were not'
k-èyè t-èn	'we (INCL) are not'	*k-éyé t-íín*	'we (INCL) were not'
k-èyè ŋ-ɔ̀n	'you are not'	*k-éyé ŋ-ún*	'you were not'
k-èyè k-èn	'they are not'	*k-éyé k-ín*	'they were not'

TABLE 18: Negation of the verb *-ɛyɛ* with the inflected copula

(46) a. *rə̀ŋə̀k yɛ̀ ɲàmŋàm Ø-ín*
food DEM cold S3SG-COP:PST
'This food was cold'

b. *rə̀ŋə̀k yɛ̀ ɲàmŋàm k-éyé Ø-ín*
food DEM cold NEG-exist S3SG-COP:PST
'This food was not cold'

(47) a. *ŋì àfàndí y-èn*
S1SG teacher S1SG-COP:PRS
'I am a teacher'

b. *ŋì àfàndí k-èyè y-èn*
S1SG teacher NEG-exist S1SG-COP:PRS
'I am not a teacher'

(48) a. *ŋgɔ́ ábá-èŋ Ø-èn*
S3SG father-POSS:1SG S3SG-COP:PRS
'He is my father'

b. *ŋgɔ́* *ábá-èŋ* *k-èyɛ̀* *Ø-èn*
S3SG father-POSS:1SG NEG-exist S3SG-COP:PRS
'He is not my father'

4.2.3 Negative interrogatives

Negative interrogatives in Tagom are another example of asymmetric constructional negation. The negative prefix *k-* is attached to the main verb, followed by the inflected auxiliary to which the question marker *=ɛ́* is suffixed. The verb forms in the affirmative questions of (49), (50) and (51) differ from the verb forms in the negative interrogative ones in that the latter are inflected for TA but not for person. That is, negated interrogatives use the same negation strategy as do declarative clauses in Tagom.

(49) a. *ŋgɔ́* *fàr* *Ø-údfəg=ɛ́?*
S3SG house S3SG-clean:PST=QUES
'Did she clean the house?'

b. *ŋgɔ́* *fàr* *k-údfɛ́* *Ø-ín=ɛ́?*
S3SG house NEG-clean S3SG-COP:PST=QUES
'Did she not clean the house?'

(50) a. *ŋgɔ́* *yèr-ùŋ* *Ø-ɛ́brɛ́d=ɛ́?*
S3SG work-POSS3SG S3SG-finish:PST=QUES
'Did he finish his work?

b. *ŋgɔ̀* *yèr-ùŋ* *k-ɔ́brét* *Ø-ín=ɛ́?*
S3SG work-POSS3SG NEG-finish S3SG-COP:PST=QUES
'Did he not finish his work?

(51) a. *ŋɔ̀* *tàgòlɛ̀-gɔ̀* *wɛ̀-ndɛ̀=ɛ́?*
S2SG Tegali-LOC S2SG-go:PRS=QUES
'Are you going to Tegali?'

b. *ŋɔ̀* *tàgòlɛ̀-gɔ̀* *kà-ndɛ̀* *w-èn=ɛ̀*
S2SG Tegali-LOC NEG-go S2SG-COP:PRS=QUES
'Are you not going to Tegali?'

4.2.4 Prohibitive

"Imperatives are the clause type where we most commonly find negative strategies distinct from standard negation" (Miestamo 2017: 417). This is relevant for Tagom since the strategy used to negate the imperative is

substantially different from that used to negate the declarative or even the interrogative. Instead of negating the verb by prefixing it with *k(V)-*, the negative particle *ànàgò* precedes the imperative verb. The verb, in turn, consists of the subject index (see TABLE 3) prefixed to the verbal core. The plural form is additionally suffixed by *-dʌ̀n*, as is the case in the affirmative as well (see SECTION 3.2.2). The schematic presentations of singular and plural negated imperatives are as follows:

ànàgò + 2SG subject prefix *w(V)-* + VERBAL CORE
ànàgò + 2PL subject prefix *ŋ(V)-* + VERBAL CORE + *-dʌ̀n*

The relationship between positive commands and negative commands is asymmetric on the constructional level due to the presence vs. absence of the person prefix. Consider the examples in TABLES 19 and 20 below.

2SG IMPERATIVE	2SG NEGATIVE	GLOSS
ɲə̀rŋə̀k	*ànàgò wə̀-ɲə̀rŋə̀k*	'Do not fall!'
kà	*ànàgò wà-gì*	'Do not take!'
ndɔ̀	*ànàgò wù-ndù*	'Do not go!'
yù	*ànàgò wɔ̀-yù*	'Do not drink!'

TABLE 19: The negative imperative for 2SG

2PL IMPERATIVE	2PL NEGATIVE	GLOSS
ɲə̀rŋə̀g-dʌ̀n	*ànàgò ŋɔ́-ɲə̀rŋə̀g-dʌ̀n*	'Do not fall!'
kà-dʌ̀n	*ànàgò ŋà-gò-dʌ̀n*	'Do not take!'
kɔ̀-ndɔ̀-dʌ̀n	*ànàgò ŋɔ́-ndù-dʌ̀n*	'Do not go!'
yù-dʌ̀n	*ànàgò ŋɔ́-yɔ̀-dʌ̀n*	'Do not drink!'

TABLE 20: The negative imperative for 2PL

The same particle used to negate the imperative is used to negate the hortative. The schematic presentation of the negated hortative is as follows:

ànàgò + prefix marker + VERBAL CORE

Note, though, that the construction of the negated hortative is in a symmetric relationship to the affirmative one. Compare the affirmative and negative examples of the hortative in TABLE 21. Also, as the examples show, tone marking on the verb is, as expected, that of the present tense/aspect.

	Tagom AFF	GLOSS	Tagom NEG	GLOSS
1PL	*tù-ndù*	'Let us go!'	*ànàgò tù-ndù*	'Let us not go!'
	tà-mìn	'Let us sit down!'	*ànàgò tà-mìn*	'Let us not sit down!'
	tɔ̀-yù	'Let us drink!'	*ànàgò tɔ̀-yù*	'Let us not drink!'
	t-èrŋək	'Let us eat!'	*ànàgò t-èrŋək*	'Let us not eat!'
3SG	*ù-ndùk*	'Let him go!'	*ànàgò ù-ndùk*	'Let him not go!'
	à-mìn	'Let him sit down!'	*ànàgò à-mìn*	'Let him not sit down!'
	ɔ̀-yù	'Let him drink!'	*ànàgò ɔ̀-yù*	'Let him not drink!'
	Ø-èrŋək	'Let him eat!'	*ànàgò Ø-èrŋək*	'Let him not eat!'
3PL	*kù-ndùk*	'Let them go!'	*ànàgò kù-ndùk*	'Let them not go!'
	kà-mìn	'Let them sit down!'	*ànàgò kà-mìn*	'Let them not sit down!'
	kɔ̀-yù	'Let them drink!'	*ànàgò kɔ̀-yù*	'Let them not drink!'
	k-ərŋək	'Let them eat!'	*ànàgò k-ərŋək*	'Let them not eat!'

TABLE 21: Affirmative and negative hortatives

4.2.5 Lexical negation

"Clausal negation may also be expressed by lexically idiosyncratic negatives, i.e. the combination of negation and a lexical meaning can lexicalize" (Miestamo 2017: 423). The negation of existential/locative, experiencer and possessive constructions in Tagom are good examples of lexical negation. The relationship in all types of lexical negation is asymmetric.

Negation of existentials/locatives

While the affirmative existential/locative construction makes use of the verb *-ɛyɛ* 'exist', the negated existential (52) and locative constructions (53)-(55) both employ the verb *mbɔ̀ŋ*, meaning 'not exist'. The verb *mbɔ̀ŋ* occurs at the end of the clause and is inflected for plural by the suffix *-ɛ* with plural nouns (52). Consider the following examples:

(52) a. *àlgìrìʃ-è* *k-èyè*
money-PL S3PL-exist
'There is money'

b. *àlgìrìʃ-è* *mbɔ̀ŋ-è*
money-PL lack-PL
'There is no money'

(53) a. *mən* *tà-sʊ̀k* *Ø-èyɛ̀*
sorghum LOC-market S3SG-exist
'There is sorghum at the market'

b. *mən* *tà-sʊ̀k* *mbɔ̀ŋ*
sorghum LOC-market lack
'There is no sorghum at the market'

(54) a. *kìtáb* *tàrbìsà-dà* *tɛ̀rɛ̀ŋ* *Ø-èyɛ̀*
book table-LOC on S3SG-exist
'The book is on the table'

b. *kìtáb* *tàrbìsà-dà* *tɛ̀rɛ̀ŋ* *mbɔ̀ŋ*
book table-LOC on lack
'There is no book on the table'

(55) a. *bìs* *ùŋgrán-dà* *tʊ̀grʊ̀m* *Ø-èyɛ̀*
cat bed-LOC under S3SG-exist
'The cat is under the bed'

b. *bìs* *ùŋgrán-dà* *tʊ̀grʊ̀m* *mbɔ̀ŋ*
cat bed-LOC under lack
'There is no cat under the bed'

The verb *mbɔŋ* used with existential and locatives is the only verb in such clauses.

Negation of experiencer constructions

We also find the replacement of *-ɛyɛ* 'exist' with the experiencer construction. However, the lexeme in question is *mbɔ̀* here instead of *mbɔ̀ŋ*. Furthermore, *mbɔ̀* in the experiencer construction precedes the inflected copula *-Vn*. Since *mbɔ̀* is invariable it seems to have lost its verbal character and could be analyzed as a negation particle.

(56) a. *ŋɔ̀* *rà* *n-ɔ̀yɔ̀*
O2SG fear 2OSG-have:PRS
'You are afraid (lit. Fear is on/with you)'

b. *ŋɔ̀* *rà* *mbɔ̀* *n-ɔ̀n*
O2SG fear lack 2OSG-COP:PRS
'You are not afraid (lit. Fear is not on/with you)'

(57) a. *ŋì* *àŋàn* *t-èyè*
O1SG happiness O1SG-have:PRS
'I am happy (lit. Happiness is on/with me)'

b. *ŋì* *àŋàn* *mbɔ̀* *t-èn*
O1SG happiness lack O1SG-COP:PST
'I am not happy (lit. Happiness is not on/with me)'

(58) a. *ŋèndá* *àlàm* *nùŋg-èyè*
O3PL hunger O3PL-have:PRS
'They are hungry (lit. Hunger is on/with them)'

b. *ŋèndá* *àlàm* *mbɔ̀* *nùŋg-èn*
O3PL hunger lack O3PL-COP:PRS
'They are not hungry (lit. Hunger is not on/with them)'

Negation of possessives

Possessive constructions are negated with the verb -*wəndən*, meaning 'not have, lack', which replaces the verb -*èyè* 'have' in affirmative possessive clauses. The negative verb -*wəndən* is conjugated with person morphemes and is inflected for tense; see TABLE 22. Compare the structure of example (59) to example (31) above:

PERSON	PRESENT	PAST
1SG	*tù-wàndàn*	*tɔ́-wándán*
2SG	*nɔ̀-wàndàn*	*nú-wándán*
3SG	*nɔ̀-wàndàn*	*nú-wándán*
1PL	*tàŋg-wàndàn*	*túŋg-wándán*
1PL	*tàŋg-wàndàn*	*túŋg-wándán*
2PL	*nùŋ-wàndàn*	*núŋú-wándán*
3PL	*nùŋ-wàndàn*	*núŋú-wándán*

TABLE 22: Paradigm of the inflected verb -*wəndən* 'not have, lack'

(59) *ŋgɔ́* *fâr* *nɔ̀-wàndàn*
O3SG house O3SG-not_have
'He does not have a house'

(60) *ɲìndɛ́* *ágíà* *tàŋg-wàndàn*
O1PL PL:child O1PL-not_have:PRS
'We (INCL) do not have children'

5 Conclusion and summary of findings

The study concludes with a summary of the findings.

Tagom is basically a verb-final language with SOV word order. In possessive and experiencer constructions the word order is altered to OSV, with cross-reference on the verb to the possessor (object).

With regard to TAM marking, we can state the following:

- The present tense/aspect is marked by low tone. It refers to ongoing and habitual actions and may be used to refer to future actions.
- The past tense is marked by high tone.
- The perfect differs from the past with regard to its tonal marking, which is HL while for the past it is HH.
- With regard to the future, the suffix *-ὸŋέ* is the most obvious marker. Its first vowel is considered to be responsible for the vowel change that often occurs within the verbal root.

Generally, the verbal root is a bound morpheme. However, verbal roots which begin with a consonant are unmarked in the imperative singular, so that in that case the root corresponds to the imperative singular.

Otherwise, if the root starts with a vowel, the singular imperative is marked by the prefix *k-*. The plural form has the same variation regarding the prefix (*k-* vs. zero-marking) and is additionally always marked by the suffix *-dʌn.*

The hortative, occurring with first person plural (inclusive) and third persons, is formed by prefixing the verbal root with the relevant person marker.

The copula verb *-Vn* in Tagom is used with predicate nominals and predicate adjectives. It also plays a major role in the structure of negative declaratives, negative interrogatives and the negation of non-verbal predications.

In existential and locative constructions, the verb *-ɛyɛ* is used intransitively, while in experiencer and possessive constructions it is used transitively. Its translation as ‘exist’ vs. ‘have’ depends on these syntactic differences.

The analysis of negation is based on Miestamo’s (2017) opposition between symmetric and asymmetric negation, both on the constructional and on the paradigmatic level. While we find paradigmatic symmetry for the TAM forms present, past, perfect and future in Tagom, within each negation mode, the relationship to the affirmative is asymmetric. Constructional asymmetry can also be found for imperatives and interrogatives, while for non-verbal predication and hortative, it is symmetric.

Tagom makes use of all types of negative markers, i.e., morphological affixes, negative particles and negative verbs. In more detail:

- The *k-* prefix precedes the main verb of the clause, which ends with a copula for negative declaratives and negative interrogatives.
- The negative particle *kɛyɛ* is used in negated non-verbal predications preceding the copula.
- The same particle *kɛyɛ* is used to negate the future, here following the main verb.
- To negate the imperative/hortative form, the negative particle *ànàgò* precedes the verb.
- The negative particle/verb *mbɔ/mbɔŋ* occurs clause-finally in existential and locative clauses and precedes the copula in experiencer constructions.
- The negative verb *-wɔndən* 'not have' occurs ditto in possessive clauses.

Although, due to the difficult field situation, questions on some aspects of verbal inflection and negation remain to be answered, this first sketch on verbal inflection and clausal negation is a good starting point for future research that will hopefully advance our understanding of the Tagom language.

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Abbreviations

1	first person	O	object
2	second person	PL	plural
3	third person	POSS	possessive pronoun
C	consonant	PRS	present tense/aspect
COP	copula verb	PST	past tense
DEM	demonstrative	QUES	question
EP	epenthetic consonant	REF	referential
EXCL	exclusive	S	subject
FUT	future tense	SG	singular
INCL	inclusive	TA	tense/aspect
LOC	locative	TOP	topic
NEG	negative	V	vowel

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