

Souag_#SO20214FLW

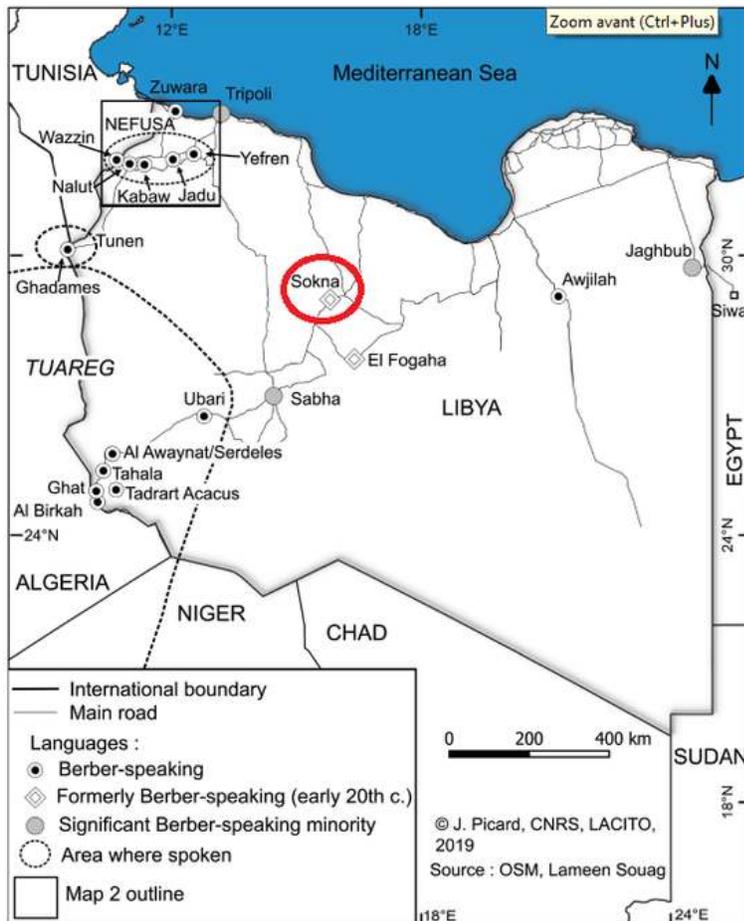
1/12 Negation in Sokni Berber

In Sokna (Libya), a geographically isolated Berber variety was spoken into the 1920s, but the whole community has shifted to Arabic; only a few elderly semi-speakers still recall some words.

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2/12 The only surviving data on this language were gathered by travellers, but some were first written down in Arabic characters by Soknis: a wordlist by `Ali ben el-Ḥadj `Abd eṭ-Ṭawil (Richardson 1850), and 5 stories by Sh. Ḥassuna ben Muḥammad ed-Dakshi (Sarnelli 1924)

Al-Ṣafif, Al-Muxtār ṢUthmān, 2002, *Madīnat Sawknah*. Tripoli : Manshūrāt al-Markaz al-Waṭānī li-l-Maḥfūḍāt wa-l-Dirāsāt al-Tārīxiyyah.

Richardson, James & Salah ben El-Haj Abd-Beltah, 1850, *Words in Arabic and Soukaneeh*. Tintalous, ms. FO 101/30. UK National Archives.

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Seid n Yunes, 2010a, *Tutlayt Imaziyt n Sukna (1)*. *Tawalt*. <http://www.tawalt.com/?p=5047>.

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3/12 Within the Sokni data, the variety of negators stands out in a Berber context: they include at least:

- wel/(y)ul
- (i)ngi/nki
- abu
- la

Only the first of these is widespread in Berber. What's their synchronic distribution, and how did it arise?

4/12 Wel/(y)ul, the oldest, fell out of use during the 19th c. Lyons (1821) gives a "pan-Berber" example:

- williseen (*wel i-ssin) "stupid" ("he does not know")
 (with NegPf -ssin replacing PosPf -ssen "know")

Sarnelli (1924) tried to elicit this, but only got:

- ingî issen

Bread	Tegrāri.
Flour	Aruna.
Go	Maat.
Run	Azzil.
Listen	Sill.
Brother	Nitta.
Sister	Ootima.
Stupid	Williseen.

STUPIDO	<i>willisen</i>	ul issén. (2)
TAPPETO	<i>majeer</i>
TELA	<i>akhooli</i> (3)	
TESTA	<i>ighrof</i>	igóf.
TOPO	<i>agherdi</i>	agérdi.
TRE	<i>shard</i>	šáret.
TU	<i>neish</i>	níš. (4)
TUO (<i>pron.</i>)	<i>enick</i>	-ennek. (5)
UCCELLO	<i>azdcáh</i>	aždit. (6)
UNO	<i>idgen</i>	igǵen.
UOMO	<i>mar</i>	mār.
UOVO	<i>terdaaleen</i>	tazdált. (7)
VA (<i>imper.</i>)	<i>maat</i>	mad.
VECCHIO (<i>agg.</i>)	<i>wusser</i>	wëssér.
VIENI	<i>aeed</i> (8)	ásed.
VERDE	<i>wurrugh</i>	warrág.

(1) da me non uđlita. Attualmente è in uso la parola ar.

(2) cioè " non sa, colui che non sa, ignorante ". Oggi i Suak-na direbbero *ingî issén*, analogamente a *ingî isél* per "sordo"; v. testo III.

5/12 Negator ngi/nki, the commonest, is attested only in Sokna and nearby El-Fogaha. In Berber, preverbal particles (inc. negators) normally host clitic pronouns, as does irrealis ad in Sokni; but ngi leaves clitic pronouns in situ (postverbal), as seen below.

الاد ايجيس ما اساطن بجيل يوحمد ايجيس غار شاعر طامح
 يناس ايسونج بلاك كمدوح يناس با تاتنت يناس اللع ينيت
 كمش يناس اساطن حتى نشه ايسونج بلاك امدوح ويناس
 اللع ينيت دكس نياهار اساطن او ديناك لو مسيحر
 سا عظام نون يناس تبار و تنك فلاسا يناس سايح الزغاريد
 اتا سفانوي يناس جرحي دلوقت اديتاج وينسند
 ايساطن امكليتس ايرهار ايتج دكس وانك يناس ايلمار
 ازورنياك اوج يناس مار اساطن لهلك تور يناس
 ايجيت تفل يناس تويد صينيزوني د اساطن اغر ي
 اديعامل تاكلا يناس اساطن ايلمار لهلنو لا اسي
 تاويد التوما يناس حار اساطن ايجيس سال ايرزوني
 يموت يناس لا اساطن ايتج تسنيس سينا يناس حتى او كيس
 يموت يناس يجرز سوهاس يناس حتى لا اساطن فوت يناس
 عزز ينسنا يناس تاكلا نك طيبه يناس واللع او كيش
 ادغ ايو تيد ايج ديد

wu ingi yennás
 e non (gli) disse

Sokni:
 ingi y-enn(a)=as
 NEG 3MSg-say.Pfv-3SgDat
 “he did not say to him”

Kabyle:
 ur as=y-enni
 Neg 3SgDat=3MSg-say.NegPf
 “he did not say to him”

6/12 Likewise, whereas most Berber varieties replace the "aorist" (~irrealis) with a realis form under negation, ngi seems to just precede it; but the only example is problematic. Latin transcription has ingi; Arabic, yugi "he refused"!

یندگر دبرایج البریه و زان النبع نوح لعایکبر ایونا ایمنی نامروا
 علی و یضیح لیا یسین سام یوسازد بیسورس یوسستین ابلاس
 و یزغاس سنا بکرت و یحور یضیح سیاسی حام یوکسی انیجار
 یو عا سنا سنا سنا سنا نزل د ایش هفت نود ماونا و ادر صاری
 ایلامن انموکاوین ایصا انسام د حام ایلامورس انسنس مصرایم
 یجاوب اباس نوح یو عا سنا اباس سیکس دمصر و یجده یضیح سیاسی
 یاجت یوکسی انیجار - یو عا ادر صاری الفنا سنا سنا سنا صاری
 سنا الفنا سنا یل جوج و ما جوج د انترک و یجده ایسنا سنا سنا
 سنا سنا نیاسی حام نفل لهنس و تور و تود مورس انهریت
 سسطوبت نناس لهنس الرعوة ان باباک نولکاتعد د حام ینکسر
 الفنا سنا سنا یو فیتس سسطوبت مان کبرن مورس انهریت
 نیجام انجس د الحلب ان بابا تنس حام مانع و یلن ایلفر -
 نغیل ایونا مورس اسطاب سولتمس توله سستورس
 و تناسلی انهار سستورس جمیع السودان د لیمش

V.

yeḡkér dē bdāi'a ɛzzuhūr ána ɛnnēbi nuḥ, lámma yekbá*rr,
 iwēn iǧǧēn n amérru 'áli wu yeḡbá*ḥ yāis sá'm. yusázéd. yēs-
 sūres fusēnnes fēllās wu yed'ás sēl bārket. wu bá'dhū, yeḡba*ḥ si
 yāis ḥām, ingi attižāub; id'a sē ḡēnānās ɛddō'l d aséšfōf n ud-
 māwen wa dšārin illāmen ɛttēsugāwin iyédnā n sá'm. dē ḥām ilā
 mūziin, ismēnnes mšrāim: izāūb ubbās nūḥ, yēd'ás ubbās, iskén
 dē mšār. wu bá'dhu, yōḡbāḥ si yāis yāfat, **ingi attižāub**: yed'a ad-
 šārin ɛddēnānnes širār elḥāliq; šāren sāl ɛddēnānnes yažūz wa ma-
 žūz dēttū*rūk. wa ba'd eddā'a ɛn seyyidnā nūḥ ɛddēnā n yāis ḥām
 taqqāl lahlēnnes, wu turū, tuwid mūziin ɛttēmāziyēt settūfēt: tennās
 lahlēnnes: ɛddā'wet mbābak tulānāḡd! dē ḥām yēnkōr ɛddēnānnes
 wu yérwel māni yufiten settūfēt. māni kō*brōn, muziin ɛtto*ma-
 ziyēt n ḥām ō*ffēḡān dē tīāleb ɛn babātsen ḥām. māni wa*ššēlen
 iilqa*rb n innil, iwēn mziin asettāf s ūltmās, tuwī sé ḡūres wu te-
 nāsēlen: išār sē ḡūrsen žēml'a ɛssudān dē laḥbēš.

ingi at-t i-jaweb
 Neg Aor-3MSgAcc 3MSg-answer
 he would not answer

y-ugi at-t i-jaweb
 3MSg-refuse Aor-3MSgAcc 3MSg-answer
 he would not answer

7/12 Non-verbal negation is unattested in Sokni data, but was most likely handled with *ngi*, since the nearest and most closely related Berber variety, that of El-Fogaha (Paradisi 1963), uses cognate *nk* for this purpose as well; see attached.

itāni šārāt; yusāsēnd mezzāi. Wa yennā: i-nékki; d wayād innā: i-nékki; d wayaq innā: i-nékki. Ennān y-enmīs: ummi abīs? Tennāsen: nk-essēnāg ummi abīs. Ennānas: kif nk-tessēnet? Tennā: nk-essēnāgt. Ennānas: yēlla anūgār y-elgādi. Tennās: nk-essēnaht. Sekmāntet i-tmāttūt n elgādi. Tēmmat tnéššed dāges. Elgādi yeggā imōzzūgīnnas haf tāqat n elgāsrēnnes. Tennās tmāttūt n elgādi: nékki gūrī tlāta n imezzāiyen; sen nk-abītsen elgādi. Elgādi yeslēt dag imezzūgīnnas. Tennās: šēmmi gūrem iggen nk-tessānēt ummi abīs? Tennās: nk-essēnāg ummi abīs. Mān yeslā elgādi awāl yugār itāzzel y-elqūdiā ókkul, yennāsen: slīg s-tmezzūgēnnu tamāttūtēnnu tennā nk-dānānnu sen. Ennānas: aḡ šira élli imātar y-ēddānā d kull iggēn eggēt imānnas d síwel kull iggēn imānnas. Seknāst, élli ayūḡit d āiwātček nk-yāiyek d élli nk-ayūḡit d nk-āiwātček yāiyek. Issíwel i moqqār, yesseknāstet, yugēt d iwāt abīs; d yessíwel y-elwāsft, d yesseknāstet la-bā ayūḡēt u la-bā āiwót. Issíwel i-mezzāi, yugēt d iwot. Šēsniñ nk-dānānnas, moqqār d mezzāi. Eddānā ēssēsniñ ugāren did emmitsen d yelléfiēt d yušāš lhaqqēnnas. Yāqqim elqādi d mezzāiyēnnas alwāsft.

sen nk abi-t-sen elgādi
 two Neg father-EP-3MSgPoss judge
 Two (children), their father is not the judge.

8/12 Three candidate sources come to mind:

1. *wel-en -gi- "(who) did not do/was not", with a proto-Berber negative participle - unlikely, since relativization is infrequent

- *y-ungey "he refuses" - problematic, since only Tamasheq has an n in this verb; Sokni had y-ugi!

The least probable scenario is a derivation from the reconstructed negative participle of *g* "do, be" (*wəl-ən gi-), reanalysed as a double negative *wel ngi* and then losing its *wel*. In this case, *ngi* would at first have been limited to certain relative phrases; but such phrases are rare, and do not make a plausible starting point for generalization to other contexts. Moreover, the only attested sense of *g* in Sokni is "do", not "be", and the participle is unattested there.

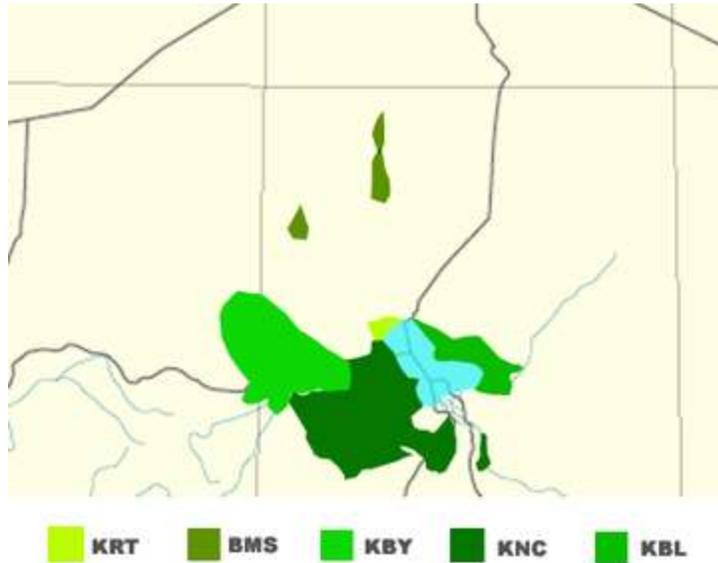
A different internal explanation seems more promising. Most Berber varieties do not allow direct negation of the aorist; either the imperfective replaces it, or a periphrastic form is used, like Ntifa *ur iri a-yefk* > *ur ra-yefk* "he will not give", lit. "he does not want to give" (Laoust, 1918 : 176). Many varieties attest a verb "refuse, not want": e.g. Siwi *ugay* (author's data), Kabyle *agwi* (Dallet 1982), Zenaga *oʔgih* (Taine-Cheikh, 2008), and Mali Tamasheq *ungəy* (Heath, 2006). In all cases, this verb is followed by the aorist, e.g. Tahaggart *yugəy ed igəl* "he refused to leave" (Foucauld, 1951:I.419). This suggests a grammaticalization of *yungi *a-tt iżaweb* "he refused to answer him" to *ngi a-tt iżaweb* "he would not answer him", much like what we saw for Ntifa.

9/12 3. Kanuri negative copula *gənyí*, also negating some verb forms.

The expected Sokni reflex would be **gni* > *ngi* with (well-attested) metathesis of falling-sonority clusters.

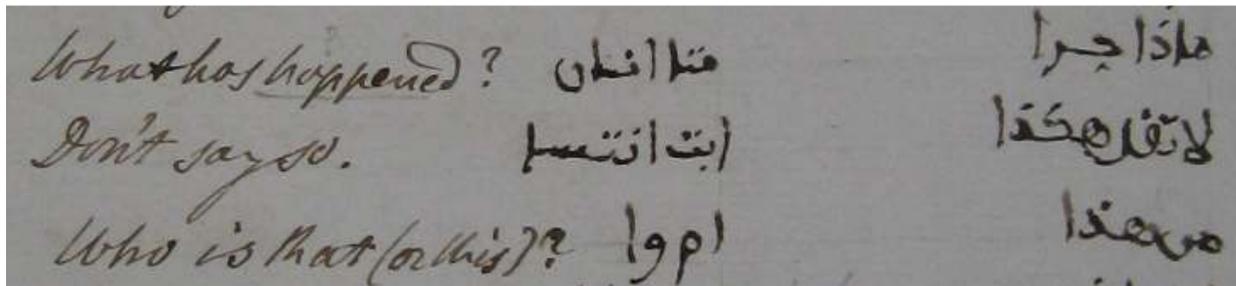
Yet Kanuri loans seem too rare in Sokni to include a negator!

(map by @tommymiles < Wikipedia)



Metathesis was irregular but attested, always putting the more sonorous member of a consonant cluster first. For example: *gelbi* “heat” (A1.9) < Arabic *gebli* “sirocco”; (*t*)*agezni* “needle” (B4.2) vs. S *tizignit*; *egtiččwa* “worm” (B4.23) vs. S *tgiččwā*; and *anefđ(u)* “summer” (A7.4), better corresponding to the rest of Berber than S *aněđfu*.

10/12 Abu marks prohibition; only one example survives (Richardson). This likely derives, via Tamajeq bo PROH and iba "lack, be missing", from Hausa bâbu "there is no"; cp. Kanuri bâ(wo). No plausible cognates exist further north, but El-Fogaha has bak (<bu+2MSgDat -ak?).



abu	t-in-et	sa
Proh	2Sg-say-2Sg	thus
don't say so		

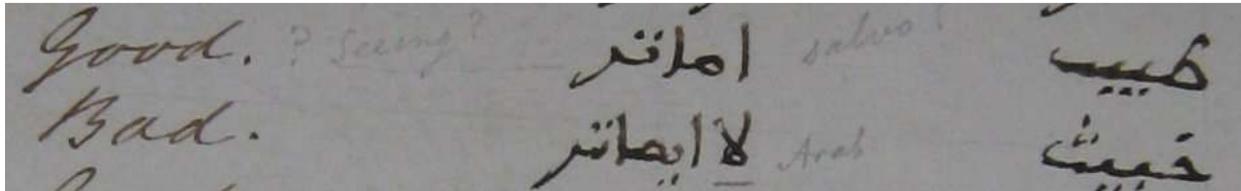
The best comparison is with the prohibitive particle *bo* found in Tuareg among the Kel Ewey and Iwellemmeden, p. ex. *bo tasle ezäle wăy* "don't listen to this song" (Kossmann 2011:98). Its ultimate origin is less clear. Almost all Tuareg varieties have the forms (*ă*)*bo* "no!" and *iba* (pfv. -*ăba*, impf. *tiba*) "be lost, missing, not be there", and grammaticalization from MISSING to NOT is well-attested cross-linguistically (cf. Heine & Kuteva 2002:188). But the rest of Berber has no comparable negative form, with the possible and very doubtful exception of Tarifiyt (Lafkioui 2013). In fact, Ritter (2009:544) explains the Tuareg forms in passing as loans from Hausa (a major language in Niger and elsewhere), which has *bâ* / *bâbù* < *bâ abù* "there is not", *bà... bâ* "not (indic.)". Kanuri too has a similar form, *bâ* / *bâwo* "there is not" (Cyffer & Hutchison 1990). The exact history of this regional form remains to be unraveled, but it seems most likely to have reached Sokna from Hausa via Tuareg.

11/12 Finally, the 4 attested examples of *la* are too few to find its exact function (emphatic negation?); cp.

la imater "not good" (Richardson)

engi imatar (ditto) (Yunes)

But it matches Siwi to the east, and is likely < Berber *wāla "(not) even" (influenced by Arabic *lā*?)



The rarity of *la* suggests an emphatic function. One example is also attested at El-Fogaha (Paradisi 1963:115): *lē dūba, lē dūba* "not yet". In Siwi, *la* is the standard negator; its attestation in Sokna suggests that it used to be more widely used in Libya, before Sokni and Siwi separated.

This particle is obviously reminiscent of Arabic, but is probably not a simple borrowing. In Siwi, *ula* survives alongside *la* in a few fixed phrases, notably *af ula h̄hela* "for no reason", and as a pro-sentential negative "no". The particle *ula* "(not) even" often plays a role in negation in Berber (Kahlouche 2000), and almost certainly played a part in the history of Siwi *la* alongside Arabic influence (Souag 2013). The emphatic sense proposed here for Sokni *la* would fit this scenario well: a development along the lines of **ula lix šuyl* "I don't even have a job" > *la lix šuyl* "I don't have a job" may be envisioned.

12/12 Sokni thus took a different path than most of Berber, gaining new negators before levelling out with *ngi*.

Trans-Saharan contacts helped trigger both developments.

See Souag 2017: Le parler berbère de Sokna (Libye) à la lumière de nouvelles données

<https://www.cairn.info/revue-etudes-et-documents-berberes-2017-1-page-193.htm>

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