

# 16

## Kisi

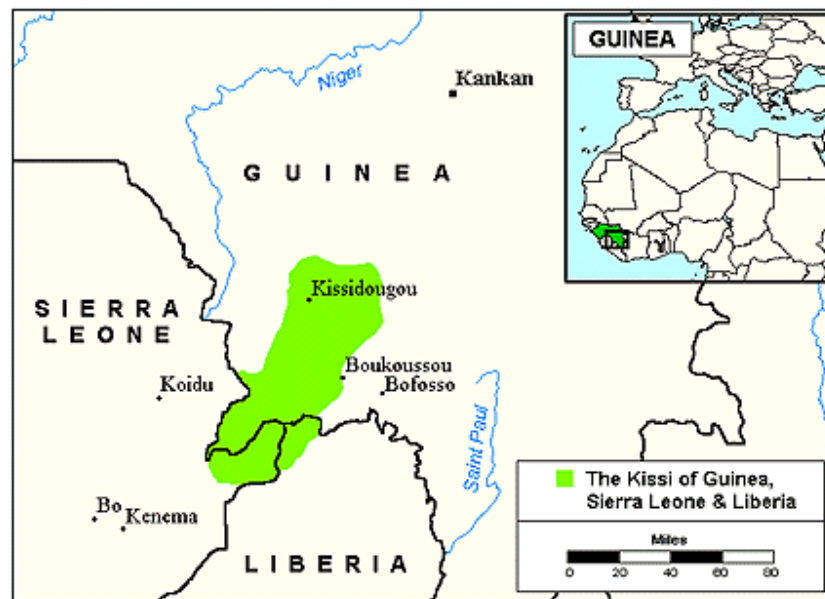
(Bulom, Mel, Southern, Atlantic)

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### 16.1 General

Kisi (also commonly Kissi, representing French spelling), is the language of some 500,000 speakers, of whom the majority (60%) reside in Guinea, with the rest split between Liberia (20%) and Sierra Leone (20%). Childs (1995:9-10) identifies “at least two different dialects”, Northern and Southern Kisi, following, roughly, the political division between Guinea and Liberia-Sierra Leone, suggesting that the Northern dialect could be further sub-divided. Speakers are found over a relatively discontinuous area, and are generally surrounded by Mande speakers (Childs 1995:1,7)<sup>1</sup>. The languages most closely related to Kisi, namely Sherbro, Mani, Bom and Krim, are located at a distance from the Kisi areas, along the distant Atlantic coast.<sup>2</sup>

The discontinuous distribution of the Southern Branch, to which Kisi belongs, is explained both by historical movements and modern political divisions. According to sources cited in Childs (1995:3), the Kisi, and a related group, the Gola, were separated from other Southern Branch groups by expanding groups of Mande speakers, sometime between the 1300's and 1700's, reaching their present inland location at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The establishment of recent political boundaries has further segmented the unity of the Kisi as a linguistic group.



Map source: Bethany World Prayer Center

<sup>1</sup>All Kisi data are from Childs 1995, except where otherwise noted. Consequently, in examples, I generally cite only the date of his grammar (1995) and page numbers.

<sup>2</sup>Temne and Gola, sister sub-branches of the Mel sub-group, despite being located physically quite close, are, lexico-statistically speaking, not as closely related. See Childs (1995:7) for classification details.

Kisi is a seven-vowel language with contrastive vowel length, and numerous diphthongs. The consonantal inventory includes doubly-articulated segments (e.g. **kp**, an areal feature (Greenberg 1983)), a series of pre-nasalized stops (e.g. **mb**), and implosives **b** and **d**, phonetically [b̥, d̥] (1995:12, 22, 35). Consonant clusters (except for homorganic nasal-stop segments) are not allowed. CV is the basic configuration of the Kisi syllable, although closed syllables are allowed; as well, several sonorants may occur syllable-finally (1995:13). Tone is critically important in Kisi<sup>3</sup> marking both lexical and grammatical differences.<sup>4</sup> There are two level tones, H (acute accent) and L (grave accent), and two contour tones, a rising (ˊ) and a falling (ˋ)<sup>5</sup>. Childs also notes an “extra-high” tone of “limited distribution” (see example in fn. 5). The following is an example of the importance of lexical and grammatical tone:

- (1)    **sàà**    **sáà**    **sàá**  
          Saa    grab    sheep  
          ‘Saa grabs the sheep’ (1995:43)

Morphologically, Kisi shares the Atlantic feature of noun classes, although its extent is relatively limited with respect to either Fula or Bijago, dividing all nouns into one of seven classes. An interesting morpho-syntactic feature of these classes is the *position* of the class markers: they appear suffixed to the noun (although Childs (1995:19) cites some evidence of a formerly prefixal structure. With this one exception, Kisi otherwise conforms firmly to “both the primary and secondary characteristics associated with VO languages” (1995:20). Because of their limited number, as well as for referential use in subsequent examples, I list the suffixes below in (2). This display requires some explanation: the leftmost column represents the pronoun representative of each class; the second column is the corresponding suffixal form attached either to independent nouns of the respective class, or to words which refer to the noun, such as adjectives.

- (2)    The Noun classes of Kisi (1995:148)

Class Name (=PRO)	Suffix (=SUF)	Semantic characterization
<b>o</b>	<b>-ó</b>	Singular of all animates, some inanimates
<b>a</b>	<b>-á</b>	Plural animates

<sup>3</sup>Kisi is one of the most southerly of the Atlantic languages: Childs remarks (1995:13) that, within the Atlantic family, “tone appears only in the (geographically) southern languages and may even be disappearing there”.

<sup>4</sup>Many aspectual meanings are associated with specific tone patterns, e.g., the perfective has a LH tone pattern (Childs 1995:226), the imperative has a single H tone (1995:227) (see 1995:228-231 for the more involved tonal complexities of the hortatives). Habitual has all low tones (1995:224). These will be explained and exemplified when the individual aspectual meanings are discussed. It should be noted that verb stems generally have no lexical tone (Childs 1995:56). One derivational (extensional) morpheme, the “middle” verb extension (fullest form **-nuŋ**), has lexically assigned (LH) tone: **dìì** ‘kill’ > **dìì-nuŋ** ‘kill self’ (Childs 1995:50, 184).

<sup>5</sup>The little-used extra high tone is exemplified as follows:

<b>à</b>	<b>dàtá</b>	<b>yá</b>	>	<b>á</b>	<b>dàtá</b>	<b>yá lé</b>
you	condemned	me		you	condemned	meNEG
‘You condemned me.’				‘You didn’t condemn me.’ (1995:49)		

<b>le</b>	<b>-léŋ</b>	Singular inanimates
<b>la</b>	<b>-láŋ</b>	Plural inanimates
<b>i</b>	<b>-é</b>	Singular collective plants
<b>ŋ</b>	<b>-óŋ</b>	Plural collective grains, etc.
<b>ma</b>	<b>-áŋ</b>	Liquids

Generally, Kisi is left-headed: the head constituent precedes all dependent elements. Thus, adjectives typically follow their head noun, as do possessives and relatives: “The order of elements with modified nouns is Noun Stem + Noun Class Pronoun (“Pro”) followed by Adjective Stem + Noun Class Marker (“Suf”). The exception to this pattern is **o**-class nouns; pronouns do not appear after the noun stem” (1995:150). For interactions involving noun class pronouns and suffixes, see also Relatives (§16.6) and Negatives (§16.7).

- (3) **la** class      **lèèŋ-là**      **yùwéí-láŋ**  
cutlass-PRO    old-SUF  
‘old cutlasses’
- ŋ** class      **bèl-ŋ**      **yùwéí-óŋ**  
palm kernel-PRO    old-SUF  
‘old palm kernels’ (1995:150)
- ma** class      **mèŋ-mà**      **yùwéí-áŋ**  
water-PRO    old-SUF

Subject pronouns are as follows: **í**<sup>6</sup>, **à**, **ò**, **ŋ**, **là**, **à** (1995:71). The **o** and **a** class pronouns are identical to the third person personal pronouns (1995:107). Object personal pronouns are **yá**, **núm/nùm**, **ndú**, **náá**, **ŋá**, **ndá**. These are cliticized when reduced.<sup>7</sup>

## 16.2 Word Order

Word order is S V (IO) (DO) (as in 4a). However, if there is an AUX, the order becomes S AUX (IO) (DO) V: in other words, the order of VO is reversed, becoming OV (4b). Only two objects may follow an un-extended finite verb; with extensions, up to three may occur (1995:249). An adposition may also ‘license’ an additional argument (1995:249). Childs indicates that only “higher” arguments (patient and beneficiary) appear between the AUX and the non-finite form of the verb: other “lower” arguments appear after the non-finite verb with an adposition (4c). The

<sup>6</sup> This pronoun (and only this one) has the unusual characteristic of raising the first tone of a verb (1995:104). As well, this is the only personal pro that bears a H tone, all others being L.

<sup>7</sup> Unreduced form of object pronoun **ndú** ‘it’:

<b>í</b>	<b>sólí</b>	<b>ndú</b>
1s	take-out	it
‘I took it out.’		

Reduced form of object pronoun **ndú** >

<b>-ŋ: í</b>	<b>sólí=ŋ</b>
1s	take out=it
‘I took it out.’ (1995:72)	

significance of vowel length and tone differences in the second and fifth examples (**kíndá** vs. **kíndàà** is not clear to me).

- (4) a S-V                    **sàà cílùl**  
                                   Saa fat  
                                   ‘Saa is fat.’
- S-V-DO                    **sàà kíndá dìòó**  
                                   Saa close door  
                                   ‘Saa closed the door.’
- S-V-IO-DO                **sàà ké yá káníúŋ**  
                                   Saa give me money  
                                   ‘Saa gave me money.’
- b S-AUX-V                 **sàà có<sup>8</sup> cò**  
                                   Saa AUX see  
                                   ‘Saa will see.’
- S-AUX-DO-V              **sàà wá dìòó kíndà-à**  
                                   Saa AUX door close-IPFV  
                                   ‘Saa was closing the door.’
- S-AUX-IO-DO-V         **sàà có ndú kóná dóóŋ**  
                                   Saa AUX him message pour  
                                   ‘Saa will give the message to him.’ (1995:218)
- c ò cò kòŋnǎŋ ó yòmndó  
                                   it AUX hit to tree  
                                   ‘It will hit against a tree.’ (1995:250)

The negative particle **lé** (after a final V, **te** after final C, **ló** for emphasis (1995:125)) appears sentence final (5a), as does the focus particle **ní** (5b), (if both occur, the focus particle occurs last (Childs 1995:263)), and generally, ideophones (5c). See also §16.4.

- (5) a **í kóó sà** vs. **í kóó sá lé**  
                                   1s pass judgment                    1s pass judgment NEG  
                                   ‘I pass judgment.’                    ‘I don’t pass judgment.’ (1995:261)
- b **mààlón ó có cùucúúwó ní**  
                                   rice 3s AUX sow FOC  
                                   ‘It’s rice he’s sowing.’ (1995:270)

<sup>8</sup> This AUX is used for present or future reference. AUX **wa** is used for past reference. See §16.5.1.

- c í líndán pólókò-pólókò  
 1s muddy Ideophone  
 ‘I got myself muddy all over.’ (1995:134)

### 16.3 Verb Structure

The Kisi verb is morphologically simple (ROOT+ (EXT) + (FV)) in comparison with, say, the Bijago verb. It consists of either the verbal root or the verbal root extended by one of four suffixes<sup>9</sup> occurring in the order “Causative” (= Cs), “Benefactive” (= Ben), “Middle” (=Mid), “Plural” (=Pl). Examples follow:

(6)	Stem	<b>haŋgu</b>	‘be warm’ (1995:174,336)
	Causative	<b>heŋgi</b>	‘make warm’
	Benefactive	<b>haŋgul</b>	‘warm for someone’
	Middle	<b>haŋguŋ</b>	‘warm oneself’
	Causative + Benefactive	<b>heŋgil</b>	‘warm for someone’
	Causative + Plural	<b>heŋguu</b>	‘warm many things’
	Causative + Middle	<b>heŋgiŋ</b>	‘be made warm’

In the case of analytic predications (involving both an AUX and a main verb), these extensions occur *only* on the main verb:

- (7) a Main verb with benefactive and middle extensions:

ò      bëndúlûŋ      fâl      kòn      fúú  
 3s    be.tall      old-man    that    uselessly  
 ‘He became tall for that old man uselessly.’(1995:53)<sup>10</sup>

- b Analytic construction with main verb benefactive and middle extensions:

ò      co      tîŋ      fâl      bëndùlonŋ      fùù  
 3s    AUX    slightly old-man    be.tall    uselessly  
 ‘He’s becoming tall for that old man uselessly.’(1995:53)

#### 16.3.1 Verbal Extensions

##### 16.3.1.1. Causative.

In its simplest form, the morpheme **-i** is suffixed to the verbal base:

- |     |   |   |   |
|-----|---|---|---|
| (8) | <b>sul</b> ‘be rich or (sexually) mature’         | > | <b>sul-i</b> ‘make someone mature; raise a child’ |
|     | <b>hol</b> ‘adhere, stick to, be leaning against’ | > | <b>holi-i</b> ‘make adhere, plaster’              |
|     | <b>tend-u</b> ‘be awake’                          | > | <b>tind-i</b> ‘awaken’                            |

<sup>9</sup> The preferred shape of the Kisi verb is bi-syllabic. This has an effect on how the verb is extended as well as phonological processes (1995:171).

<sup>10</sup> See Childs (1995:52-53) for an explanation of the tones and prosodic aspects of these examples.

If the verb ends in **-a**, the causative marker is located before the final **-a**:

- (9) **bɛnda** ‘be agreeable’ > **bɛnd-i-a** ‘make agreeable’  
**tosa** ‘do’, ‘make’ > **tos-i-a** ‘fix’, ‘repair’

Childs suggests that “From a diachronic perspective, the final *a* may represent the remnant of another verb extension or another verbal morpheme which has lost all of the original semantic content, perhaps something like the ‘Final Vowel’ of Bantu”(1995:176).

### 16.3.1.2. Benefactive.

The fullest and basic form is **lul** (**cuu** > **cuu-lul** ‘carry’), **-ul** after **l, ɲ** and **m**, **-l** after vowel-final polysyllabic verbs:

- (10) **baŋa** ‘redeem’ > **baŋa-l** ‘redeem [for]’

Sometimes no material is added at all:

- (11) **yɔn** ‘send’ > **yɔn** ‘send [for]’

Sometimes, Benefactive is marked by ablaut:

- (12) **caŋ** ‘cry’ > **ceŋ** ‘cry [for]’

The benefactive has a wide and subtle range of meanings, sometimes indicating only that the beneficiary is aware of the verb’s action:

- (13) **ò yààmál yá á ylááj**  
3s yawn-BEN me with hunger  
‘She yawned with hunger in front of me.’ (1995:182)

The participants in benefactive structures are typically animate. The benefactive can combine with any suffix, but show “particular affinity” for the causative for semantic and pragmatic reasons (as both involve typically animate sentient arguments) (1995:184).

### 16.3.1.3. “Middle”

Despite the terminology, this is not a voice, but an extension, although it covers much of the semantic range of “middle voice” (middle, reflexive, passive). Many of this type are stative verbs (final example).

- (14) **boli** ‘hurt’ > **boli-ɲ** ‘be hurt/injured’  
**tofa** ‘look at’ > **tofa-ɲ** ‘look at oneself (in a mirror)’  
**loo** ‘beat’ > **loo-nuɲ** ‘be beaten’

**liwa** ‘be wet’ > **liwa-ŋ** ‘be wet’

As mentioned above, this is the only extension which has a lexically assigned tone (LH). The fullest form is **-nuŋ** (**càl** ‘sit’ > **càlnuŋ** ‘seat’), but there are several phonotactically motivated allomorphs, often simply **ŋ tòm̀bòl̀à** > **tòm̀bòl̀aŋ** ‘discuss’. The middle occurs with all suffixes, less often with the benefactive (although this latter is possible: **ì dìm-úl-ùŋ** (it tell-Ben-Mid) ‘It was told’ (1995:52)).

- (15) **susu** ‘roast’  
**susu-l** ‘roast for someone’  
**susu-l-uŋ** ‘roast itself, get in a warm place’ (1995:190)

#### 16.3.1.4. “Plural” (= Pluractional?)

This extension has a broad and diverse range of meanings. It is often formally identical with the causative. The most common marker of the plural is iconic: vowel lengthening (a. examples), or reduplication (b. examples):

- (16) a **candu** ‘praise’ > **caanduu** ‘praise repeatedly/over and over’  
b **lau** ‘struggle’ > **laulau** ‘struggle repeatedly’

If the marker is identical to the causative, it performs in the same way, i.e., appears before the final **-a**:

- (17) **baa** ‘hang’ > **baa-y-i-a** ‘hang repeatedly’

Sometimes the vowel of a monosyllabic stem is lengthened and **-uu** is added :

- (18) **tiŋ** ‘pledge’ > **tiiŋuu** ‘pledge repeatedly’  
**boli** ‘hurt’ > **booluu** ‘hurt in many places or many times, have many scratches or sores, be wounded; be infected with venereal disease’(1995:194) .

Yet another method involves the use of the noun class suffix **-lán**, which, as already noted in (2), is the suffix denoting plural inanimates as well as being the productive, default pluralizer:

- (19) **bùmbà** ‘failing’ > **bùmbà-lán** ‘failing repeatedly’

Childs remarks that “verbs” bearing this suffix are not inflected and occur only after the auxiliaries **co** and **wa**. Nevertheless, “the fact that a third way of pluralizing exists is significant with regard to renewal of the verb extension system” (Childs 1995:194). See also Childs (1987).

## 16.4 Aspect, Mood

As is common throughout Niger-Congo, aspect, not tense, dominates the verbal system. Kisi is no exception. The basic contrasts that are marked on the verb are the aspectual categories

(perfective, imperfective, and perfect), mood (hortative, imperative) and polarity (affirmative vs. negative). Childs (1995:222) subsumes habitual and progressive under the general term “Imperfective”. The main difference seems to be that the progressive is formed analytically, with the use of an auxiliary, and, as in examples below, by lengthening of the FV of the main (lexical) verb. Aspect and modality may be marked by a variety of means, including tone changes on the verb or auxiliary, ablaut, the use of auxiliaries, and pronoun vowel lengthening (see Childs 1995:219 for a full list). The main distinctions are exemplified below. See also the Summary of Forms in §16.6.

### 16.4.1 *Imperfective forms*

There is no “Imperfective” form which contrasts with either the progressive or the habitual. The progressive is formed analytically by the use of an (aspectual) auxiliary, certain tones patterns, and the lengthening the FV of the main verb. It indicates an ongoing activity, regardless of time frame:

(20) Progressive aspect (verb **cimbu** ‘leave’)

- |   |                    |                |                        |
|---|--------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| a | Progressive        | ò cò cimbòó    | ‘She is leaving.’      |
| b | Past progressive   | ò wá cimbòó    | ‘She was leaving.’     |
| c | Future progressive | ò cò wà cimbòó | ‘She will be leaving.’ |

The habitual is marked by low tone throughout, both on subject pronoun and verb. Its use signifies something happening more than once, often customary or usual action with no reference to time, beginning in the past and continuing into the present and even the future. The past habitual is marked on the subject pronoun by high tone and vowel lengthening. Stative verbs do not occur in this aspect.

(20) Habitual aspect

- |   |               |          |                         |
|---|---------------|----------|-------------------------|
| a | Habitual      | ò cimbù  | ‘She (usually) leaves.’ |
| b | Past habitual | óó cimbù | ‘She used to leave.’    |

The past habitual is used if the ongoing action in the past has ceased, and the translation is, typically, ‘used to, was/is no longer’. Childs recognizes a “Perfect” with which this aspect contrasts, which indicates that the completed action still has relevance to the present. However, I see this form as a perfective with an added adverb ‘already’ (see below).

### 16.4.2 *Perfective forms*

Perfective forms have the verbal tonal pattern LH. The perfective usually refers to a less specific past time:



(22) **ò cimbú** ‘She left.’

With stative verbs, the use of the perfective indicates that the subject has achieved the relevant state: ‘is X at the present time’. With active verbs, the sense is of an action that took place sometime in the past, with no time specified (1995:225). This could, therefore, be considered a factative system.

(23) a stative verb **à ɲùlú**  
3p listless  
‘They are listless.’ (1995:225)

b active verb **ɲòómbòó ò dèl lèŋ kpúŋmgbúlún**  
boy he fall ground Idph  
‘The boy collapsed on the ground.’ (1995:226)

Childs (1995:314, nt. 121) indicates that the perfective is also used for “the imminent future, as is also possible in Russian (Comrie 1985:20). One can compare this usage to the English slang, ‘I’m gone,’ as one is preparing to leave. This latter usage is comparable to the way it may be used in Kisi: **í kwáŋŋ** ‘I’m gone, i.e., I’m about to leave’”.

As may be seen in (24), the “Perfect” is identical, formally and tonally, to the perfective, but with the addition of the adverbial lexical item **nîŋ** (which in other contexts means ‘now, already’). As noted above, the perfect indicates the ongoing relevance of a past action, something ‘currently relevant’. Childs indicates that the “tense associated with the Perfect is past, especially with active verbs” (1995:237), but with the recent or immediate past, in contrast to the unspecified past conveyed by the perfective.

(24) **ò cimbú nîŋ** ‘She has now left.’

The negative form of this aspect is also formed analytically, but using what Childs calls an “incipient aspect particle” (1995:238) **wò** ‘still’, ‘yet’:

(25) **ò cimbú wò lé** ‘She hasn’t left (yet).’

### 16.4.3 *The Future*

The future in Kisi has both tense and modal value. As a tense, the use of the future indicates that an action will take place after the moment of speech. With modal value, intention or desire on the speaker’s part is conveyed (1995:234). The auxiliary **cò** is used to express the future (but compare (20a), repeated here as (26b), where the present progressive is also marked by the use of auxiliary **co**). Note that these forms are distinguished only by the lengthening (and slight change in quality) of the final vowel of the main verb). Childs says some speakers have no contrast between the future and the progressive (1995:220); given their strong formal similarity, this is not surprising.

(26) a future **ò cò cimbù** ‘She will leave.’

b progressive      ò cò cìmbòó ‘She is leaving.’

There is a future progressive which is distinguished from (26b) by the addition of the auxiliary **wa**. The auxiliaries appear in the following order:

(27) ò cò wà cìmbòó ‘She will be leaving.’

#### 16.4.4 Mood

Kisi has three distinct moods: declarative, hortative, and imperative. The imperative is marked by H tone:

(28) **dímí wǎè**  
say again  
‘Repeat!’ (Childs 1995:227)

**címbú** ‘Leave!’

The negative imperative has a characteristic HL tone pattern, followed by the negative particle **lé**:

(29) **címbù lé** ‘Don’t leave!’

The hortative expresses the speaker’s wish that the verbal action be performed. The translation is usually ‘let’s X’ (1<sup>st</sup> plural) or so-and-so ‘should’ or ‘ought to’ (3<sup>rd</sup>). It can also be used as an indirect command. The tonal pattern for all but 2<sup>nd</sup> person is LH:

(30) ò **címbú** ‘She ought to leave/ should leave.’

The negative hortative has the opposite tone pattern, HL:

(31) ò **címbù lé** ‘She shouldn’t leave.’

## 16.5 Auxiliary Verbs

### 16.5.1 Existential auxiliaries

Kisi has two copular verbs, **wa** ‘be’, ‘stay’, ‘remain’, and its suppletive form **co**, used for ‘realis’. As above, **có** is used for present and future reference, **wa** for “irrealis, past, and all other distinctions” (Childs 1995:120):

(32) a **sàà có ní**  
Saa is FOC  
‘It’s Saa.’

b sàà wá ní  
 Saa was FOC  
 ‘It was Saa.’

**Wa** is a full verb in Kisi (Childs 1995:119). It may be inflected (although, it should be noted, only for imperative and hortative) and allows certain extensions to be added, such as the benefactive: **wa** ‘be’ > **wèlló** ‘be for someone’. **Co** is far more restricted in its distribution and productivity, being used “only when the sense is both realis and present” (1995:120).

### 16.5.2 “Incipient” auxiliary verbs

Childs acknowledges the diachronic nature of grammaticalisation processes by identifying several lexical items as “incipient auxiliary verbs” (1995:120). He notes that these items occur in the same position as do the auxiliary verbs **wa** and **co**. Among the verbs that fall under Child’s “incipient auxiliary” designation include:

(33) **cii** ‘finish’

ò cii fòndàndàḡ hèwì  
 3s finish spaces occupy  
 ‘He occupied the spaces.’ (1995:121)

(34) **nɔɔ** ‘have’ (modal AUX expressing obligation)

tààniláḡ ndâḡ lá n wàná súí cùwó ní  
 bonds these Prohave people palaver bring FOC  
 ‘It is these commitments that cause trouble between people.’ (1995:121)

(35) **hiou** ‘pass by’ (‘continuative’)

sàà cúá léèḡndó yááù mbó hiàù kláḡ  
 Saa grab machete Idph Conj-he pass going  
 ‘Saa grabbed the cutlass and continued on.’ (1995:121)

This lexical item is also used in comparative structures:

(36) ò hiòù yá nàḡ  
 3s pass me goodness  
 ‘She’s more handsome than I.’ (1995:20).

(37) **huḡ** ‘come’ (‘incipient’)

ò cò hùn cíóóḡ tòòfià  
 3s Aux come towns look-at  
 ‘He will come inspect the towns.’ (1995:121)

## 16.6 Relatives

A relative clause follows the noun it modifies. The relativized noun loses its noun class suffix, which is replaced by the noun class pronoun, with the noun class suffix appearing at the end of the clause. Thus, as in the following example, two pronouns appear in the sentence, one immediately after the modified noun ('water') and another before the predicate ('(be) good'). The first **mà** replaces the suffix **áj**, which appears at the end of the relative clause, and the second is the subject pronoun:

- (38) a      noun 'water'                      **mèŋ-mà** (ma class)
- mèŋ**   **mà**    [ó kól]-**áj**    **mà**    **nǐŋ**    **lé**  
 water Pro    [he drink]-Suf Pro    good NEG  
 'The water [that he drank] wasn't good.' (1995:286)

The situation is slightly different with **o**-class nouns. Here, no pronoun appears after the modified noun:

- b      noun 'person'                      **wàná** (o class)
- wàná** Ø [tóófià cíóŋ]-ó              ò    cò    **lè**    **hùndò**  
 person Pro [inspect towns]-Rel    Pro AUX    again    come  
 'The person [who inspects towns] will return.'

## 16.7 Negation

Kisi has but one negator: the post-posed independent particle **lé**.

- (39)    **í kóó sà**                      vs.      **í kóó sá lé**  
 'I pass judgement.'              'I don't pass judgment.' (1995:261)

Some irregular verbs show vowel changes in the negative:

- (40)    **kíól**                              vs.      **kíàl lé**  
 'Bite!'                              'Don't bite!' (1995:221)

In copular constructions, it is the noun which is negated. When this occurs, "the noun loses its suffix and prefixes its pronoun" (Childs 1995:261), as in (41a and 42). The high tone of the copula raises the first tone of the stem, if it is low (as in 41b):

- (41) a      noun **càléŋ** 'pumpkin' (**le** class)
- ò**    **có**    **lé-cá**              **lé**  
 it Cop    Pro-pumpkin NEG  
 'It's not a pumpkin.'

b noun **cáá** ‘maggots’ (a class)

**ò có á-cáá lé**  
 it Cop Pro-maggots NEG  
 ‘It’s not maggots.’

Childs (1995:263) notes that there is a certain amount of “pragmatic complementarity” of negative and focus particles: “Negation has inherent focus and thus there is no need for further focus”:

(42) **tànd-ǎŋ ní** vs. **ò có má tándà lé**  
 pubic.hair-Suf FOC it Cop Pro pubic.hair NEG  
 ‘It’s pubic hair.’ ‘It’s not pubic hair.’

## 16.8 Overview of Kisi Verbal Forms

Stem	<b>cimbu</b>	‘leave’
Imperative	<b>címbú</b>	‘Leave!’
Hortative	<b>ò cìmbú</b>	‘She ought to leave.’
Habitual	<b>ò cìmbù</b>	‘She (usually) leaves.’
Past Habitual	<b>óó cìmbù</b>	‘She used to leave.’
Perfective	<b>ò cìmbú</b>	‘She left.’
“Perfect”	<b>ò cìmbú níŋ</b>	‘She has now left’
Future	<b>ò cò cìmbù</b>	‘She will leave.’
Present Progressive	<b>ò cò cìmbòó</b>	‘She is leaving.’
Future Progressive	<b>ò cò wà cìmbòó</b>	‘She will be leaving.’
Past Progressive	<b>ò wà cìmbòó</b>	‘She was leaving.’

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