

Pre: a language of Côte d'Ivoire

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Analysis of Pre data

English gloss	Pre citation	External parallel (if any)
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Body Parts

back	gbrɛo	?
beard	gbi-komu	? + hair. ? cf. Dyan ŋɔ̄kɔbu
belly	bɛya	?
blood	ɲamu	CF. Nyabwa (Kru) ɲemo .
bone	ko	Similar forms are widespread, usually with a bilabial stop in C ₂ position at least to Proto-Volta-Congo (W. 238)
breast	jomu	?
cheek	bɔ̄	
chin	gbenaŋmruku	
cough	trɔ̄	
ear	nɛ	
elbow	gbɔ̄nɔ̄ɔ̄	
eye	ɟisi	Cf. Kru forms such as Bete of Daloa ɟi . The -si is an unproductive suffix.
fontanelle	peyi	
forehead	siw	
hair	komu	
hand	bɔ̄	A widespread Proto-Atlantic-Congo root reconstructed by W. (212) as -búá(k)- . Usually without nasalisation it shows signs of an m- prefix in Atlantic.
head	ɲi	The first element in many Gur languages is ɲi- but the vowel change is somewhat unusual
heart	sozi	
heel	gbɔ̄kuŋru	
intestine	lali	
knee	gbonuɣu	
leg, foot	gbɔ̄	Curiously, exact parallels for this are found in the Benue-Congo languages of Nigeria, notably Bini igbɔ̄ . However, it may also be connected with common Kru bo (e.g. Dida). Kru shows no trace of either nasalisation or labialisation.
liver	tɛ	
nose	mɛ̄	Perhaps cf. Kru forms such as Nyabwa máná . However, M. (373) reconstructs similar forms to Proto-Atlantic-Congo so this is less than conclusive.
nostril	pukrɛ	
neck	fye	
pus	pɛ̄	
shoulder	kaɲi	
skin	gbaw	?
stomach	gbɔ̄ or koni	W. gives -ku- as a Proto-Atlantic-Congo reconstruction, but his examples show

sweat	syē	that C ₂ was probably a nasal, making this form a likely cognate.
thigh	gboŋmo	See comment under ‘leg’
tongue	jeŋe	?
tooth	ɲɔŋɔmu	?
urine	nɛnɛ	
wound, sore	nɔmu	A single Senufoid language, Nyarafolo, has a cognate nɔmu -gɔ/-yɔ. However, a question remains as to the source of this word.

People

baby	tɛwɛ tɛnɛ	et. ? + ‘new’
chief	jeŋ-kɔ	et. village + master
child	tetra	pl. tanwa
corpse	sɾɔŋɔŋɔ	
father	to	Usually found with a long vowel in Senufoid languages e.g. Nafaara tòò or Kafiire tóo . Also found in Kru languages, e.g. Dida to , Godié tá .
fool, madman	kube kɔ	
friend	tɔgbe	
husband	fuwo	
grandfather	laya	
grandmother	seyá	
man/male	sre	
maternal	kɔ	
uncle		
mother	ma	Although this has a world-wide distribution for ‘mother’ is is curiously not found in the languages immediately neighbouring to Pre.
old man	gbrɔ	
older brother	kuri	
person	ɲɔŋɔ	This has a direct parallel in some Senufoid languages, e.g. Lorhon ɲũ , but initial ɲ- is fairly widespread in Mande-Congo. However, compare also Nyabwa (Kru) ɲɔŋɔ . As ɲɔ- is a suffix in Pre this parallel may be misleading and this is simply case of a retention of the old Proto-Mande-Congo ‘person’ root. < Agni-Baule
ruler	bleŋmisre	
slave	syā	
son		
stranger	nāpɔŋɔ	
woman	su-wa	
younger brother	ɲɛnɛ	

Plants

baobab	titiyili	
bark	wo	
bean	gbē	
calabash	kayá	
grass	sē	This resembles some Mande forms, for example, Busa sē , although linguistic geography excludes this being a loan. Other Mande forms have a back vowel and no nasalisation (see Prost, 1953:88)
liana	kɔw	
leaf	faniyi	A similar form can be reconstructed for Proto-Volta-Congo although the proximate source may be Lobiri faa. C ₂ was apparently /g/ since many other Senufoid languages have a weakened form waga . However, the retention of the

f-n-g sequence argues for the Pre form being closer to the original.

millet	kew	
okra	sẽ	
palm-tree	ημεñí	
pepper	seneηane	
raffia-palm	dusu or klõ	
reed	μενερωμωγω	et. water + ?
rubber	νωνω	
silk-cotton tree	σωηω	
tree	gbeya	
yam	σωγω	

Animals

animal, meat	namu	cf. Proto-Mande-Congo
bat	tiyilaηmrã	
bee, honey	tuγyupωηω	cf. Dyan tugbunu
bird	nõ	This is widespread in Proto-Volta-Congo, reconstructed by M. (405) as -nùn- , although curiously not attested in the Gur languages surrounding Pre.
butterfly	gbeneyele	
canary	pala	
cat	keni	
chameleon	neηre	
chicken	tõ	
chimpanzee	kosã	
cock	kokro	k-k-r roots for ‘cock’ are widespread <i>Wanderwörter</i> in West Africa
cow	nũ	Although -na- roots are widespread in West Africa (cf. W. 262) this precise form occurs in Gur languages, e.g. Tagbana, Supyire <i>nũ</i> whence it was presumably borrowed.
crab	kamu	#-kal- is a widespread form for ‘crab’ (W. 230) but the -mu suffix is unusual and may relate to Kru forms such as Koyo kãmõ .
cricket	kõdo	
crocodile		
cutting-grass	gbẽ	This root appears to be widespread in this region, although the proximate cognates may be Kru forms such as Niaboua gwẽã .
dog	kesi	?
duck	tẽbobo	
elephant	gbõdro	
fish	sẽmu	?
fly	gbenetiγene	
goat	bobo	Probably a loan from Mande. cf. Yaure bobo
guinea-fowl	samu	
hare	besi	
hippopotamus	tumowow	et. water + ?
hyena	jeloyõ or krakumo or komwo	
leopard	naηma	
lion	tõkõ	
lizard	mẽ	

louse	sime	
mason wasp	pɔ̃pɔ̃	Tepo (Kru) has popo káɲmo but this is unique within Kru. popo in Tepo means ‘butterfly’ so this may be an accidental resemblance.
millipede	gbɔɔɔlɔkɔɔɔ	
monkey	lɛw	
mouse	gbeyele	
partridge	to	
porcupine	sumuyɔ	
python	saɲme	
rat	gbɔyolo	Perhaps cf. Kru forms such as Kyo kpólu
sheep	baba	Probably a loan from Mande. cf. Gban baba
snake	sɔw	This root for ‘snake’ is widespread in Benue-Congo languages but not in this area.
spider	nuna	
termite	sɛɲɛɛ	?
toad	tɔtɔli	
tortoise	kruwɛ	#- kuru is a virtually pan-African root for tortoise (Blench, 1997) and is attested in some neighbouring Gur languages, e.g. Nabaj xuru .
wart-hog	gbɛ	
Natural World		
ashes	tuyunibo	Probably a compound with the first element corresponding to the Proto-Atlantic-Congo root # toN- (cf. M. 560)
white clay	bɔwa	Perhaps related to Kru forms such as Bete bala .
cloud	gbɔ̃	
dust		
field	tɔ̃	
fire	na	A Proto-Mande-Congo root given by Westermann (262) as -ná-. Occurs in Senufoid as Nafaara, Tyebara naà
fireplace	kɔ̃	
forest	taɲa	
ground	sasi	
hill	koɲoli	
hole	tɔw	
rain	mɛɛɛ	
root	duyɔ	
river	jeɲa	
sand	muɲakasi	
seed	doɲosi	
smoke	donuyɔ	
stone	ba also	
	kuni	
thorn, spine	sɛ̃	
water	tumu	Occurs in several Senufoid languages, notably Palaka tónmó , Tagbana tɔ̃mɔ̃ with initial /t/ weakening to /n/ and then /l/ in many lects
well	krɔ̃tɔ̃	
wind	fili	
lie	jɛ̃	
dance	yɔsi	
song	pesi	
story	puma	
language	pisi	

name	pyela	
truth	gbeṃmre	
smell	fili	
shadow	wō	
medicine	gbotuyu	
charm/fetish	sɛ	
food	gba	
work	tūdo	
war	syela	
thing	dɛ	cf. Dyan de
inheritance	pō	
dream	ɲɛsrā	
sickness		
hunger	frɛ	
dirt	pyela	
cold	tɛtɛɣɛ	
cold in head	fɛɲro	
smallpox	gbawisi	
world	poni	
spirit, soul	ɲa	
sky/God	duɣu	
sun	sɛni	Almost certainly related to the word for day (see below) with a similar association in Senufoïd languages.
moon	mō	
road	nā	
house	ɲini	cf. ɲĩɲò in Jimini -but this is a unique form also.
wall	ku	
village	yew	
market	powa	
fat, oil	dowa	
palm-wine	kōmi	
peel (fruit)	kɛsɛ	
tail	se-w	
horn	gbɛ	Perhaps cf. Kru forms such as Niabwa gbó or Aizi gbeli .
wing	di-w	?
feather	komu	?
egg	kuɲuni	?
Time		
morning	tini	
evening	biso	
day	sɛnnɛ	A rare Senufoïd root found in Fodonon cɛ́nɛ , Nyarafolo cɛ́ngé and Nafara cangà .
night	be	
yesterday	sa	
today	prā	
year		
dry season	ɲapyami	
rainy season	kruwami	

Objects

arrow	fā
axe	toŋmo
basket	gbeŋmeɣe
broom	pesi
chair	gboŋmro
cloth	pē
head-pad	tiɣini
hoe	ba-ɣa
iron	fɛɣɛnɛ
knife	sila
mat	gbaya
mortar	jɔɣɔni
net	kra
porridge	bomu
rope	jese
sauce	ti
thatch	do
toothstick	nɔɣɔsi
trap	byē
winnowing tray	sali

Adjectives

black	bi	A widespread Niger-Congo root (W. 206)
new	tɛnɛ	
red	syoli	perhaps cf. Lobiri da syɛ although these are not common Gur forms.

Numerals

one	pīdo	#-do is a common element in Mande for 'one' but this leaves the pī element unexplained.
two	ɣɔŋɔ	?
three	taŋɔ	#ta- is Proto-Atlantic-Congo and the -ŋɔ affix is apparently Pre (cf. 2,7)
four	na	#na- is Proto-Mande-Congo (W. 263)
five	nu	#-nu is Proto-Atlantic-Congo (W. xxx)
six	nŋi	?
seven	niɣɔŋɔ	? perhaps a compound of 5 + 2.
eight	bōdɔɣɔna	?
nine	krōdo	probably a loan from Bambara korondo
ten	gbri	? Unless connected with Westermann's -guá- (p. 225)

Verbs

to answer	
to ask for	se, seni
to be big	byē
to be long	woli
to be quick	kalɔ
to be respected	

to be ripe	be	
to be somewhere	wɔ	cf. Dyan wɔ
to be tired	gbō	
to be wet	yɛtrɔ	
to beat	ɲa	
to bite	nɔ	
to boil, cook		
to blow	poli	
to braid	mɛnɛ	
to build	sɔ	
to burn		
to buy	sɛ	
to call	jre	cf. Tyembara jèrè
to catch		
to come	ya	
to come from	su	
to count	sɛni	
to cut	sa	
to dance		
to defecate		
to dig	wɔ	
to die	fu	
to do	po	?
to drag	kɔ	
to dry	fulɔ	
to eat	dɛ	
to fall	pre	
to feel		
to finish	ta	
to fire at	tyeli	
to fly	file	
to forget	pɛde	
to gather	frɛ	
to get up	file	
to give	so	
to go		
to go down	sɪde	
to go in	mi	
to go to bed	pɪde	Lobi pi
to go up	pɛ	
to greet	sɪ	
to grow	je	
to hear	ɲɪdɔ	
to help	ɲɔɲɔ	
to hide		
to hunt	mrã	
to insult	myã	
to jump	yɛli	
to kill	ɟi	
to know s.o.	se	
to laugh	mã	
to lay (eggs)	ɟewu	
to learn		

to leave	kiŋɛ	
to light (fire)		
to live	mɔŋɔ	
to look at	ɲrĩ	
to lose	ŋmɛnɛ	
to marry	gbe	
to melt	yaya	
to pass night	jo	
to pierce	du	
to pound	we	
to push	kana	
to put in	wi	
to put on	sɔ̃	
to put in ground	sɔ̃	
to refuse (food)	kale	
to rot	ɲɔʋɔɔ	Apparently some connection with Senufoïd. cf. Nafara fɔ̀gò and Lomaka fũɔ
to run	lato	
to say, speak	te	cf. common Proto-Mande-Congo root ta- for 'narrate'
to search for	kɛ	
to see	ɲa	
to sell	je	
to send back	mrã	
to shell	kɛli	
to shake	tiŋa	
to share	la	
to shave	wile	
to shoot		
to shout	tɛnɛ	
to show	ŋɔnɔ	
to sing		
to sit down		
to sleep	lale	cf. Lobi dar
to snore	fini	
to sow	to	
to steal		
to swallow	mě	
to sweep		
to swell	foyoli	
to take	kũ	
to throw away	bu	
to throw stones at	ta	probably the common Proto-Mande-Congo root for 'shoot, throw'
to turn over	sě	
to vomit	kɔʋɔli	
to wait for		
to wake up	file	
to walk	ɲã	
to go for a walk		
to wash	boʋoli	
to wash body	ji	
to weave	mɛnɛ	

to weep **bye**

Q words

Here **wɔna**

How much? **jye** cf. Lobi **yemō**

There **lɔyɔna**

What? **ya**

When? **yila**

Where? **bɛ**

Who? **ŋma**