

The Ehwa language

of

Central Nigeria

[DRAFT CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT]

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Ehwa-English-Hausa Wordlist – July 09

1. Introduction

This is an annotated orthographic wordlist of the Eḥwa language spoken in several villages around Ankwe in Kachia LGA, Kaduna State, East-Central Nigeria. This seems to correspond to a language grouping noted as Iku-Gora-Ankwa in former reference sources. However, exactly where Iku is and what is spoken there remains uncertain. The wordlist given here corresponds to the speech of Ankwa, correctly Eḥwa. The material was collected by Alex Maikarfi as part of a project to explore the roots of the Eḍa [=Kadara] language spoken around Adunu in Niger State.

The lists are marked by an unusual choice of words, which does not always make it easy to compare them to standard wordlists. The orthography used is somewhat irregular, but has here been corrected in line with discussions with Mr. Maikarfi. The main changes are as follows;

1. Final –nn has been corrected to nasalised vowel
2. –rr- commonly heard as a rolled /r/ in Plateau languages is almost always an allophone of the tap and is therefore merged with it
3. gh is converted to ɣ and sh to ʃ
4. doubled consonants are reduced to single consonants
5. V- prefixes on verbs are deleted as these are almost certainly nominal forms

It does not seem worth attempting an analysis of the phonology in the light of these difficulties. The reason for typing out and disseminating this list is that these languages (the other being Eǰegha) are otherwise completely unknown and that their classification is thus (as so often) based on assertion. The comparative data here makes it possible to assess their place in the scheme of Plateau.

2. Classification of Eḥwa

Reference sources such as Crozier & Blench (1992) refer to a cluster listed as Iku–Gora–Ankwa as as part of Benue–Congo, Plateau family, Northern group, along with;

Eḍa [=Kadara]
Eḍra [previously under Kadara]
Eǰegha [=Idon-Doka-Makyali]
Kuturmi
Kulu

No evidence has ever been presented for such a grouping. Data on Kulu is of reasonable quality and it seems only remotely related to this group. Where Kulu does fit within Plateau is harder to determine, but it seems closer to the Western group (i.e. Koro, Hyam, Gyong etc.) although this is just an impression. Data on Kuturmi is much weaker and also orthographic. Some suggestions are made here, but no more rigorous hypothesis can yet be advanced in the absence of better quality data.

Eḍa and Eḍra are closely related and have previously been listed under the single name Kadara, which is derived from Eḍra. They appear to be distinct, but could be considered highly divergent dialects. Eǰagha and Eḥwa both share some distinctive lexical items with the Eḍa/Eḍra cluster, but there is also a great deal of divergent lexicon.

Table 1 shows a comparative table of common lexemes for the proposed Northern Plateau cluster. Some of these are also recorded elsewhere in Plateau or indeed in Niger-Congo, but some look distinctive, such as ‘kill’, #*perɛ*, which is usually #*ku* or similar in other languages.

Ehwa-English-Hausa Wordlist – July 09

Table 1. Evidence for a Northern Plateau cluster

Gloss	Ɖda	Ɖdra	Ɖjegha	Ɖhwa
Alcohol	àkǎ	akam	akuma	akɔm
Bag	ɔpa	ɔpa	ɛpa	ɔpar
Be cooked	brǎ	brɛ	bra	bra
Be stuck	ga	ga	ga	gake
Blood	eji	eji	eyii	eyi
Build	vrǎ	vrɛ	vra	bray
Buttocks	eta	eta	ɛreta	ɛta
Chest	ɛka	ɛkam	ɛkɔɔ	ɛkɔ
Come	ba	ba	ba	ba
Dig	tũ	tum	tum	time
Fall	kpa	kpa	kpa	gba
Father-in-law	azǎ	azɔ	azɔŋ	azǎ
Kill	pre	pal	peye	per
Make mistake	vro	vro	vlu	vɔw
Measure	maa	mel	mara	manɛ
Pound	kpa	kpa	kpa	kpa
Raise up	sa	sa	saŋ	sa
You	ŋɔ	ŋɔ	ɔŋɔ	ŋɔ

Nonetheless, Ɖhwa also has much very divergent lexicon. It suggests that the split between the Ɖda/Ɖdra languages and Ɖhwa was quite ancient.

From the existing materials, Kuturmi does seem to be related to the northern cluster (Table 2). It appears that It is closer to Ɖjegha and Ɖhwa than the Ɖda/Ɖdra cluster. The terms for ‘leg’ and ‘goat’ are interesting as they are very distinct from common Plateau roots for these items.

Table 2. Evidence for the position of Kuturmi

Gloss	Kuturmi	Ɖda	Ɖdra	Ɖjegha	Ɖhwa	Kulu	Also
tree	ufi	ekyi	ekyi	ɔfi	ɔfe	gí-nshi	
father	ete	ekye	otoo	ate	ete	ì-cí	
egg	ikpa	ɛkpa				di-kpa ⁺	Ningye kpaŋ
hand	awu	ɔnye	ɔnye	avu	ɔvɔ	gu-nyùŋ	
leg	afra	ɔfrǎ	ɔfrɛ	afra	ɔbra	gu-prà	
blood	eyi	eji		eyii	eyi	bè-jí	Ninzo àyìyì, Bu eyi, PLC *í-yíp
goat	anama	abǎ	abǎ	anuma	avɔ	gí-mbuŋ	
dog	ova	ava				gí-va	
oil	enye	ànyè		anye	anywɛ	?	

Ehwa-English-Hausa Wordlist – July 09

Ehwa-English Wordlist

English		PoS	Notes
add	sa		
age	uwe		
alcohol	akɔm	n.	cf. Ejegha akuma , <u>E</u> da àkǎ ,
amulet	ɛma hwu		
ancient ruins	onfow	n.	
anus	ɔplɔgay		
ask/plead	rule	v.	
axe	andom	n.	
bad smell	unugo	n.	
bangle	ɛgya		cf. Eḍa ɛgya ,
be cooked	bra	v.	cf. <u>E</u> da brǎ , Ejegha bra ,
be lean	drɛy	v.	
be quiet	ɔkɔkeɛ	v.	
be stuck (in mud)	gake	v.	cf. Eḍa, Ejegha ga ,
be unsatisfied	gɛnɛ		
beautiful	ɛgyɔm		
bee	ɛsɔ		cf. Eḍra ɛfɔ ,
beg, plead	solo		
belch	ugɛy	v.	
belly, stomach	ɛnyɛ		
beniseed	ɛgwɛn		
bird	ɛnɔ		
black	utri, etretri		
blacksmithing	ɛkyuma		
blood	eyi	n.	cf. Eḍa eji , Ejegha eyii ,
boa			
boil, steam	ndrɔ	v.	
bottle	inkro		
brain	alɛbom	n.	
break into pieces	pro	v.	
break	vre		
break/bottle, egg, etc.	vine	v.	
breast	ezom	azom n.	
bridge		n.	
broom	ɛnyile		
build	bray	v.	
bush I	ayaa	n.	
bush II	orumo	n.	
bushmeat	ikywi		
bush-spirit	ɔnfay	n.	
buttock	ɛta	n.	cf. Eḍa ɛta , Ejegha ɛrɛta ,
buy	row	v.	
calabash	ɛnse		
call	za	v.	
centre	atar		

Ehwa-English-Hausa Wordlist – July 09

English		PoS	Notes
chaff	ɛkyɛkyɛɛ	n.	
chair I	ikpokpo	n.	
charcoal	akan	n.	
check	dru		
chest	ɛkɔ		cf. Ƙɗa ɛka , Ejegha ɛkɔɔ ,
chew I	tɔm	v.	
chief	agwa		
child/children	awɛ		
climb	kay	v.	
cockroach	akyilɛ		
coconut	ɛkpan	n.	
collect	wolu		
come	ba	v.	cf. Ƙɗa, Ƙɗra, Ejegha ba ,
count	bay	v.	
cover, close	grulu	v.	
cow	ɛna	n.	
cricket, grasshopper	ede	n.	
cry	kro		
cultivate	ro		
cut leaves for soup	ɔtrale		
cut, slice	sar	v.	
dance	tra	v.	
day after tomorrow	etiya	adv.	
dig	time		cf. Ejegha tum ,
divide, share	gɔw		
do	nɛh	v.	
ear-ring	ɔmatɔ	n.	cf. Ejegha ɔmatɔŋ ,
earth, ground, city	ɛbye	n.	
eat	jaa	v.	cf. Ƙɗa, Ƙɗra ya ,
elbow	uŋkoŋ	n.	
embrace	klɔ	v.	
expose carelessly	fuu		
eye	ize	n.	
fall, confess	gba		
fart	urnbzi		
father	ete		cf. Ejegha ate ,
father-in-law	azɔ		cf. Ƙɗa azɔ , Ejegha azɔŋ ,
fence	ɔpaŋ		
fetch water	da	v.	
find/search	kyeŋ	v.	
finish	ɔkpɛ		
fire	ɛnda		
fish	owobru		
flatter	day	n.	
fly	ugyugyu		
fog	ɔme		cf. Ejegha ɔmɔɔ ,
fonio	ikpo		
foodstuffs	ɛŋwɔnja	n.	
fool	idile	n.	

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English		PoS	Notes
forest	orumo		
forgetfulness	ɔvaa	n.	
frog	owrɛy	n.	
fry	ro	v.	
give	sayi	v.	
Gbari	aGbari		
go	gyow	v.	
goat	avɔ	n.	
gorilla [!]	ɔka		
grind flour	kpa	v.	cf. Ejegha kpa ,
grope	bɔm		cf. Eɗa bam ,
groundnut	ivii	n.	
hand	ɔvɔ		
hare	okyoo		
hat	ɛfrɔ abla	n.	
Hausa people	akɔre		
he/she/it	aɲu		
heat	ɔpyer		
hedgehog	ikywi agan		
hide	solu	v.t.	
hide self	ɔmã	v.i.	
hit/beat	nywe	v.	
hold	ko	n.	
hole	ɔplɔ	n.	
horse	ɛduwa	n.	
intestine	igyire		
kill	pɛr	v.	cf. Eɗa prɛ ,
know	kpey	v.	cf. Nupe kpe ,
laugh	sɛna		
leaf			
left	epey		
leg		ayaa	
leopard	igbe		cf. Ejegha ikpe ,
let go free, to	pele		
lick	rine		
lift	sa	v.	cf. Eɗa sa , Ejegha saɲ ,
lips	ɛkywɛɛ	n.	
lizard	ɛntra	n.	
load	ɔɲga		
make fire	fuu		
make mistake/get lost	vɔw	v.	cf. Eɗa vro ,
market	ɔgba ɛzɛ		
massage	byini		
me	ɛmɛ	pron.	
measure, test	manɛ	v.	
mix liquids	sar	v.	
money	ɔnfɛ		
mosquito	ɛvɔ	n.	cf. Eɗa ɛvɔ ,
mushroom	anhwow		

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English		PoS	Notes
navel	inko	n.	
news	ifun	n.	cf. Edra ifu ,
night	ugwe		
oil	anywē	n.	cf. Kuturmi enye ,
okra	ukremi		
old woman	ɔnkpa	n.	
owl	uṅgum		
part	ɔgraj		
peel	wa	v.	
person/people		adara	
plait/weave	tɛr	v.	
plant for making kunnu	ɛkor		
play/joke	drɛya	v.	
post on wall	dray		cf. Eda da ,
pot	ijywe		
potash	unto	n.	cf. Eda atɔ ,
potassium ?	amina		
pound	kpa	v.	
pour	tro	v.	
pour into something	toṅ	v.	
praying mantis	ugēṅeme		
pregnancy	ɛnyɛ	n.	
pull	dray		
pumpkin	agbom	n.	
puncture	vow		
quarrel, scold	rina		
rain	ɔya	n.	
rat	ikywi		cf. Eda ikiyi , Ejegha ikywi , and widespread Plateau ikpi etc.
receive	yalɛ		
remove	wow	v.	cf. Ejegha woo ,
ridge	avɔ		
right hand	ɛnja	n.	
ring	ɛma		cf. Eda ɛma ,
rise/sit up	sinɛ	v.	
river I	iwi		
rock	ɔpa		cf. Edra ɔpa
rope	iwe		cf. Eda iwe ,
run	kywikywa		
salt	ɔnɔ	n.	
sand	igyɛ	n.	cf. Ejegha ikye ,
scorpion	ɛna	n.	cf. Eda, Ejegha ɛna ,
scratch	yane		
seedlings	ɛwɔw		
seize forcefully	ɔkpay	v.	
shadow/ shade	ururu	n.	
shea-tree	iywo	n.	
shift	rey	v.	

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English		PoS	Notes
shoe	atigha	n.	
shoulder	ɔnkyɛ	n.	
show	yeniy	v.	
side	ipriyi	n.	
sit down	tritire	v.	
skin, to	wɛn		
slaughter	wa		cf. Ɛda, Ejegha wa ,
sleep, pass the night	mbrulu	v.	
smear, smudge	pele	v.	cf. Ɛdra pele ,
someone	uɲyo		
spoon, wooden	ɛɲkpɛ		
squeeze	pre	v.	
stand	dɛdɛn		
stay/wait for long	tre	v.	
steal	ze	v.	cf. Ɛda, Ɛdra ze ,
stick	ɛmbaɲ	n.	cf. Ɛda abã ,
strength, power	ɛkay	n.	
swaddling cloth	ogodo		cf. Ɛdra ɛgado ,
swallow	mbra	v.	
swear	tre	v.	
sweep	eyɛɛ	v.	
swell	mbla	v.	
talk	ɔbey	v.	
teacher/herbalist	ana mane	n.	
tear I	grɔ	v.	cf. Ɛda gre ,
tear II	sar	v.	cf. Ɛda saa ,
tell	ga		
termite mound	ɛkrɔ	n.	
testicles	atle		
throat, neck	ɔmbrilɛɛ	n.	
toad	ɔwrɛy	n.	
tomorrow	ufukya		
tongue	ɛrile	n.	
touch	da		
town/city	apya	n.	
tree, generic	ɔʃɛ	n.	cf. Ejegha ɔʃi ,
tripod/stove	akrɛ	n.	
umbrella	ururu		
unripe (fruit)	abine	n.	
urine	ebrii		cf. Ɛda ebī ,
visit, condole	dru	v.	cf. Ɛda dru ,
vomit	ukrolu	v.	
waist	etre	n.	
wait	hwiy	v.	
walk	gye		
wash	gulu	n.	
we	andɛɛ	pron.	
wear	ywoɲ	v.	
weed	gow	v.	

Ehwa-English-Hausa Wordlist – July 09

English		PoS	Notes
whistle	ɓɔw	n.	
white man	enesesen		
witch	ekrili		
woman	ene nyine	anyine n.	
wood	ɛhwɔ	v.	
worm	ifoo		
wrapper	uzeni	n.	
yam	unkyiri	n.	
yesterday	korre	adv.	
you	ɗɔ	pron.	