

The Ejegha language

of

Central Nigeria

[DRAFT CIRCULATED FOR COMMENT]

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English-Ejegha Wordlist

1. Introduction

This is an annotated version of an orthographic wordlist of the Ejegha language spoken along the Kachia-Kaduna road in Kaduna State, West-Central Nigeria. Its basis is a list prepared by Alex Maikarfi in which he attempted to establish its relationship to Eda [=Kadara]. Ejegha has been analysed in order to create an orthography, but many problems remain. This introduction, based on transcriptions is intended as contribution to the classification of this language.

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 Ejegha) 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 Ejegha

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

Eda [=Kadara]
Edra [previously under Kadara]
Ejegha [=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.

Eda and Edra are closely related and have previously been listed under the single name Kadara, which is derived from Edra. They appear to be distinct, but could be considered highly divergent dialects. Ejegha and Eɣhwa both share some distinctive lexical items with the Eda/Edra 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.

English-Ejegha Wordlist

Table 1. Evidence for a Northern Plateau cluster

Gloss	Ēda	Ēdra	Ējegha	Ēhwa
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	tū	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, Ēhwa also has much very divergent lexicon. It suggests that the split between the Ēda/Ēdra languages and Ēhwa 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 Ējegha and Ēhwa than the Ēda/Ēdra 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	Ēda	Ēdra	Ējegha	Ēhwa	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	?	

English-Ejégha Wordlist

Ejégha-English Wordlist

English	sg.	pl.	PoS	Comments
adore, glorify	ᵛᵛ		v.	cf. Eda ᵛᵛᵛ,
agama lizard	itadoᵛ			
age	anyee			cf. Eda ámè,
alcohol	akuma		n.	cf. Eda àkǎ́, Èhwa akòm,
algae	irriye			
amulet	ɛɛ			
ancient ruins	avuyo		n.	
anus	isiyi ibū			
ask/plead	wulu		v.	cf. Eda waā,
axe	akper		n.	
bad smell	ɔnyaᵛ		n.	cf. Eda ɔnya,
bag	ɛpa			
bangle	ɛkyɔᵛ			
bathroom	idasɔ		n.	
be cooked	bra		v.	cf. Eda brǎ́,
be lean	tɔrɔ		v.	
be quiet	kom		v.	
be stuck (in mud)	ga		v.	cf. Eda gaa,
be unsatisfied	ujer			
beautiful	ɔdɔduman			
bee	ɛrɛtoᵛ			
beg, plead	ᵛor			
belch	gawa		v.	cf. Eda gɔɔ,
belly, stomach	afo			
beniseed	awa			
bird	inoᵛ			
black	ususuyu			
blacksmithing	pɔ			
blood	eyii		n.	cf. Eda èjí,
boa	iyyo ɛkoᵛ			
boil, steam	tili		v.	
bottle	ɔkɔlba			< Hausa
brain	irikoᵛ		n.	cf. Eda ikrī,
break into pieces	wura		v.	
break/bottle, egg, etc.	sɛyaw		v.	
breast	ayer		n.	
bridge	ɛdɔyɔ		n.	
broom	ɛrkiyer			
build	vra		v.	cf. Eda vrǎ́,
bush I	ayum		n.	
bush II	ɔfa		n.	cf. Eda ofu,
bushmeat	agwoᵛ			
bush-spirit	ɛfɛyɛ		n.	cf. Eda ɛfǎ́,
buttock	ɛrɛta		n.	cf. Eda ɛta,
buy	yɛ		v.	
calabash	ɛsɔᵛ			

English-Ejegha Wordlist

English	sg.	pl.	PoS	Comments
call	yurɔ		v.	
centre	abayateŋ			
chaff	ɛgyɔr		n.	
chair I	ɛgoo		n.	
chair II	ukwera		n.	
charcoal	aker		n.	
chest	ɛkɔɔ			
chew I	kɛr		v.	
chew II	tɛyǎ		v.	
chief	agɔm			
child/children	anɔ			
clay	ɛrɛtoŋ			
climb	kyela		v.	
cockroach	ɔyɛyɛ			
coconut	ofu		n.	
collect	yer			
come	ba		v.	cf. <u>Eda bà</u> ,
count	pala		v.	
cover, close	yur		v.	
cow	ɛna		n.	
cricket, grasshopper	ihywer		n.	
cry	ci			
cultivate	ghu			
cut leaves for soup	kara			
cut, slice	ɔo		v.	
dance	ya		v.	
day after tomorrow	adawe		adv.	
dig	tum			
divide, share	kɔ			
do	ju		v.	cf. <u>Eda dù</u> ,
door	oŋwū boyo		n.	
dove	ikiym			
drink	sa		v.	
drum	uhuyu			
ear-ring	ɔmatɔŋ		n.	cf. <u>Ehwa ɔmatɔ</u> ,
earth, ground, city	erebɔ		n.	
eat	la		v.	
elbow	aweri		n.	
embrace	kɛn		v.	
expose carelessly	fo			
eye	ica		n.	
fall, confess	kpa			
fart	foribuŋ			
father	ate			
father-in-law	azɔŋ			
fence	ubili			
fetch water	voo		v.	
find/search	waŋ		v.	
finish	kper			

English-Ejegha Wordlist

English	sg.	pl.	PoS	Comments
fire	ɔya			
fish	itagboŋ			
fish-hook	akugiwa			
fishing net	akale		n.	
flatter	yɛm		n.	
fog	ɔmɔ			
fonio	ikpoŋ			
foodstuffs	imola		n.	
fool	abo		n.	cf. <u>Eda</u> ogbō,
forest	irikur			
forgetfulness	iywuyu		n.	
frog	ihweye		n.	
fry	kara		v.	cf. <u>Eda</u> krā,
give	mā		v.	
go	wɔl		v.	
goat	anuma		n.	
gorilla	ɔkaw			
grind flour	kpa		v.	
grobe	ɔbɛr			
groundnut	ifywi		n.	
hand	avu			
hare	osoŋ			
hat	ɛtagya		n.	
Hausa people	agyuyu			
he/she/it	aŋa			cf. <u>Eda</u> ŋa,
health	ɔkywɔghɔ			
heat	ɔcii			
hedghog	ɛkpakara			
hide	ʃɔ		v.t.	
hit/beat	gyo		v.	
hold	gō		n.	
hole	ɔfɔŋ		n.	
horse	ɛkaw		n.	cf. <u>Eda</u> ɛkaw,
intestine	ɛɛnaŋ			
kidney	ikopobuyu			
kill	peye		v.	
know	yeh		v.	
laugh	sra			
leg	afra			
leopard	ikpe			
let go free, to	shiyi			
lick	yale			
lift	saŋ		v.	
lips	ɛblɛ		n.	
lizard	ɛzaŋ		n.	
load	akpara			
make fire	ker			
make mistake/get lost	vlu		v.	cf. <u>Eda</u> vro,
massage	mer			

English-Ejegha Wordlist

English	sg.	pl.	PoS	Comments
me	ime		pron.	cf. <u>E</u> da mi ,
measure, test	mara		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da maà ,
mix liquids	saya		v.	
money	ife			
monitor lizard I	ikur		n.	cf. <u>E</u> da igrū ,
monitor lizard II	iweyi		n.	
mosquito	aniṅ		n.	
mucus	irrimir			
mushroom	asili			
navel	irikoo		n.	cf. <u>E</u> da iko ,
news	ila		n.	
night	etiṅ			
oil	anye		n.	cf. <u>E</u> da ànyè ,
okra	ɔke avuṅ			
old woman	anahwa		n.	
owl	ufi			
part	ɔgee			
pay	biya		v.	
peel	fura		v.	
pestle	ano ofo		n.	
piece	εgbara			
pig	aledi			
plait/weave	teye		v.	
plant for making kunnu	εgyinε			
plate, clay	epe			
play/joke	kpaha		v.	
porridge	amū			
post on wall	der			cf. <u>E</u> da da ,
pot	iwoo			
potash	awalato		n.	
potassium ?	amadaṅ			
pound	kpa		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da kpa ,
pour	fir		v.	
pour into something	tor		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da tɔ ,
pregnancy	afo		n.	
pull	waya			
pumpkin	akper		n.	
puncture	kulu			
quarrel, scold	raṅ			
raffia stick	ago			
rain	avaya		n.	
rainy season	εrekper		n.	
rat	ikywi			f. Hasha ikwi , Idū ikpi and across Plateau
receive	yera			
remove	woo		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da we ,
ridge	ayur			
right hand	ila		n.	
rise/sit up	sesaṅ		v.	
river I	avuṅ			

English-Ejegha Wordlist

English	sg.	pl.	PoS	Comments
river II	ekyeŋ			
rock	ɔpaŋ			
root	aniŋ		n.	
run	ti			
salt	atɔ		n.	
sand	ikye		n.	cf. <u>E</u> da ifee ,
scorpion	ɛna		n.	cf. <u>E</u> da ɛna ,
scratch	gor			
seedlings	ɛyɔ			
seize forcefully	saŋ		v.	
shadow/ shade	iyru		n.	
sharpen	faŋ		v.	
shea-tree	iyro		n.	
shift	yini		v.	
shirt	ɛgbaŋ			
shoe	akpoyɔ		n.	
shoulder	ovũ		n.	
show	nyin		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da nyin ,
side	ɔgii		n.	
sit down	cica		v.	
skin, to	gywa			
slaughter	wa			
sleep, pass the night	mor		v.	
smear, smudge	gble		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da blè ,
someone	ayo			
spoon	ɛtaw			
spoon, wooden	ɛpaya			
squeeze	miyi		v.	
stand	titar			
stay/wait for long	ywa		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da ywa ,
steal	yi		v.	
stick	aŋi		n.	
strength, power	ɛɛkyuyɔ		n.	
swallow	ŋon		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da ŋon ,
swamp	idatee			
swear	isuyu		v.	
sweep	yɛrka		v.	
swell	mra		v.	
talk	pɛye		v.	cf. <u>E</u> da pe ,
teacher/herbalist	ava		n.	cf. <u>E</u> da àvwǎ ,
tear	gaya		v.	
tell	tɛr			
termite	iyi		n.	
termite mound	iriyi		n.	
testicles	ɛko			
thanks	ikywifufuyu		n.	
throat, neck	omuyɔ		n.	
toad	iweyi		n.	
tomorrow	ɛkywa			

English-Ejegha Wordlist

English	sg.	pl.	PoS	Comments
tongue	εεγεm		n.	
touch	piya			
town/city	εfɔŋ		n.	
transfer	amiyi			
tree, generic	ɔfi		n.	
tripod/stove	akyeye		n.	
umbrella	iwu			
unripe (fruit)	ujer		n.	
urine	aypuyu			
visit, condole	bli		v.	
vomit	ukor		v.	
waist	abuyu		n.	
wait	ja		v.	
walk	kyeŋ			
wall	iriyi		n.	
warthog	ɔwa			
wash	hur		n.	
we	iyi		pron.	
wear	som		v.	
weed	kyεr		v.	
whistle	wile		n.	
wing		afɔŋ		
witch	ohwur			
woman	eyir	ayir	n.	
wood	ifi		v.	
worm	εydεε			
wrapper	imulor		n.	
yam	utruyu		n.	
yesterday	amufee			
you	ɔŋgɔ		pron.	cf. <u>E</u> da ηɔ,