

Comparative Akokoid

[WORK IN PROGRESS]

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1. Introduction

Akokoid languages are Niger-Congo languages spoken southwest of the Niger-Benue Confluence in Ondo State, Akoko North LGA and Kwara State, Kogi LGA. Wordlists of these dialects were collected by Femi Ibrahim under the supervision of Kay Williamson in the 1980s. The data has been left unanalysed since that time, but I am beginning to type up the lists and to annotate them with potential cognates in nearby languages. The transcriptions are not 100% reliable, especially in the matter of tone.

Table 1 shows the somewhat scattered and inconsistent information about the Akokoid languages presently available.

Table 1. The Akokoid languages

Name	Language	People	Other names	Location	Population
Afa	Ọ̀wọ̀n Àfá	Àfá	Oke–Agbe	Oke–Agbe town, Affa section	
Arigidi		Arigidí		Arigidi town	
Eruṣu		Erúṣú	Erusu, Erushu	Eruṣu town	
Ese	Ọ̀wọ̀n Èsé	Èsé	Aje, Oke–Agbe	Oke–Agbe town, Ese section	
Igáì	Ọ̀wọ̀n Ìgáí	Ìgàshí	Igashi, Igasi	Igáì town	45,000 (1986)
Oge	Ọ̀wọ̀ Ọ̀gè	Ọ̀gè		Oke–Agbe town, Oge section	
Ojọ				Ajọwa town	
Oyin				Oyin–Akoko town	
Udo	Ọ̀wọ̀n Ùdò		Ido	Oke–Agbe town, Udo section	
Uro				Uro–Ajọwa town	3000 (1986)

2. The classification of Akokoid

As so often, the classification of Akokoid has been typified by assertion rather than argument. The notion that Akokoid and Yoruboid form a single group or that Akokoid is simply Yoruboid appears in the list of Nigerian languages appended to Hansford et al. (1976). According to Appendix 1 of Akinkugbe (1978) this idea goes back to a suggestion made verbally by Ed Fresco in 1973 and subsequently picked up by both Carl Hoffmann and Kay Williamson (1982). In this version of the idea, Ayere and Ahan were still treated as undifferentiated members of the ‘Akoko North cluster’. Appendix 1 of Akinkugbe (1978) gives some examples of purportedly cognate items, but even assuming these are cognates, the confusion between Ayere-Ahan and Akokoid leads to misleading results. For example, Ayere **éndí** ‘ear’ may well be cognate with Proto-Yoruba Igala **etí**, but the Akokoid root is quite different.

This idea was reprised without change by Capo (1989) who took up the suggestion to rechristen this supposed family ‘Defoid’. Capo follows Akinkugbe in terms of classification, although by that time there were more student long essays to draw on for the validity of the argument. Defoid appears again in Crozier & Blench (1992) and was only finally exorcised through the present author’s dissatisfaction in Williamson & Blench (2000) where Akokoid is treated as co-ordinate with Yoruboid, Edoid and Igboid and Ayere-Ahan

is banished to a still higher node. Part of the inspiration for this change was the work of Ohiri-Aniche (1991) who showed that Akokoid seems to have as many cognates with Edoid and Igboid as with Yoruboid. Indeed in a published overview, Ohiri-Aniche (1999) points out that Akokoid lexicostatistical counts with Yoruboid provide no evidence for the close association posited by Defoid.

The present paper is a more detailed investigation of Akokoid with a view to trying to understand how it can be placed in the border Niger-Congo 'tree'. The main source are BA student long essays, mostly from the University of Ilorin which are principally phonologies, and a comparative Ibadan 400 word wordlist from the files of Kay Williamson and largely collected by Femi Ibrahim (Table 2). Appendix 1 lists the sources of data in more detail.

It should be at once clear that Akokoid is essentially a dialect cluster. Despite a certain amount of dialect variation, for most standard glosses, the forms are essentially cognate. A 'proto-Akokoid' quasi-reconstruction is thus presented in the final column. I believe that a regular reconstruction is almost impossible as these languages are subject to extensive micro-borrowing between geographically close communities, making for a stream of slight irregularities.

Table 2 is a comparative wordlist of the Akokoid languages based on the Ibadan 400 word list.

Table 2. Comparative Wordlist of Akokoid languages

Gloss	Oyin	Uro	Eruṣu	Udo	Arigidi	Oge	Ojo	Igaṣi	Aje	Afa	*PA	Notes
Head	igíri	inírí	ègíri	ìgíri	ìgíri	ìgíri	ìgiri	ìgíri	ìgiri	igíri	igíri	cf. Ahan éri , Yoruba orí
Hair	itírí	isírín	ìṣíri	itírí	ìṣíri	isírí	ìṣi	intirí	isírín	itírí	icírí	cf. proto-Akpes itífi ,
Eye	íjù	íjù	oju	oju	ojù	íjù	íjù	íjù	íjù	íjù	íjù	Other languages all have #iji or similar
Ear	útó	útó	ótó	útó	oto	útó	otó	uto	úto	útó	útó	cf. Ebira ùtós , but this is a common Niger-Congo root. Preserved in Akpes with a velar at C ₂
Nose	úwḗ	úwḗ	úwḗ	úwḗ	ojúwḗ	úwḗ	iwḗ	uwḗ	úwḗ	úwḗ	úwḗ	≠ Ukaan. cf. Ayere-Ahan ówú
Mouth	údòrū	—	orū	ùrú	orū	òru	odòrū	odòrū	odórū	òrū	odòrū	cf. Yoruba enu , Akpes onū , Ayere arū . Assumed to reflect widespread #-nu root.
Tooth	eyì	ejì	éjì	éyì	ejì	eyí	idalò	éjì	ejì	éjì	ejì	Ukaan *òpòg- , Igala éjì , Oba eyí , Ayere éyí , common Niger-Congo root
Tongue	éré	íré	íré	éré	èrè	íré	íwḗ	íré	érē	éré	íré	cf. Ahan iré , Ibilo ú-rè ,
Jaw	àmgbà	àmgbàmgbà	àmgbà	àmgbà	àgbḗ	àmgbà	ìkpédónu	àmgbà	àmgbà	àmgbà	àmgbà	cf. Ayere àngbà but a widespread root
Chin	olò	ùlè	itḗ	olò	ètḗ	ùlè	ódónu	ùlè	ùlè	ólò	ùlè.	? cognate with Ahan ùndē
Beard	ilè	ulé	ìṣilè	itírí àmgbà	icírèlè	isírí ùlè	ìṣi ódónu	inti ùlè	isírí ùlè	ilè	ilè	? cognate with Ahan ihinde
Neck	òṅúgḗ	ùcè	ùgḗ	ògúgḗ	ùgḗ	ùcè	ilé	ùcè	ucè	ùgigḗ	ògúgḗ	cf. Ife Yoruba ogorḗ , Ayere igḗgḗ ,
Breast	ípḗ	ípḗ	èpḗ	ípḗ	èpḗ	ípḗ	ímpḗ	ípḗ	ipḗ	ìkpḗ	ìkpḗ	cf. Ayere émó [?]Yoruba omú ,
Heart	okúrùgè	ègè	ègè	okḗ	ejuhè	okḗ	uné	okḗ	ègè	okḗ	ègè okḗ	cf. Ayere okḗ , Akpes okḗ , Yoruba okḗ , Gade rù-kwḗ ,
Belly	ìgḗ	igó	ḗgḗ	ìgḗ	ḗgḗ	ìgḗ	ìgo	ìgó	ìgḗ	ìgḗ	ìgḗ	? Akokoid innovation. ? cf.

Gloss	Oyin	Uro	Eruṣu	Udo	Arigidi	Oge	Ojo	Igaṣi	Aje	Afa	*PA	Notes	
Stomach	ífu	úrúnìgò	ḡgɔ	àkpòlúkù	àkpòlúkù	úléléfe	—	àkpòlúkù	àkpòlúkù	ífu	??	Yoruba ikũ , cf. Ahan duduruku , cf. Ayere ifu , Igala éfù , Ouhuhu áfó ,	
Navel	ípḡ	ímkpḡ	epḡ	ípḡ	ekpḡ	íkḡ	ikpḡ	imkpo	ikpḡ	ópḡ	ípḡ	cf. Iyayu okḡ , P-Akpes ḡḡkḡ , P-Ukaan òkpòdù ,	
Back	òsù	òḡjù	ḡsḡ	òsũ	ḡsḡ	òsu	òsu	òsũ	òsũ	òsũ	òsũ	cf. P-Akpes òcum , Isheu Ukaan ijũ , NW Edoid, Uhami éḡimì , EBC #- ḡim- cf. P-Ukaan òwḡ , NW Edoid, Uheun owḡ , Yoruba owḡ ,	
Arm	úwḡ	únḡ	ḡwḡ	úwḡ	èkéwḡ	úwḡ	kpàkpóhò	ikpápá uko	úwḡ	úwḡ	úwḡ	úwḡ	
Hand	úwḡ	únḡ	ḡwḡ	ògúnḡwḡ	ḡwḡ	ìbúwḡ	uwḡ	urḡ	úwḡ	—	—		
Nail	íḡà	íḡgà	àkíkē	íḡgà	ekē	íḡgà	—	íḡgà	íḡgà	íḡgà	íḡgà	íḡgà	
Buttocks	ìbḡ	ilámí	ilapē	ìbḡ	èjeme	inḡ	inḡ	inḡ	ètè	ìbḡ	ìmbḡ		
Penis	ìndù	ìndù	òko	ìndù	ḡkḡ	ìndù	ikù	ìndù	inũ	ìndù	ìndù	ìndù	also ‘tail’. cf. Degema ùtúm , Ce u-ndú , Ayere undu , cf. Ahan ìntì ,
Vagina	ondí	íhḡ	oròkũ	ondí	ehḡ	íhũ	èkù	íhḡ	íhḡ	ondí	??		
Thigh	ifã	okokó	ikpa	ùròkó	—	okokó	ikókó	okoko	gbàlálìku	ìbàlálùkù	#- koko		
Leg	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	òhḡ	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	cf. Ikaan ‘thigh’ ihḡ ,
Knee	ìḡḡḡḡhù	ìḡíḡíḡḡ	ehò	ìḡḡḡḡhò	ewóhḡ	ìḡḡ	ìwèḡḡ	ìḡíḡíḡḡ	ìḡḡ	ìḡḡḡḡhò	ìḡḡ	ìḡḡ	cf. Ahan égú , Yoruba eèkũ , Ukaan ihũhũ ,
Body	ìji	ìji	èje	ìji	èje	ìjínã	ìji	ùji	ìji	ìjĩ	ìji	ìji	cf. Ukaan isí , Uhami ‘skin’ isì ,
Skin	àla	—	—	aleji	awḡ èje	alà	—	àla	alà	—	àla	àla	cf. words for ‘body’ cf. Igala òla , Yoruba ara .
Bone	ìkpĩ	ìkpi	ìkpĩ	ìkpĩ	èkpĩ	ìkpĩ	ìkpi	ìkpi	èkpĩ	ìkpĩ	ìkpĩ	ìkpĩ	

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