

# THE TIVOID LANGUAGES: OVERVIEW AND COMPARATIVE WORDLIST



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CIRCULATION DRAFT

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## 1. Introduction

The Tivoid languages represent one of the least-known and most poorly characterised of the larger Bantoid groups. Indeed no argument for the unity of this group has ever been presented in print and for some putative Tivoid languages there appears to be no published information. Meek (1931) may well be the earliest author to record languages other than Tiv itself; he provides vocabularies of Bitare, Abõ and Batu. Greenberg (1963) included Tiv, Bitare and Batu, languages now considered to be Tivoid, as three of the seven co-ordinate branches of Bantu but did not argue for any special relationship between them. Williamson (1971:276) lists Tiv, Ceve, Balegete, Bitare, Abõ and Batu as part of the Tiv-Batu group, which she places within ‘non-Bantu Bantoid’ alongside Mambila-Wute [i.e. Mambiloid]. Balegete is an Upper Cross language very remote from Tivoid and indeed a footnote admits that no data was available. The Benue-Congo Comparative Wordlist material seems to derive from Meek with Tiv added.

The recognition that there is a whole group of languages related to Tiv may first appear in Dieu & Renaud (1983) reprised in Watters & Leroy (1989). Piron (1997) recognises a Tivoid group although she only sampled a very small number of languages. Her lexicostatistic counts link it with ‘Noni’, i.e. East Beoid. Grollemund (2012) also reaches a similar conclusion. The situation is thus of the same data being recycled from one author to another with no real advances in analysis. It therefore seems useful to present a comparative wordlist of Tivoid, as far as this is possible, and to use this information to develop a preliminary classification of the family<sup>1</sup>.

The first version of this paper accepted the assignation to Tivoid of languages which following further analysis would be better placed with West Momo, now rebaptised SW Grassfields. These languages are Balo, Manta and Osatu. They are therefore excluded from this second, revised version. Table 1 shows the Tivoid languages presently recorded, with populations taken from the Ethnologue and the sources available for each language. Populations are generally estimates and have different dates attached and so should be treated as indicative of scale only.

**Table 1. The Tivoid languages**

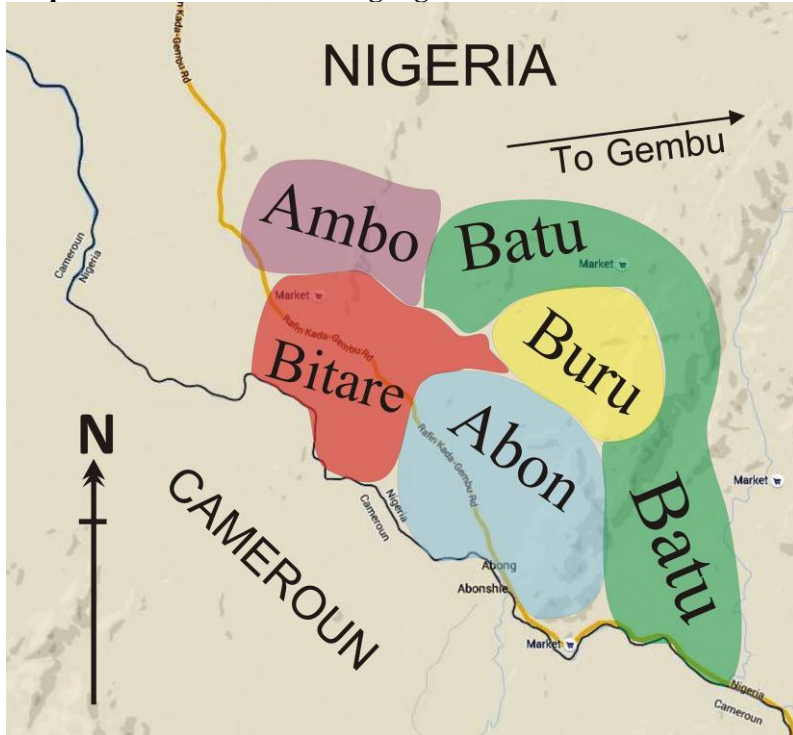
Name	Country	Population	Sources
Abõ	Nigeria	1000	Koops ms., IL survey
Ambo	Nigeria	1000	?
Batu	Nigeria	25,000	Koops ms.
Bitare [=Njwande]	Nigeria/ Cameroon	6000	Koops ms.
Caka [=Asaka]	Cameroon	5000	ALCAM
Eman	Cameroon	800	ALCAM
Esimbi	Cameroon	20,000	Koenig, Coleman & Coleman (2007)
Evant	Cameroon/Nigeria	1000	ALCAM
Iceve-Maci	Nigeria	5000	ALCAM
Ipulo	Cameroon	2500	ALCAM
Iyive	Nigeria/ Cameroon	2000	ALCAM
Kamino	Nigeria	1000	Koops ms.
Ugarə (=Mesaka)	Cameroon	14,000	Cassetta & Cassetta (1994a,b,c)
Otank (=Otanga)	Nigeria	3000	ALCAM
Tiv	Nigeria	2,212,000	Abraham (1940b)

I have been unable to find any data for Ambo, so the only proof of its existence is repeated assertion.

Map 1 shows the approximate locations of the North Tivoid languages. None of these have been definitely reported as having villages in Cameroun, although it seems likely. I have included Buru, despite my scepticism that it is Tivoid.

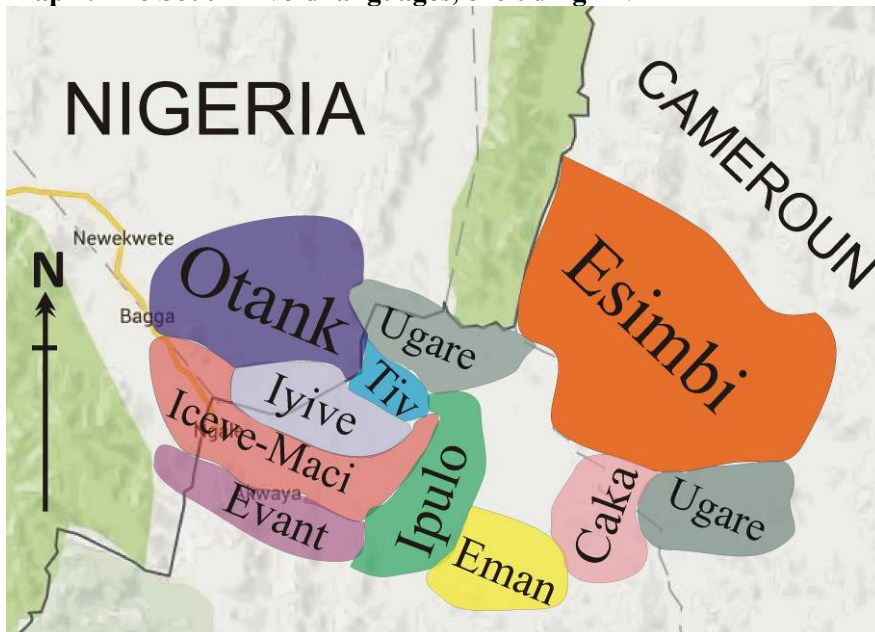
<sup>1</sup> The core data in this paper comes from the ALCAM surveys undertaken in Cameroun during the 1970s and kindly made available by Cameron Hamm. I would also like to thank Rob Koops for making available his manuscript wordlists of Nigerian Tivoid languages.

Map 1. The North Tivoid languages



Map 2 shows the South Tivoid languages, excluding Tiv itself, which covers a large area of southeastern Nigeria.

Map 2. The South Tivoid languages, excluding Tiv



## 2. Data sources

The great majority of lists derive from ALCAM, the Linguistic Atlas of Cameroun, hence the list of 120 words which was used for that survey. ms. wordlists collected by Rob Koops in the 1970s. Materials on Tiv far exceed those for all other languages, including Malherbe (1934), Abraham (1933, 1940a,b), Terpstra (1968) and Arnott (1958, 1964, 1967, 1969). Gundu & Jockers (1985) provide a general bibliography of publications on and in the Tiv language itself. Initial studies of Esimbi are Stallcup (1980a,b,c) and the phonology in Fointein (1986). In a more modern style, there is a ms. dictionary by Coleman (n.d.) and a phonology (Koenig, Coleman & Coleman 2007). Cassetta & Cassetta (1994a,b,c) have contributed some

initial studies of Ugare. Apart from Tiv, most of this other material is unpublished. A survey conducted by Rueck et al. (2011) covered the Otank, Evand and Ceve lects in Nigeria. The datasheets have been edited as follows;

**Tiv.** Has been corrected from Abrahams (1940b).

**Afi, Kamino, Ab̃ and Njwande.** Typed from Rob Koops' original datasheets. Only the Afi list is filled for the complete Ibadan 400 list. None of these lists match the ALCAM list, so there are a number of significant gaps. Presumed infinitive marker *na-* deleted from verbs.

**Otank, Evand.** Retranscribed from the sound files accompanying Rueck (2011)

**Olit.** Corrected from Cox (2013)

**Iyive.** Corrected from Foster (2012)

**Ipulo.** Corrected where possible from Tuinstra (2015a)

**Ugaré.** The original Ugare material appeared under 'Mesaka', and has been corrected from Cassetta & Cassetta (1994a,b,c). Uncorrected forms are not tone-marked. However, spurious /a/ has been corrected to /a/ and the infinitive prefixes *uv-* on verbs have been deleted. Where the root is not the same, the original is maintained with (S) and the Cassetta version is marked (C).

**Esimbi.** Corrected from Coleman (n.d.)

### 3. Phonology and morphology

#### 3.1 Consonants

For Tivoid languages, phonologies of any sort exist for only five languages, Tiv, Iyive, Iceve, Esimbi and Ugaré. Even the material on Tiv is not really up to modern standards. Table 2 shows a composite consonant system which holds for most described languages.

**Table 2. Typical Tivoid consonant system**

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alveolar	Alveopalatal	Palatal	Velar	Labial-velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d			k g	kp gb	
Fricative		f v	s z	[ʃ] [ʒ]		ɣ		h
Affricate					[tʃ] dʒ			
Nasal	m		n		ɲ	ŋ		
Trill			[r]					
Approximant					y		w	
Lateral			l					

Esimbi adds the bilabial approximant /β/ but is otherwise similar.

#### 3.2 Vowels

Ugaré has an eight-vowel system common for the region (Cassetta & Cassetta 1994a);

	Front	Central	Back
Close	i	ɨ	u
Close-Mid	e		o
Open-Mid	ɛ		ɔ
Open		a	

Vowel length can be contrastive, although it is likely to arise from sequences of two similar vowels.

#### 3.3 Tones

Tiv and Ugaré are two-tone languages, with low tones causing automatic downstep. Ugaré also has upstep, which may well be present in related languages. Esimbi has three tones as well as rising and falling glide tones.

### 4. Noun morphology

Tiv itself has been the subject of some discussion because it is one of the small number of Niger-Congo

languages to have both prefixes and suffixes. Similar morphology may occur in other Grassfields languages such as Bum and Bamunka, although these have yet to be fully described (Hamm p.c.). Otherwise these occur among Gur and proximate languages in the Togo-Ghana borderland (Avatime, Bassari and Bogong are examples). Table 3 illustrates number-marking in Iyive (adapted from Foster 2012).

**Table 3. Iyive number marking**

Gloss	sg.	pl.
bamboo	kóválók	ávál
batteries	áká	kíkák
bell	kímómúnùkú	vímómúv
big lizard	ìtànó	átân
child	wán	vánáv
cloth	ikwónḁ	ùkù
dust (in the air)	ìhùḁdú	éhùḁḁ
face	kíjík	víjív
fishing net	étúfú	vèvèl
horn	kókwólókó	úkwoḁl
hair (of head)	ítjé	ítjé

Table 4 shows a summary of the Iyive concord system. Iyive has two unpaired classes, ù- and mV-, and kV/vV pairing which is the only one to show double affixing. The ù- prefix is stable across a set of adjectives with different stem vowels, whereas the mV- prefix shows concord with the stem vowel. ì-/é- has two distinct concord sets which suggests there has been class merger.

**Table 4. The Iyive concord system**

Prefix	Gloss	Sg.	Pl.	Plenty	Big	Small
ù	clothes	ùkù	—	ùsò	ùtavə̀n	ùtsek
à/í	squirrel	àtsàl	ítsàl	àsò	yàtavə̀n	yètsék
ì/é I	fishing net	itúfú	étúfú	àsò	yàtavə̀n	yètsék
ì/é II	wine	ikém	ékêm	isó	itàvə̀n	ítsék
kV/vV	thing	kíkák		kəsó	kátavə̀nəkè	kètsék
	things		víkáv	vəsó	vátavə̀nə̀və̀	vètsék
mV	water	mə̀ngólùmú	—	məsó	mátavə̀nə̀və̀	mètsék

Source: Foster (2012)

No nouns with an mV- prefix show singular plural alternation. Some are characteristic mass nouns such as ‘water, smoke, oil’ but others although in principle could mark number. Table 5 shows a sample of Iyive mV- prefix nouns. In most cases the V is predictable from the stem vowel or the prosody (i.e. the palatal ɲ- in stem-initial position determines the -i- vowel). However, some seem to be quite irregular such as mùtá ‘swelling’.

**Table 5. Iyive mV- prefix nouns**

Iyive	Gloss
màkô	hornbill
màwó	silk-cotton tree, kapok tree
mônd	cocoyam, taro
mòndzò	maggot (in rotten meat)
máŋgólùmú	water
másòlèmú	alcohol (general)
métsém	salt
mètsútsú	calf of leg
míjám	dream (n)
míjánzèmé	urine
míjím	smoke
múkútém	oil
mùsònd	hernia (umbilical)
mùtá	swelling
mútwém	ashes

Source: Foster (2012)

Table 6 illustrates nominal prefix pairings in Ipulo. These are characterised by complex allomorphy in the V- prefixes and hence an extremely rich concord system.

**Table 6. Ipulo class pairings**

Singular	Plural
1 Ø, à-, ò-, ù-	2 vò- vâ- vè-
2a	vá-, vó-
3 ó-, ú-	6 á-, é-, ó-
7 í-, é-	6a1 mǎ- mà- mǎ-
9 ì-, è-	6a2 mù-
12 í-	8 ví-, vé-
14 (w)ú-, wó-	10 í-, é-

Source: Tuinstra (2015a)

The Batu languages have extremely complex number-marking, and typologically extremely rare, double affixing in singulars. The first set of singular/plural pairs show singulars with nV- and -Vn in combination with a- plural marking. Table 7 shows some examples of number-marking in Kamino nouns.

**Table 7. Kamino number marking**

Gloss	sg.	pl.
tongue	nímīn	ánémē
root	ngáŋìn	àkájí
leg	ŋgáñ	āká
maize	ńzúgwàn	āfúg
arm	bóṣ	ábóā
navel	dúmbà	dum
horn	kwèsè	kwésò
bird	ènúnú	énúnùm

Source: Adapted from Koops (ms.)

5. Datasheets

Table 8. Comparative Tivoid wordlist

No.	French	English	Afi	Kamino	Abš	Njwande	Esimbi	Ugare [=Mesaka]	Tiv	Iyive	English	Oliti	Baceve	Otanga	Evand	Caka [=Batanga]	Caka [=Asaka]	Ipulo	Olulu
1.	bouche	mouth	tsōgū/ ásōgū	só/ásó			ɔdzu /a-	ú'zò pl. í'zò	dza	údzwá	mouth	únò /inò	ó-nò-	odzo	i-nū/ú-	uʒo	adsu	uwu	uwu
2.	œil	eye	nyíjīn/ anyíjīn	nyíjī/áníjī	enyijī	eji/afī	kí-jī /ó	í-jī /é-	ijē	ijē /éjē	eye	isi- /ási	isi- /ási	ise	ijī /ésū	iyili	ieli	ix	ix
3.	tête	head	n <sup>w</sup> énūn/áf <sup>w</sup> én	vúnū/áfū	ófunē	ofū/áfū	kè-rəŋgə /mè-	í'kólè á'kúlù pl.	itiox	kitók/vítov	head	kí-tóu /ví-	ituwu	eto	kétók/v <sup>w</sup> étov	ikoto	ewutu	ekwat	ekwot
4.	cheveux	hair (on head)	fwénō/-	fūnū/-		kəfu	eyi pl. èyi	ufwə	ice	ijē /ijē	hair (on head)	ò-nū /í-	ijū	icye	kújék /ijē	bigonu	eyu	ikit	ikit
5.	dent	tooth	nyíjī/ánýī	nyíjī/ánýī	éjī/ ájī	eŋgī/angī	ki-zini /o-	íyīn pl. é'yīn	ijnix	kíjék /éjé	tooth	éjé /ájé	enix	iney	kúnū /éjū	ige	igə	ij	ij
6.	langue	tongue	númān/ ánúmā	nīmīn/ánémē	enyé	enim	o-nómə /o-	ú'nēm pl. í'nēm	nombor	ú-númbóló /i-	tongue	oləfələ	oləfəl	oləmbəy	īvīvī/mūvīvīm	ibe	ibə	ivev	ivev
7.	nez	nose	nd <sup>v</sup> zénūn/ āg <sup>v</sup> él	jīndī/jīndīō		enu	o-húndu /o-	eyu:	ihinga	ingá /āngá	nose	efəŋga	etəŋga	ihinga	énwē / mónīm	oyunu	ounu	eyun	eyun
8.	oreille	ear	ndún/ándó	fīnyīn/āfyānyī		otu/atu	ó-to /ó-	ú'tò pl. é'tú	utox	kótók /átó	ear	otuj	otujə	oto	k <sup>w</sup> ótóngók /átō	otu	atə	otu	otu
9.	cou	neck	mīnē/mīnāū	mīnā/ámīnā mīnā		kiməŋgo	o-mī /e-	úmè pl. ímè	mən	ú-món /í-	neck	omenə	əmenə		ómēn /émn	əme	əme	əmi	əmi
10.	sein	breast	mbánən/ábān	mbánən/ābən		eban	ke-yĩmbi /e-	í↑-vyéndè pl. é↑-vĩndi	tumbax	í-túmbá /á-	breast	otimba	otembay		kótāmbāk /ātūmb <sup>w</sup> ā	ibanda	ebindi	evant	evant
11.	bras main	arm hand	bós/ábóā	bós/ábóā	abú	obō/abō	ó-bu /á-	ukpendi	ukwinde	kúvók /évó	arm hand	uvuwu	uwu	ovok	íkivī / ékiv	ubə	abo	əwa	owə
12.	griffe, ongle	claw nail	nyásī nyásō- kwārā fē	nyásī nyásōkwārā fē		cikwəkwa	ke-zi /e-	uku:lu	ikuvwe	kí-kúl /é-	claw nail	ənuməvu	ekwaləyē	ikuluy	kyāmbók v <sup>w</sup> āmbòv	ijnafī	ijnafə	iwe	iuwe
13.	jambe pied	leg, foot	mbánən/ābən	ébā	eba/aba	ūgurū/ āgurū	o-gúru /o-	úvālè ávīlī pl.	uŋghar	ú-ŋgásól /á-	leg, foot	okasə	əkasəy	ovilo	éwālē /	əgulu	əgulə	əwəl	owul
14.	fesse	buttock	nú	ŋgān/āká			ə-tə wu esungu a-tə yə ~	ítýlè átúlú pl.	atə	ítý / ékpénityò	buttock	atə	eto	icyo	atawəla	atutu	atət	ətanut	etanot
15.	ventre	belly	dúmbāī dúmbāu	túmún/bútún	ebū/abū	ēbirī/abirī	ke-cijī /me-	únā (v)āni pl.	iyav	iyávó /vīyávó	belly	otsəl	ifli	oyav	úthú / íthú vógyáv/mágyám	buya	bəyi	wəyav	woyav
16.	nombril	navel	šembū	dúmbā/dum			ki-túngu /mi-	tsembe	combo	í-ŋjóm /á-	navel	etsemp	atsimp	icəmp	ētsōmo /átsōmp	itungə	itungu	itung	itunjk
17.	intestins /boyaux	intestines / insides					hahindeyɔʒ [S]	ə:gliuna	iyam	ú-dzálvyò /í-	intestines / insides	etsolə	eca:lo	ovor	étsól	əsulə	əsulə	əswal	aswəl
18.	sang	blood	ńvóm	éfāma <sup>u</sup> /nvām		kinim	mē-yungu	vecin	awambe	í-wóm /á-	blood	əgəmbə	əyambo	avəmp	kómbók /āmbò	əyungə	əyungu	əyinj	iyinj
19.	urine	urine	ŋgām	ŋgām			mējīndi	vānjīhi	ijnandem	mínyānzəmō	urine	mēpasimə	mēpasim	mayamzim	māpānzim	ezīndi	ezīnde	mēsīnze	mēsīnze
20.	os	bone	fūfu	fūgū			kí-kú /mí-	úkúhú /í-	ukuhe	kíkék (also úkwé) /ékéwé	bone	ekifē	ikifē	ikuhey	kíkúk/óíkúp	iku	iku	iku	iku
21.	peau	skin	sùgá		kégúgí	kīgū	è-gùghù pl. é- gughù	ikway	ikof	kíkók /víkóv	skin	okəyulo	ekəy	okəkəyolo	kókók/vékóv	ikə	eku	əkowu	okow
22.	aile	wing	wóúáwó	fīi/afīi	abōna	ubatsi/abatsi	ə-pəyərə /a-	ú-kpíkpa /á-	əgbil	ebets	wing	ovalə	ivaleye	egbey	kūkérúk / ékét	owalə	awal	əkabili	opabali
23.	plume	feather	fyīrō	fīi/fīnūnū	fyīrō / fyironūnūm	afura	ko-gunu /to-	uŋgulu	uŋgur	ú-ŋgúl /í-	feather	əjūngulu	əjūngəl	etəŋ	íngúlī/āngúlī	igunu	egwini	inwən	iwunah
24.	corne	horn	kwēsè/kwēsō	kwēsè/kwēsò	kwēsè/kwēsō		ékúru pl. ekúru	í-tsóhó /é-	kolox	kokoləko	horn	okulu	okwəlo	okor	ókòl /ékòl	akəlu	akəlo	əkul	okul
25.	queue	tail	vúndá/ uvunda	vúndā búvúndā	vúndá/uvunda		ítsúrú pl. itsúrú (bird) ké-tsóló / mé- (mammal)	əvīndi	tša	utsa	tail	oca	oca	oca	ōjā /ējā	ukye	uki	əki	oki
26.	être humain	human being	nnə/ úfyəu	niè/fiú		nti	ə-ŋgúlú / mō-	nèlè (v)énèlè pl.	or	nəot	human being	onul	ənəle	or	ónót /énót	ətu	atu	ət	ət
27.	homme (mâle)	man (male)	nò/fyó	nyīsōŋ		onumbusu	mòsəŋgúlú pl. mòsəŋgulu	utalienel	naməsor	ənəmbəso	man (male)	ənəmbəso	ənəmbəso	nəmbas	ónómōs/ vānómōsò	oyumato	əyumətu	əmbut	əmbut
28.	femme	woman	nyinà/ nyinò	nyinà		okasə/bikasə	mòŋgúlú pl. mòŋgulu	nálè pl. (v)á/nélè	kwase	okas	woman	okye	okəy	əkwas	ókás /vákásəv	bətu	bwətu	at	at
29.	mari	husband	sùŋwá				zumú / mə-	unəm	nəm	onəm	husband	ənum	ənum	onəm	onəm	əyumə	əyumə	yum	yium
30.	enfant	child	ŋwákāwā / mbómkwā	ŋwánókāwā	ŋwā/m <sup>w</sup> uní	ŋwālē/bōndōbare M. wanolē	wúnú pl. wunu	vān pl. bōn	wan	wan	child	wanə	wani	owan	wánə /vánó	ənu	anu	ən	on



The Tivoid languages. Roger Blench Circulation Draft

No.	French	English	Afi	Kamino	Ab̄	Njwande	Esimbi	Ugare [=Mesaka]	Tiv	Iyive	English	Oliti	Baceve	Otanga	Evand	Caka [=Batanga]	Caka [=Asaka]	Ipulo	Olulu
31.	nom	name	nyān/ ānyā	nān/ānyā	ētēme	ēdiki/ ādiki	ke-li /ε-	iyólé éyúlú	iti	ice	name	ite	ite	itye	átá	iti	iyite	wukum	wukum
32.	ciel	sky					əbhəŋgə	idza:l	kwad□aənde	ʃakiyaŋk	sky	ago	ago	asan	ē-sōŋgō kátāŋ /á-	ayo	ayuo	eyup	eyup
33.	nuit	night	figitun		nemēná	M ɛfu RK ési ihar̄	orə pl. orə	iyim	tux	iyimə	night	ife	ife	imye	ewe	iyimi	iyime	iyim	iyim
34.	lune	moon	áwé/wil	gwé		esange	atəŋgə	útāŋ pl. ityāŋ	uwe	uwel	moon	ovulu	əwəlu	uor	ó-tāŋk /é-	uwele	owulu	otāŋk	otāŋk
35.	soleil	sun	wélgwān	gwéwú lɔn		utsire	eyú pl. eyu	iyú	iyange	iyāŋk	sun	eyangɔ	iya:ŋge	iyāŋ	ówò	ayu	əŋgwayuo	eyup	eyup
36.	vent	wind	hōadi/ hōfau	hóró/hóróú			embi	iyàlé (v)áyili	ahumbe	kabebəl	wind	əfɔfɔ	ufɔf	ahunmgbe	ú-wē /í-wē	kuwelewe	kəwəlewo	ukpabili	upabali
37.	nuage	cloud					kembətə	ifüfúú	iyibix	ikuk	cloud	akuwu	ifley	akuh	kélík /vyélik	itigiti	itiket	ikilikito	ikilikito
38.	rosée	dew					mobar [S]	vuwulu	awule	ewuli	dew	imi	imi	ovule	úwúlē/ēwúlē	ubolu	obulu		iyənine
39.	pluie	rain	kwān	kwān		ogwa	obiri	uwəl	uwula	uwula	rain	ovəla	ovla	ovəle	éwúlá	abulu	obolu	ewul	ewul
40.	terre	ground	gyóú-	záu			edzughú	zòhò izòhò	ija	ija	ground	eyaju	eyaje	ija	ētòl[ɔnē	izo	edzo	eya	eyah
41.	sable	sand	gwá	jámbyū			mənətsətsə	qɔjɔ	walawa	wəlawə	sand	ɛfandaɔɔ	ɔfandaɔɔ	owolawa	ō-gwālāgwā /ē	beleli	belele	walawa	walawa
42.	chemin	road	ʃiná/ʃinā	ʃiná/ʃinā			o-numu /ə-	dze	gbinda	kumun	road	uwa:	əwa	ihāŋk	ōgwāwā /ágwā	izi	idzi	isi	mɔɔɔɔ
43.	eau	water	m̄bigóm̄/ m̄górɔ	m̄bigóm̄		məŋgomo	murú / a-	mólé imólé	ngereɛm	mungoləmo	water	edzəl	edzale	edzəl	māmūlūm	omələ	omolo	məl	məl
44.	cours d'eau	stream (river)	sōr̄/sōr̄	m̄mārā búmāra /		gam	ə-tu /a-	usa:lə	uwar	wanowaŋ	stream (river)	dzəlɔbɔna	ezəlɔbɔna	idzəlɔsini	ēzól/ézól yasəŋe [?]	izalo	edzolo	zxwəŋk	ohəŋk
45.	maison	house	ki/-	ki/ākī		otuta/atuta	ki-túmbú /mí-	iyoy ú-'kpilē /í-	iyox	kute	house	etimbe	itimbe	itimbye	íd'ū /íd'ú	itumbu	otumbo	ukwəl	ukwəl
46.	feu	fire	kúsū/-				uwúsu, owúsu	uguhu	usu	uwuz	fire	gusu	əkwəso	odzu	údzū /ídzū ozwela [?]	ogulə	ogulo	uwus	uwus
47.	bois à brûler	firewood	hún/áhún	hún/áhún	akwə	ökün	u-vini /o-	iwun	ikəŋ	ukəŋ	firewood	ekwun	əkwənoh	ekəŋ	yák'úné /ékón	uwəni	owəni	uweŋ	uwen
48.	fumée	smoke	ngim̄/-	ńzím/-			u-yi /o-	unuwu	ɔim	mijim	smoke	mɛɔimi	miyimi	mijim	mūɔim	uyiki	oyika	uyik	uyik
49.	cendre	ash	mūtāmwū mūθim	ndāgām	matəm	métsám̄	məotú	vatu (S) é'lihi (C)	ituem	mutwim	ash	mutumu	mətəmo	mutəm	mətumelam	ətumə	atumu	mətum	atum
50.	couteau	knife	bāfū/m̄bām̄	ébáú/ńbām̄		umfwan	ó-yi /é-	ufan	ihə	ihə	knife	esamə	esamo	isəm	yasamekili	uwe	owul	əpul	opul
51.	corde	rope	kwédi/kwéréū	kwé/ákwe			o-gbəndə /ə-	ukal	ukər	okal	rope	okwulo	əyi	okwər	oyi	əkala	əkələ	əkə:l	okal
52.	lance, sagaie	spear	ngógəŋ / ákóŋ	ngógəŋ/ákóŋ		egonggo	ótə pl. wətə	iyən	iwəŋge	iwəŋ	spear	egəŋgo	egəŋgo	evəŋk	yavya	iyəŋgə	eyungo	eywəŋk	ayəŋk
53.	guerre (combat)	war (fight)	sōh	gōm̄		egūm	ki-biri /mí-	ulum (S) ivili (C)	ityav	vitav	war (fight)	vetav	etave	etav	vetav	əzəŋu	anzunɔə	vetav	vetav
54.	viande	meat	nyām/nyām̄	nyām	ɛɔam	éɔām̄	ényimi enyémí	ɔam	iyam	ɔnam	meat	ɛɔam	ɛɔam	ɔnam	ɛɔam	ɔnamə	ɛɔim	ɛɔam	ɛɔam
55.	chien	dog	bíyā/bíyá	bíā/bíá		ebwa	ébú pl. ébu	bíbi pl. í'bí	iwa	iwa	dog	ewa	ewa	iwa	egwa	ibə	ebo	ewə	ewə
56.	éléphant	elephant	ngómbó úngómbó	ngómbó būngómbó	etimakō	e3oku/ē3oku	ké-dzə /mé-	únélé (v)inélé	nor	nol	elephant	esə	esə	uney	ənel	kineme	ənələ	ənil	ənel
57.	chèvre	goat	byēn/byén	byēn/byén		ebi	ibi	búbú pl. í'bú	ivo	iwə	goat	evu	evu	ivo	egwe	ibi:	ibi	ivi	ivi
58.	oiseau	bird	núnúfú/núnún	ēnúnú/énúnúm		kəɔun	enunú enúnú	núnú (v)inúnú	ɔnəŋ	inəŋ	bird	enunu	enəŋ	inəŋ	yənune	inwine	ɔinə	inwəŋ	inwəŋ
59.	tortue	tortoise	fəŋgəŋ m̄ŋgón	fəkóŋó məkóŋó	māŋkəŋəɔə/ un̄kəŋara	ngakuru	kə-kubəbə /tə-	ukululu	kulux	kulun	tortoise	ekulufya	məbun	okuluy	məbun	kukubaba	mogwe	ikpakə	igbəkə
60.	serpent	snake	gyóh̄/gyóh̄	zūó/júó	eyó	eyó/éyó	é-zu /é-	yó pl. í'yó	iyó	iyə	snake	ey□ŋ	eyəŋ	iyə	egyə	iyə	eiyu	eywə	eywə
61.	poisson	fish	sùú/súú	ʃùú/ʃúú			í-su /i-	úca pl. icá	ifu	ifu	fish	etsəmbə	etsimbe	isu	isu	ilu	eulu	ihu	ihu
62.	pou	louse	sālōū	m̄bún/ábú sō/sóo			ke-kə /me-	gühú igühú	iuwusu	iwut	louse	eguusu	egusuwa	isuwa	izu	igulu	igulə	iwis	iwis
63.	œuf	egg	ngin̄/ákyí	ńjisaan/ácsisà	edeídédó	ēzɔ/azɔ	ke-gi, é-gi /ε-	iwu	iji	iji	egg	edziŋ	edzine	ige	ijiki	igi	igi	ey	ey

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No.	French	English	Afi	Kamino	Ab̄	Njwande	Esimbi	Ugare [=Mesaka]	Tiv	Iyive	English	Oliti	Baceve	Otanga	Evand	Caka [=Batanga]	Caka [=Asaka]	Ipulo	Olulu
64.	arbre	tree	ndiēndī / ndiēmbū	nindé/néndéú	akwæŋí	kiti/bití	kétó, mɔ-tə /mɛ-	úté pl. (v)étí	ukɔŋ	ɔkɔn	tree	ketuy	etiye	itey	ketek	bute	bote	eti	eti
65.	écorce	bark	kómbwē, kúgē <sup>2</sup>	kúgù/kúmi			è-ghùghù /é-	ugu	ivuwux	kiwuku	bark	aguwu	agu	akoy	kiklut	bikɔ	bigo	ɔkɔwu	okow
66.	feuille	leaf	fyò/fyóò	fi/fī			ke-yónə /a-	iyán	ukwa	uka	leaf	ekayɔ	ɔkayg	oka	okax	yiana	ayine		oyaβ
67.	racine	root	nságān/ákáj	ngáŋŋn/ákájí			ɔ-ghəŋgə /a-	ugay	mise	kimifeki	root	esalə	ɔsal	oday	ɔnise	ogayga	agayge	ɔkayk	okayk
68.	sel	salt	həŋgəm/-	həŋām		eta	manu	ánú	bar	metsim	salt	məkayəmə	məkayəme	obay	mɔcam	ɔmɛ	ɔmə	mɔnɔ	mɔnɔ
69.	graisse	fat	ŋgógá	ŋgógá	memē	meme	əŋə (S) miri pl. emiri (oil)	afum	ahəm	ahuma	fat	afəm	afəm	ahəm	amɔ	abəle	abələ	amu	am
70.	faim (général)	hunger (general)	só	sō			édzú pl. edzú	dzaŋ	ijin	ijunu	hunger (general)	ejunu	ejɔnu	idzɔn	izin	izəŋgə	edzujə	eswəŋ	esəŋ
71.	fer (le métal)	iron (le metal)	ékīrā / wúkīrā	ékirā/bù		bilenge	ki-tu /mí-	uywəl	iyɔx	kiyɔk	iron (le metal)	ɛɲo:	ɛɲɔyɔ	ɪɲɔyɔ	kɪɲɔk	oyenge	itenə	ɔyɪŋk	oyɪŋk
72.	un	one	nífūn	tífúnú	imó	fumo	onə	utwam	məm	mómo	one	amo:	mamo	məm	kamək	ɔne	kina	emo	imo
73.	deux	two	évò	bivàū	bifa	M. harə RK bīhyārī	mərakpə(ŋgərə)	ulukpa	ha:	hial	two	afalə	fale	hay	vialə	bali	ba:li	vial	viyal
74.	trois	three	ètō	bitāū	bitá	atate	makələ	uta:ren	tar	tats	three	atal	tale	taɣ	vetet	bitati	betat	vetat	vetat
75.	quatre	four	ènàì	binəì	bine	M. aŋə RK bīje	monyí	bi:ne	ɲin	ɲin	four	mɪɲin	ɲin	ɲin	vini	binei	bine	veni:	veni:
76.	cinq	five	èkyùn/efjùn	bicún	bitó	M. acon RK bīcôn	metanə	uta:ne	ta:n	taŋan	five	otaŋən	taŋin	tan	vetayən	bitan	betan	vetan	vetan
77.	six	six	ètōnōmōn	bitánámùn		busoru	malalə	utata:ren	taratar	kələkətət	six	otaluta	tindal	tindyal	vetindet	bandwətu	bendəto	vetatum	vilatum
78.	sept	seven	ècūn[a]èvò	bicúnbivàū		acon da hale	matanə mərakpə	uta:neulukpa	otaŋkaruhar	katəmomo	seven	otaŋənɔfalə	taŋənɪfalə	tsaləmən	vetindetəmo	binenitati	bendətonəkina	vetatumnamo	vilatumnamo
79.	huit	eight	ècūn[a]jūtō	bicúnbitāū		acon da tate	minyinyi	bi:nebi:ne	aniani	kinikin□□	eight	onini	ayeni	kiŋkini	vinerene	bini	bɪɲɪɲi	veneni	vinani
80.	neuf	nine	ècūn āōnàì	bicún binəì		acon da je	matanə monyi	uta:nebi:ne	otaŋkarɲin	tanəɲin	nine	otaŋənəɲɪɲin	taŋəɲiyin	tanəɲin	vinerenemo	bitanbine	betanəbine	veneninamo	vinaninamo
81.	dix	ten	gbwē	hūmnífūnū ~ gbwé		oyuate	bughù moughù	buyə	puwe	pwe	ten	likwəŋ	ikwəŋ	pue	ɔfwot	bok	mbək	epot	epot
82.	venir	come	bā	bā			-bā	u:va (S) sāhā (C)	ava	ova	come	məva	ava	ova	va	abe	abə	ɔva	ova
83.	envoyer	send (s.o.)	ndùmá	nùmā		(e)ŋma	-tumù	tègh	atindi	atənt	send (s.o.)	mətima	atəma	atint	atumwa	ɔtumo	atumo	ɔtum	otum
84.	marcher	walk					-dzərə	sé	azindi	edzint	walk	mojindi	azende	adzint	zint	alinge	elingə	usot	uwisot
85.	tomber	fall	kwà	gwa			-gbə	uvge	agba	aba	fall	mɔgba	agba	agba	gba	ɔdungo	adungo	ɔpɔnɔ	opɔnɔ
86.	partir	leave					-tə	migh	ayim	eyu	leave	mumwa	amaya	ayo	gwin	eməke	as	uwe	uwe
87.	voler (oiseau)	fly	tindī	tēnē			-vi	pām	apulu	epulul	fly	mevinge	avinge	imu	pepilin	ɔpulɔ	apəlo	umomili	umabali
88.	verser	pour	sùgū [ŋgyá]	kūnyí			-dzumù	wulu	aha	akusa	pour	mifiyil	awula	aha	sɔwa	amake	ayyoku	uyit	eye
89.	frapper	beat	bàmgyá	bàmnyí			-gbirì	tamba (S) gbilí (C)	ahən	ahin	beat	məfənɔ	evaləye	adzahin	gwəh	ewene	ɔwuno	ɔpin	opin
90.	mordre	bite	gwāgē	nùmā	vimabī	ēnimakī	-numù	nəm	ayima	ayoma	bite	mənema	anima	ayima	numa	ɔnumu	anumo	ɔnum	onum
91.	laver (transitif)	wash (tr.)	gúná	gúnā			-sù	s□ɔ	as:	awə	wash (tr.)	mɔwo	adzawɔ	aklio	wɔ	ɔlu	aulo	ɔhu:	ohu
92.	fendre	split (wood)					-li	pay (S) álé (C)	apav	apav	split (wood)	məpav	akpav	apav	mbu	ayuiti	ayite	ukeŋ	okeŋ
93.	donner	give	hánà	hágō	ha	ha	-nə, -nə	fā	ana	ana	give	mənan	ana	ana	nɔ	anə	anɛ	ɔna	ɔna
94.	voler (dérober)	steal	grú	jú			-dzə	uye	ayi	eye	steal	miyi	eyi	ayi	gi	ɔzi	edzi	ufi	ufi
95.	presser	squeeze			kwaná	kám, mən	-kəmə	uvkiyil	akil	ekilik	squeeze	mɛɲil	ayil	ayil	ɲit	okikeli	enit	ukiliki	ukiliki
96.	cultiver	cultivate					-pi	káhá	akaha	aka	cultivate	mɛwum	okafe	akaha	ka	ewɛ	akə	wəka	okah
97.	enterrer (t.)	bury (t.)	ñŋwè	ŋwè			-kiri	gumbu	ai:	eyi	bury (t.)	meiyi	oyi	ayi	yi	oyi	eyi	uswəl	uswəl
98.	brûler (t.)	burn (t.)	tŋfyā	ŋwān			-kpiri	ciyil	uhia	asəŋ	burn (t.)	məsəŋ	osəŋ	asəŋk	tumbwən	ɔyuku	ayok	ɔyək	ɔyək

<sup>2</sup> after peeling

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No.	French	English	Afi	Kamino	Ab̄	Njwande	Esimbi	Ugare [=Mesaka]	Tiv	Iyive	English	Oliti	Baceve	Otanga	Evand	Caka [=Batanga]	Caka [=Asaka]	Ipulo	Olulu
99.	manger	eat	[gó]gyā	yá	yáā	yá	-ri	ní	aya	aya	eat	meya	aya	aya	gya	eli	eli	uyi	uyi
100.	boire	drink	[go]ḡwā	ḡwā			-mú	nú	ama	ama	drink	mḡwa	aḡwa	ama	mu	emwε	omo	umu	umu
101.	vomir	vomit	hai	ḡwātú			-yì	ane	asuwa	aswa	vomit	mḡswa	aswa	aswa	swa	emwε	emwε	ḡwāḡ	ḡwāḡ
102.	sucer	suck					-yḡmbà [suck breast]	amgbe	ao	ama	suck	mḡnamp	aḡamba	ama	mu	emwε	ayimbe	oyamb	oyamp
103.	cracher (salive)	spit (saliva)	gyú tḡngánà	júnà jū	cu ajwe	yulu azungu	-tú	tu	ata	ata	spit (saliva)	muto	ato	ata	tu	etwi	eti	utwa	utwā
104.	souffler (sur)	blow (on)	tḡḡ	fḡnà			-suru [on fire] -fufu [wind]	dú	ao	ewek	blow (on)	meyin	ayḡḡ	aiḡ	ḡḡ	emḡḡ	emḡḡ	wuweki	uweki
105.	enfler	swell	dífūḡ	yḡfūḡḡ			-mùrù	mol	amḡl	amota	swell	mḡmala		amola		omḡtu	amḡt		omut
106.	engendrer	give birth	bwḡn	bwà			-bì	gbo	ama:	amat	give birth	mḡmal	amal	amala	mat	obi	ebi	wuvi	uḡbi
107.	mourir	die	wé wḡnā	kwé	kwe(mā)	ekī (? =death)	-kpḡ	kpí	agbe	ekpo	die	mukwḡ	akwo	akpo	gbo	ekpe	ebḡ	wukwḡ	ukwḡ
108.	tuer	kill	húnā	gúnā			-zú	éwú	awa	awa	kill	meyiva	ayiva	awa	dwa	emḡḡ	emḡḡ	wḡyi	oyi
109.	pousser	push	yúnà	yúnà			-tḡḡḡ	tḡḡ	aḡmḡbeha	ambḡka	push	mutus	atuf	ambayha	bue	awεke	emḡt	wutindiki	utindigi
110.	tirer	pull	túmá	túmá			-numbù	fíyi	awulu	etimbe	pull	metimbe	atimbe	atḡmḡbe	gyam	omḡ	omḡ	wḡlimb	otul
111.	chanter	sing	fa ánúmbà	fā mánúmā			-yimbì	ji	awa	atḡm	sing	motumo	atḡmo	atum	tuman	emḡḡḡ	atumu	wḡlit	olit
112.	jouer (un jeu)	play (game)	sundzūn	bíninyonān			-vì engù	mḡḡḡḡ	anḡmbe	anumbe	play (game)	mḡlevili	olele	iyo	lige	emḡḡi	emḡḡ	wḡvḡḡḡ	ovḡḡk
113.	avoir peur	be afraid	kágūfḡ	kágūḡāu			-hindi	cí	acia	acya	be afraid	meca	atefe	aca	gyok	ikesε	ikesḡ	wuseti	useti
114.	vouloir	want	ndḡḡ	míndḡ		ndḡ	-rḡ	solḡ	aso	eket	want	meli	miliye	aso	tḡl	oleke	esindḡ	wuwund	uwunt
115.	dire	say	ké	ké			-ḡḡi	tsélè	ayaso	aka	say	mḡkano	mekape	alam	levlin	omḡgulu	angḡḡ	wasuku	omḡmp
116.	voir	see	mḡ/hḡḡā	hém			-dì	ndá	anige	asḡl	see	mḡtye	atiyi	ain	ca	ede	edḡ	wusunḡk	usunḡk
117.	montrer	show	nídāḡḡnā	cānā			-cìfi	tḡḡh	atese	etes	show	mite	atiḡjisi	ates	kayan	emḡḡḡḡ	emḡḡḡḡḡ	wḡḡḡḡḡḡ	utḡḡḡḡḡḡ
118.	entendre	hear	ḡḡwā	ḡḡwā			-yughùrù	álú	aḡḡḡwā	awungwa	hear	mḡḡḡwā	ḡḡwā	atambiy	mḡmḡba	oyutu	ayutu	wḡyutu	oyutu
119.	savoir, connaître	know		hémḡḡḡḡ			-kḡrḡ	célé	afa	akav	know	micil	micil	afo	kan	ekḡli	ekḡḡ	wukḡl	ukḡl
120.	compter	count	fā	fwa			-tḡḡḡ	alu	ao	at	count	mḡvḡl	avḡl	aoy	tḡ	atiḡḡe	atinḡ	wḡpan	opan

## 6. The internal classification of Tivoid

Tivoid is a group whose existence has always depended more on assertion than demonstration. There is no academic paper which demonstrates its coherence and part of the reason for this exercise is to establish criteria for membership. The data table shows that there are a number of lexemes that are found across the entire range of Tivoid. These are; neck (9.), meat (54.), dog (55.), goat (57.), bird (58.), snake (60.), fish (61.), hunger (70.) and bite (90.). All of these are found outside Tivoid so this is not entirely conclusive, but can certainly be taken as indicative. Perhaps more relevant is the fact that an internal classification of Tivoid can be established from the dataset. The following sections propose a set of subgroups using the numbered sets in Table 8.

### 6.1 Central Tivoid

The largest single group within Tivoid is here named Central Tivoid. It consists of;

Tiv  
Iyive  
Oliti  
Baceve  
Otanga  
Evand  
Caka [=Batanga]  
Caka [=Asaka]  
Ipulo  
Olulu  
Eman [=Amanavil]

Central Tivoid is here considered to consist of two major subgroups, A and B. Central Tivoid A is a well-defined set of six languages, Tiv, Iyive, Oliti, Baceve, Otanga and Evand. Evidence for their coherence as a group can be seen in the following items;

**Table 9. Common lexical items in Central Tivoid A**

<b>Gloss</b>	<b>Tiv</b>	<b>Iyive</b>	<b>Oliti</b>	<b>Baceve</b>	<b>Otanga</b>	<b>Evand</b>
ash	ituem	mútwém	mutumu	mətəmo	mutəm	mətumelam
fall	agba	gbà	məgba	agba	agba	gba
firewood	ikəŋ	íkwoń	ekwun	əkwoŋoh	əkən	ekəm
man (male)	nam sor	ùnómbòsò	onəmbəsə	ɔnumbəso	nəmbas	ɔnəməs
navel	tumbax	ifɔmb	otimba	ɔtembay	otimbay	atəmbwa
smoke	ɲim	míɲim	məɲimi	miyimi	mijim	məɲim
tail	tɕa	útsà	oca	ɔca	oca	ɔca
walk	azindi	dzèndí	mojindi	azende	adzint	zint
war (fight)	ityav	vítáv	vetav	ɛtavɛ	etav	vetav
woman	kwase	ùkás	okye	okeɣ	əkwas	əkas

Within Central Tivoid A, Oliti and Ceve are closely related, as suggested by the common lexical items in Table 10;

**Table 10. Items shared by Oliti and Ceve**

Gloss	Oliti	Ceve
arm	uvuwu	uwu
bark	aguwu	agu
blood	agombo	ayambo
bone	ekife	ikife
ear	otuŋ	otuŋo
egg	edziŋ	edzine
fish	etsambə	etsimbe
leaf	ekaŋo	okanŋ
leg	okasə	okasay
louse	eguusu	egusuwa
root	esalə	osal
salt	məkaŋəmə	məkaŋəme
ten	likwəŋ	ikwəŋ
wing	ovalə	ivaleyə

There is restricted evidence that Tiv, Iyive and Otanga may subgroup against Evand (Table 11);

**Table 11. Evidence for subgrouping Tiv, Iyive and Otanga**

Gloss	Tiv	Iyive	Otanga
ten		puwe	pwè
send		atindi	tind
count		ao	wòtó
ground		ija	ijá

The second group, Central Tivoid B, consists of Caka, Ipulo, Olulu and Eman. Table 12 shows isoglosses that suggest this subgrouping;

**Table 12. Isoglosses for Central Tivoid B**

Gloss	Caka I	Caka II	Ipulo	Olulu	Eman
head	ikəto	ewutu	ekwat	ekwət	ekəto
nose	ɔyunu	ɔunu	eyun	eyun	ayomə
ear	otu	atə	otu	otu	oto
navel	itunŋo	itunŋu	itunŋ	itunŋk	itunŋu
blood	ɔyunŋo	ayunŋu	ayinŋk	iyinŋk	ayonŋo
urine	ezindi	ezinde	mesinze	mesinze	ezinze
human being	otu	atu	ot	ot	oto

Within Central Tivoid B, Ipulo and Olulu clearly should be paired (Table 13);

**Table 13. Evidence for subgrouping Ipulo and Olulu**

Gloss	Ipulo	Olulu
mouth	uwu	uwu
eye	ix	ix□
hair	ikit	ikit
tooth	iŋ	iŋ
tongue	ivev	ivev
buttock	otanut	etanot
wind	ukpabili	upabali

## 6.2 North Tivoid

The weak data on the three languages on the Nigerian side makes unambiguous classification impossible. However, there are some isoglosses that appear to relate Afi, Kamino, Abɔ̃ and Bitare. Ambo, for which

there is no data, may be part of this group. Table 14 presents some common glosses for these four languages against the rest of Tivoid.

**Table 14. Evidence for North Tivoid**

Gloss	Afi	Kamino	Ab5	Bitare
give	hánà	hágō	ha	ha
head	nvwénūn/áfwén	vúnū/áfú	ófúnē	ofū/áfú
feather	fyīrò	fii/fī	fyīrò	afura
child	ɲwàkwā / mbómkwā	ɲwánákwā	ɲwā/mwuní	ɲwálē

### 6.3 Ugarə

Ugarə [=Mesaka] is better documented than the other Tivoid languages in this region, which may explain its unusual status (Cassetta & Cassetta 1994a,b,c). However, it does appear to have numerous common lexemes not shared with the rest of Tivoid, hence it is provisionally classified as a distinct branch. Table 15 shows a set of lexical items specific to Ugarə which separate it from the rest of Tivoid;

**Table 15. Lexical items specific to Ugarə**

Gloss	Ugarə
blood	vecin
intestines / insides	aagliuna
wing	ú-kpíkpa /á-
horn	í-tsóhó /é-
tail	ɔvindi
woman	nálé pl. (v)á <sup>l</sup> nélé
name	íyólé pl. éyúlú
sky	idza:l
wind	iyàlè pl. (v)àyìlì
cloud	ífufúù

### 6.4 Esimbi

Whether Esimbi is Tivoid can be seriously doubted. Table 16 shows a list of Esimbi words not shared with the rest of Tivoid. Even those which are shared (Table 17) are often NC roots which might be due to a common heritage. Esimbi is the most well-known language outside Tiv which is classified as Tivoid. If so, it is extremely marginal as it has a large number of lexical items not shared with the rest of the group. Table 16 shows lexical items where Esimbi is exceptional for Tivoid, i.e. where no cognate appears to occur among the other Tivoid languages. There are 55 out of a total list of 120 words, i.e. 46%.

**Table 16. Esimbi words not shared with other Tivoid languages**

Gloss	Esimbi
head	kè-rəŋgə /mè-
tooth	ki-zini /o-
nose	o-húndu /ɔ-
breast	ke-yímbi /ɛ-
claw nail	ke-zi /ɛ-
buttock	ɔ-tə wu ɛsuŋgu a-tə yə ~
belly	ke-cifí /me-
intestines / insides	hahindeyɔʒ [S]
skin	è-gùghù pl. é-gughù
wing	ɔ-pəʒərə /a-
tail	ítsùrù pl. ítsúrú (bird) ké-tsóló / mé- (mammal)
man (male)	mòsoŋgulù pl. mósoŋgulu
woman	mòŋgúlú pl. móŋgúlu

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husband	zumù / mǝ-
name	kɛ-li /ɛ-
sky	ɔbhəŋgə
night	orə pl. ɔrə
wind	embi
cloud	kəmbətə
dew	mɔbər [S]
sand	mənɔtsətsə
path	o-numu /ɔ-
stream (river)	ɔ-tu /a-
firewood	u-vini /o-
smoke	u-yi /o-
knife	ó-yi /ɛ-
rope	o-gbəndə /ɔ-
spear	ótə pl. ɔtə
war (fight)	kí-bírí /mí-
elephant	ké-dzə /mé-
(head) louse	ke-kə /me-
two	mərakpə(ŋgərə)
three	makələ
six	malalə
seven	matanə mərakpə
nine	matanə monyi
fly	-vi
pour	-dzumù
strike	-gbiri
split (wood)	-li
squeeze	-kəmə
cultivate	-pi
burn (t.)	-kpiri
suck	-yəmbə [suck breast]
blow (on)	-suru [on fire], -fufu [wind]
die	-kpə
kill	-zù
pull	-numbù
sing	-yimbì
play (a game)	-vî ɛŋgù
be afraid	-hindi
want	-rə
say	-ŋgî
show	-cìfì
hear	-yughùrù

Even where Esimbi shares a common root with the other Tivoid languages, this is often either a common Niger-Congo root or is also shared with other languages in the Grassfields. Table 17 shows the roots inherited from Niger-Congo.

**Table 17. Niger-Congo roots in Esimbi and other Tivoid languages**

Gloss	Esimbi	Comparative evidence
eye	kí-fí /ó	Gonja <i>kà-nífi</i> , Berom <i>yis</i> ,
hair (on head)	eyi pl. êyi	Ga <i>yì</i> , Nupe <i>ɛni</i>
tongue	o-nǝmǝ /ɔ-	Temne <i>rəmer</i> , Efik <i>édémè</i> , Noni <i>lēmé</i>
ear	ó-to /ó-	Geme <i>tū</i> , Ga <i>tòí</i> , <i>tòé</i> , <i>tùé</i> , Bangwinji <i>tuù</i> ,
neck	o-mi /ɛ-	‘to swallow’ Mambila <i>mèl</i> , Ga <i>mì</i> , Diola <i>mer</i> ,
arm / hand	ó-bu /á-	

**Table 17. Niger-Congo roots in Esimbi and other Tivoid languages**

Gloss	Esimbi	Comparative evidence
leg, foot	o-gúru /o-	
navel	ki-túnḡu /mi-	
bone	kí-kú /mí-	
feather	ko-gunu /to-	
horn	èkùru pl. ekúrú	
child	wùnu <i>pl.</i> wúnu	
sun	eyù <i>pl.</i> eyu	
water	murù / a-	
fire	uwúsu, owúsu	
smoke	u-yi /o-	
ash	mɔɔtù	
meat	ènyimi <i>pl.</i> enyémi	
goat	ibi	
bird	enunù <i>pl.</i> enúnu	
fish	ì-su /í-	
egg	ke-gi, é-gi /ε-	
tree	kétá, mɔ-tə /me-	
leaf	kε-yánə /a-	
salt	manu	
hunger (general)	èdzù <i>pl.</i> edzú	
five	metanə	
eight	minyinyi	
ten	bughù <i>pl.</i> moughù	
send (s.o.)	-tumù	
fall	-gbə	
bite	-numù	
wash (transitive)	-sù	
give	-nə, -nê	
eat	-ri	
drink	-mû	
spit (saliva)	-tû	
swell	-mùrù	
give birth	-bî	
die	-kpê	
push	-tùḡù	
know	-kərè	
count	-təḡè	

There are 43 such roots, out of a total list of 120 words, i.e. 36%. Thus a total of 98 words, i.e. 82%. cannot be attributed to a set of specifically Tivoid lexemes. Given the overall amount of borrowing in the Grassfields, this makes the membership of Esimbi within Tivoid marginal at best.

### 6.5 Buru

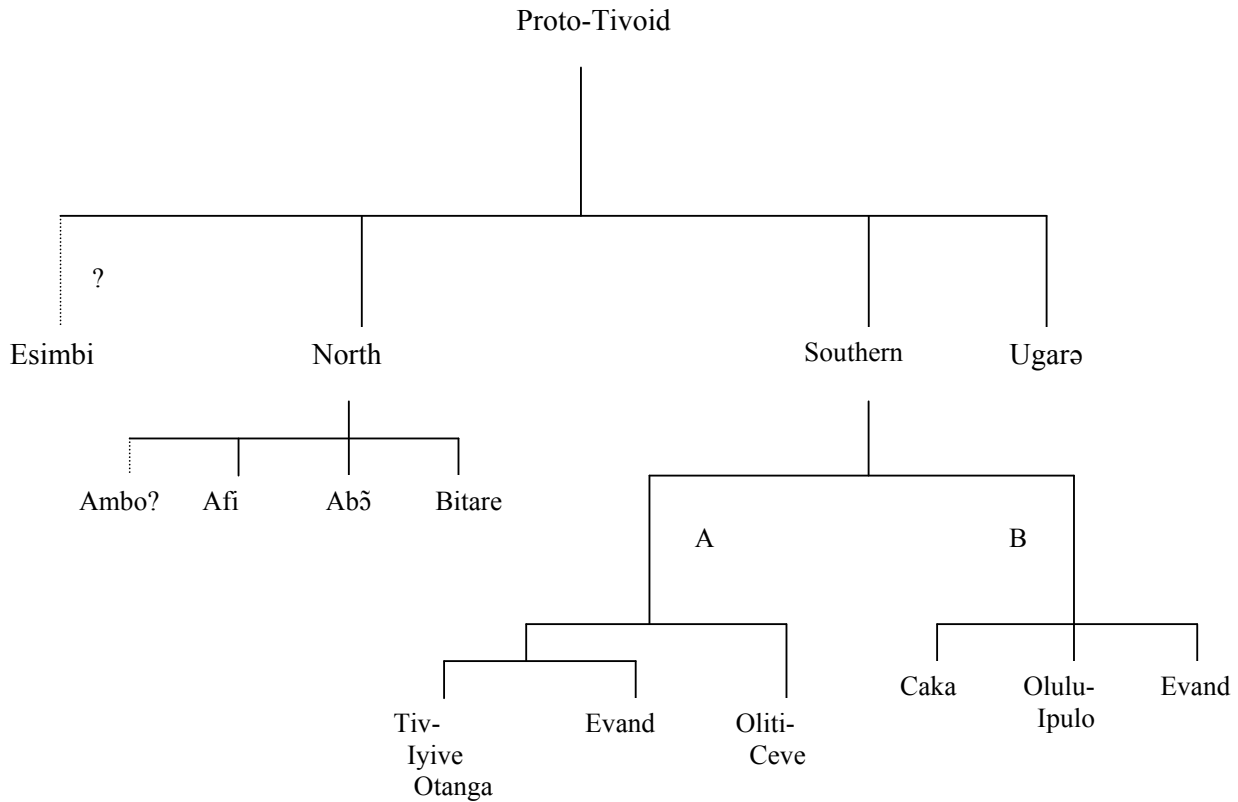
Piron (1998) treats Buru as Tivoid, although in many ways it is more marginal than Esimbi. It shares some lexical items with Northwest Tivoid, as might be expected from their proximity, but otherwise there is little to show it is Tivoid as opposed to Beboïd or Jukunoid. It is here treated as an isolate within Bantoid.



7. Overall classification

Figure 1 presents a structure for Tivoid based on the above arguments;

Figure 1. Internal structure of Tivoid

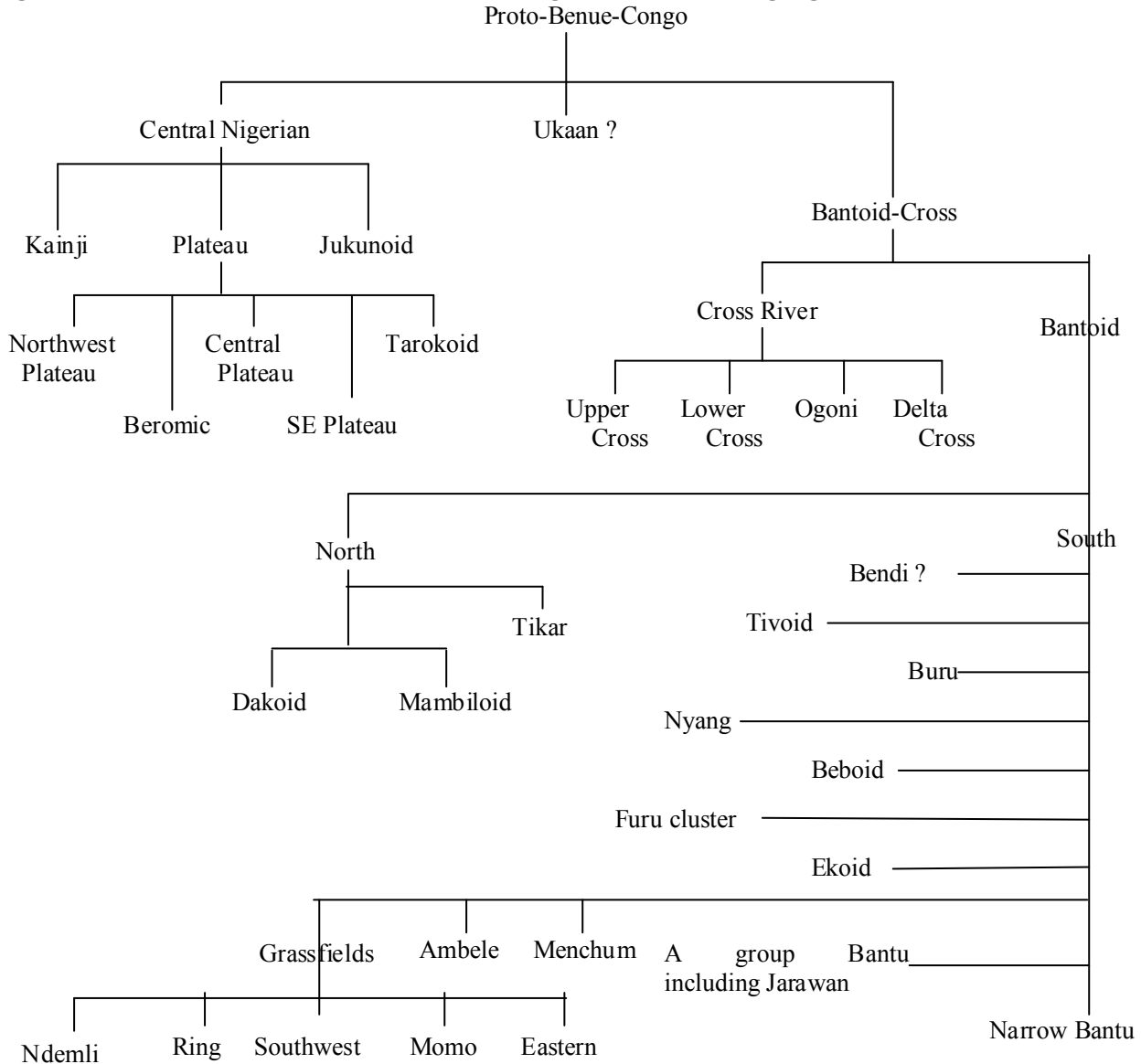


8. The place of Tivoid within Bantoid

Tivoid has been assigned different roles within Bantoid, going back to the observations of Johnston (1919-1922) and Guthrie (1969-1971). Greenberg (1977) rightly observed that the characteristic double-affixing of Tiv was significant for the evolution of Bantu, although in fact suffixing among Bantoid languages is more common than was realised at the period (e.g. Mambiloid and Dakoid Blench 1993). This could well be due to contact with Adamawa languages, though this is far from proven. Tivoid has much in common with Beboid, and probably is closer to it than to other branches of Bantoid, although some common lexical items will certainly reflect contact. But it seems likely that Tivoid should be kept still within South Bantoid, but remoter from Narrow Bantu than Grassfields and Ekoid.

Lexically at least, Tivoid appears to resemble two other branches of Bantoid. The links with Beboid have been observed by various writers including Williamson (1971) and Piron (1997). However, Hamm (p.c.) points out that Tivoid also shares numerous items with the Momo languages, hitherto claimed as part of Grassfields, although without any compelling, or indeed any, actual evidence. Examination suggests that Momo is at least as close to Tivoid as Beboid and therefore is probably misplaced in the usual schemes. This paper therefore suggests that Tivoid may form a sub-branch of Bantoid, together with Momo, East Beboid and perhaps Buru. With these caveats, Figure 2 presents a revised subclassification of the Benue-Congo and Bantoid languages;

Figure 2. Revised subclassification of Benue-Congo and Bantoid languages



### 9. Speculations on the migration history of Tivoid peoples

Tiv itself has been the subject of much historical research (e.g. Downes 1933; Bohannon 1954; Shain 2005) but virtually no material exists on other Tivoid peoples in the area of oral traditions. All records seem to point to the expansion of Tiv itself as late, perhaps as late as the eighteenth century.

### 10. Conclusions

This paper represents a first attempt to put order into the Tivoid languages. Not further progress can be made until more, and higher quality, data is available. In particular, it is important to have comparable lists for the Nigerian and Cameroun sides of the border. To understand the complex nominal affixes, plurals would need to be recorded for all nouns. Given the importance of Tiv itself as a major regional language in Nigeria, it is regrettable that so little progress has been made in recent years. Let this preliminary outline be a stimulus to further research.

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