



## AKOKOID COMPARATIVE WORDLIST

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### ABSTRACT

Akokoid, in this paper, refers to the nine speech forms which are spoken in Akoko North-West Local Government Area of Ondo State in South-Western Nigeria. These speech forms are Arigidi, Erushu, Afa, Oge, Aje, Udo, Oyin, Igashi and Uro. Since the 1970's, scholars have lumped these speech forms together as dialects of the same language without any detailed lexicostatistic investigation. Thus, the major objective of this paper is to determine whether the speech forms are really dialects of the same language through lexicostatistic analysis. Data were collected from 34 informants spread across the nine geographical areas where the speech forms are spoken through the direct interview method. In analyzing these data, Swadesh's principles of lexicostatistics were used. The lexicostatistic figures reveal that Arigidi and Erushu are 88.5% cognate, so they are classified as dialects of Arigidi. Afa, Oge, Aje, Udo, Oyin, Igashi and Uro are 81% cognate, so they are classified as dialects of the same language called Ọ̀wọ̀n (meaning 'tongue'). Two distinct but fairly related languages were identified within the nine speech forms. These are Arigidi and Ọ̀wọ̀n, jointly referred to as Akokoid by virtue of their Akoko root. Therefore, there is no justification for lumping them together as dialects of a single language.



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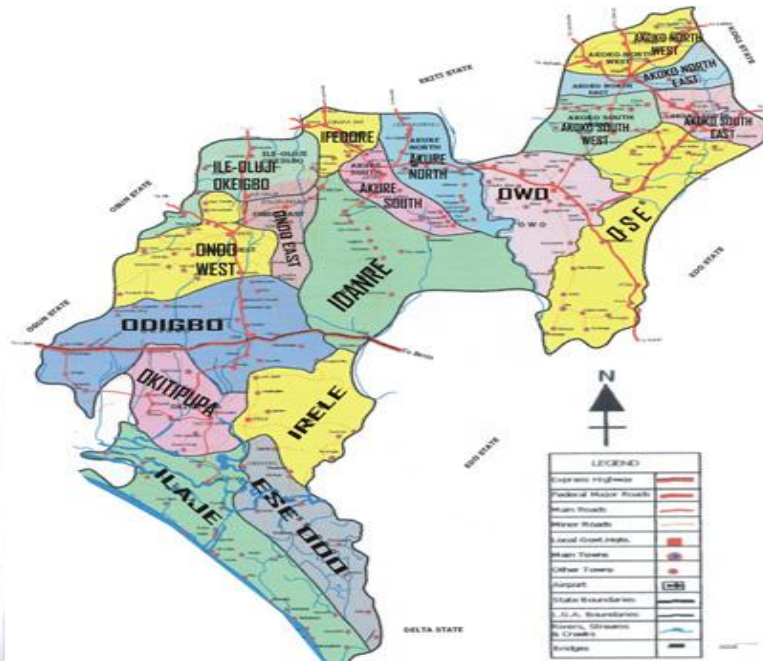
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## 0. INTRODUCTION

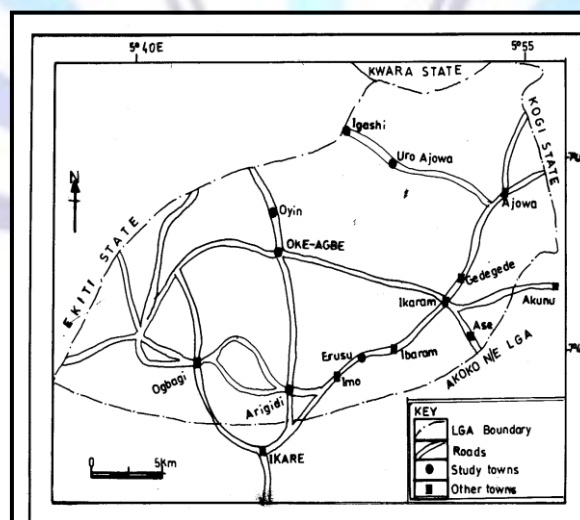
The Akokoid speech forms have attracted different names from scholars since the 1970s. For example, Hoffman (1974) refers to them as 'Northern Akoko Cluster'; Akinkugbe (1978) refers to them as 'Akokoid'; Capo (1989) calls them 'Amgbe'; Akinyemi (2002) gives them the title 'Arigidi-Amgbe'; while Fadṛo (2010) retains 'Akokoid'.

These nine speech forms are all spoken in Akoko North-West Local Government, Ondo State, Nigeria, with the local government headquarters in Oke-Agbe. The speech forms are Arigidi, Erushu, Afa, Udo, Oge, Aje, Oyin, Igashi and Uro. The names given to the speech forms coincide with the names of the communities in which they are spoken. Afa, Udo, Oge and Aje are spoken in Oke-Agbe. See Fig 1, 2 and 3 below for maps.



**Figure 1:** MAP OF ONDO STATE

Source: Akoko North West Local Government Council, Ondo State, Nigeria



**Figure 2:** MAP OF AKOKO NORTH WEST LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF ONDO STATE SHOWING THE STUDY TOWNS

Source: Akoko North West Local Government Council, Ondo State, Nigeria



## 1. RESEARCH PROBLEM

The nine speech forms explored in this work have been lumped together by scholars in the 1970s and 1980s without a detailed lexicostatistic investigation. This resulted in the hasty conclusion that they are dialects of the same language. However, a careful look at these speech forms reveals that they cannot be lumped together as dialects of the same language. In fact, speakers in their respective communities do not agree that they speak the same language with speakers in adjacent communities. This calls for a lexicostatistic investigation, which this paper has attempted.

### 1.1 OBJECTIVES OF THIS PAPER

The major goal of this work was determining the status of the Akokoid speech forms. It examined whether the nine speech forms are dialects of the same language or not. It was investigated the level of intelligibility among the over 250,000 speakers who claim that they speak different languages.

### 1.2 METHODOLOGY

The Ibadan 400 wordlist was used to obtain data from 34 informants: Aje (5), Arigidi (5), Oyin (5), Igashi (4), Erushu (3), Afa (3), Oge (3), Udo (3) and Uro (3). Thirty-two of them were non-mobile as well as rural. Twenty-five of them were old, with their ages ranging from 60-80 years old. Twenty-seven of them were males. Thus, the acronym NORM(s) (which stands for Non-mobile, Old, Rural, Males) was used with little modifications. These informants were contacted and interviewed in their villages.

### 1.3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

In analyzing the data presented in this work, Pike's (1947) discovery procedure in phonological analysis was employed in determining the phonemic status of the sound systems of Akokoid (Consonants, Vowels and Tones). Secondly, Swadesh's (1951) principles of lexicostatistics were used in classifying the speech forms into two main languages – Arigidi and Ọwọ̀n. Arigidi is made up of Arigidi and Erushu speech forms. Ọwọ̀n is made up of Afa, Aje, Udo, Oyin, Igashi, Aje and Oge.

## 2. THE CONCEPT OF VARIATION

Bright (1966:2) makes the following observation:

Within any recognizable speech community, variations are normally found on all levels of linguistic structure – Phonological, grammatical and lexical. Some of the variations are correlated with geographical location... some ... may depend on the identity of the person spoken to or spoken about... other variations are correlated with the identity of the speaker. These include cases of difference between men's and women's speech... linguistic variation may also be correlated with the social status of the speakers (or) with other facts in the social and cultural context.

The excerpt above suggests that variation in language could be determined by different characteristic features. The correlates of linguistic variation could be any of the following:

- (i) Geographical location of the speaker (where the people live)
- (ii) The interlocutors (age disparity and class)
- (iii) The topic of discussion or context (what the interlocutors discuss)
- (iv) The sex of the speaker/addressee (whether they are males or females)

Bright's comments above also serve as a springboard for this study. The factors spelled out by Bright manifest in the use of language in Akoko. For instance, Dada (2006) and Oyetade (2007) note that there was a significant difference between the different age groups in their ability in Akoko languages and between different occupations. According to them, ability in Akoko languages is gradually dwindling; generally children are not as proficient in Akoko languages as adults. Apart from this, the males have a slightly higher proficiency in their Akoko languages than their female counterparts. Deliberate efforts were made to confirm these observations. This was why we modified NORM(s) in the selection of informants. For example, five of our informants were female, seven were young and six were mobile.

### 2.1 FACTORS THAT CAUSE VARIATION IN LANGUAGE

Many reasons have been ascribed to variation in language. One of the prominent characteristics of language in general is the fact that language is dynamic, that is, it is not monolithic. It changes from time to time. Brook (1973:162) remarks that 'the spoken language is like a living person growing older continuously but so slowly that it is hard to point to any one changing feature'.

One of the factors responsible for variation in language is the social organization of the speech community itself. This includes differences in age, sex, social status and the setting in which interaction takes place. Bright and Ramaanjan (1964) capture this in the following words:



“What is termed the social dimension of linguistic variation is correlated with the socially established identity of the speaker/or the person addressed or mentioned.”

Furthermore, regional varieties of language develop as different norms arise in the usage of groups who are separated by some kind of geographic boundary. Geographical distance is an important factor that causes variation in language. Fromkin and Rodman (1993) assert that regional diversity develops when people are separated from each other geographically and socially. This is because the changes that occur in the form spoken in one area or group do not necessarily spread to another. Dialect differences tend to increase proportionately to the degree of communicative isolation between the groups. Communicative isolation refers to a situation such as existed between America, Australia, and England in the eighteenth century. Other factors responsible for variation in speech are sex, time, and education. The data presented in this paper highlights the similarities and differences attested in Akokoid.

### COMPARATIVE WORDLIST

In an attempt to expose the internal relationship within the Akokoid speech forms, two hundred lexical items consisting of one hundred nouns (such as names of body parts and natural phenomena, like sun, moon, star, fire, rain, river, day, night etc and one hundred simple verbs (like go, come, run, eat, see, die, etc.) are presented here. Because of their everyday significance, these words are believed to be least prone to change or borrowing, as every culture and linguistic group has words for them. These items are presented with their Yorùbá and English equivalents in Table 1 below:

TABLE 1: COMPARATIVE WORDLIST

Gloss	Arigidi	Erushu	Afa	Udo	Oyin	Igashi	Oge	Uro	Aje	Yorùbá
Head	Egiri	egiri	Igiri	igiri	igiri	igiri	igiri	egiri	igiri	orí
Hair	iṣiri	iṣiri	itiri	isiri	itiri	itiri	isiri	isiri	isiri	irũ
Eye	ódzù	ódzù	Ídzù	idzù	idzù	idzù	idzù	idzù	idzù	odzù
Ear	Oto	oto	Útó	útó	útó	uto	útó	útó	útó	etí
Nose	odzuwɔ	úwɔ	úwɔ	úwɔ	úwɔ	úwɔ	úwɔ	úwɔ	úwɔ	imú
Mouth	òrũ	òrũ	Odòru	òrũ	òrũ	odòrũ	òrũ	odòru	òrũ	enũ
Tooth	éjĩ	éjĩ	éjĩ	éjĩ	éjĩ	éjĩ	éjĩ	éjĩ	éjĩ	ejĩ
Tongue	éɾɛ	irɛ	éɾé	éɾé	éɾé	iré	iré	iré	iré	awɔ/a hɔ
Chin	àgbɔ	àṅmgbà	àṅmgbà	àṅmgbà	àṅmgbà	àṅmgbà	àṅmgbà	àṅmgbà	àṅmgbà	àgbɔ
Beard	isierɛ	iṣile	isilɛ	ile	ile	ulè	ulè	ulè	esiri ilè	irũgbɔ
Neck	úgɔ	úgɔ	ógúgɔ	ogúgɔ	ogúgɔ	utṣé	utṣè	utṣè	utṣé	orũ
Breast (female)	epɔ	épo	ipɔ	ipɔ	ipɔ	ipò	ipò	ipò	ipò	omú
Heart	okā	okā	okā	okā	okā	okā	okā	okā	okā	okā
Belly (external)	ogɔ	ogɔ	igɔ	igɔ	igɔ	igo	igo	igo	igó	ikũ
Navel	ekpɔ	ekpɔ	Ikó	ipɔ	igɔ	ipɔ	ikpɔ	ipɔ	ipɔ	idodo
Back	osɔ	osũ	osɔ	osũ	osũ	osũ	osũ	osũ	osũ	èjĩ
Hand	ówɔ	ówó	úwó	úwó	úwó	uwɔ	úwó	úwó	úwó	owó
Nail (finger or toe)	ekē	akikē	ika mē	inyà	inyà	inyà	inyà	inyà	inyà	èékáná
Buttocks	edzémē	ihàpē	igɔ	ibɔ	ibɔ	inɔ	inɔ	inɔ	(ètṣè)	idi
Penis	okɔ	okɔ	Ilù	indú	indú	indú	inũ	indú	indú	okó
Thigh	bàlantà	ilpa	Bàlāt ùhò	bàlāt ùɔ	ifɔ	(okoko)	bàlāti	(òkókó)	bàlātuò	itā
Leg	ùhɔ	ùhɔ	Ùhò	ùhò	uhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	esè
Vagina	ehɔ	(órokũ)	(onĩ)	ihá	ihá	ihá	ihá	ihá	ihá	òbò
Body	edze	édze	idzi	idzi	idzi	idzi	idzi	igèrédzi	omidzio	ara



Skin	(awo)	alà	àlà	alà	alà	alà	alà	alà	alà	awo
Bone	ékpe	ikpī	ikpī	ikpī	ikpē	ikpi	ikpī	ikpi	ékpī	egūgū
Blood	ēdʒē	ēdʒē	ēdʒē	ēdʒē	ēdʒē	èdʒè	èdʒè	èdʒè	èdʒè	èdʒè
Saliva	itē	itē	útē	útē	útē	ite	útē	íté	ité	itó
Urine	ùto	útó	itó	itó	itó	itó	itó	itó	itó	itò
Faeces	εmε	εmε	imī	imī	imī	imī	imi	imi	imi	imi/igbé
Water	edʒī	édʒi	údʒi	údʒi	údʒi	údʒi	údʒi	údʒi	údʒi	omi
Soup	aje	àje	àje	àje	àje	àje	àje	àje	àje	obè
Meat	ařā	āřā	āřā	āřā	āřā	āřā	āřā	āřā	āřā	eřā
Fat	òrà	òràrà	ùhè	úhε	úhε	úhε	úhε	úhè	òrà	úhε
Fish	eso	iso	íφé	íφé	íφé	íφé	íφε	íφé	íφé	edʒa
Oil	ógo	úgo	úgo	úgo	úgo	úgo	úgo	úgo	úgo	ekpo
Salt	(owò)	utē	utʒī	útʒē	útʒē	itʒa	utʒī	utʒī	utʒī	ijò
Wine	orà	orà	ùrà	ùrà	ùrà	ùrà	ùrà	ùrà	ùrà	otí
Palm wine	umū	umū	imū	imū	imū	imú	imù	imū	imū	emū/ògürò
Yam	iʒē	iʒē	àdʒu	adʒu	àdʒu	iti	isi	isi	isi	iʒu
Cassava	ògòròlò	Ogòròlò	ogorolo	ogorolo	ògòròlò	ògòròlò	ògòròlò	ògbòròdò	ògòròlò	ègέ
Guinea corn	itʒē	itʒè	itè	itè	itè	itè	isè	isè	isè	okàbàbà
Maize	igbàdo	igbàdo	igbàdo	igbàdo	igbàdo	igbado	àgbado	igbàdo	igbàdo	àgbado
Beans	(èrèhè)	édʒi	édʒi	édʒi	édʒi	édʒi	édʒi	édʒi	édʒi	èwà
Pepper	éʒē	éʒē	éte	ése	été	etèjò	ése	esèjò	ése	ata
Okra	óhū	óhū	ìŋyu	ìŋyu	ìŋyu	ìŋyu	ìŋyu	ìŋyu	ìŋyu	Ilá
Orange	òrombó	òrombó	òrombó	òrombó	ilómú	ilémú	òrombó	isò	ilómi	òrombó/osà
Groundnut	èkpà	èkpà	èkpà	èkpà	èkparado	èkparádó	èkpà	èkparádó	èkpà	èkpà
Kolanut	eʒó	etò	iʒi	itʒi	itʒè	itʒè	itʒè	itʒè	itʒè	obi
Tobacco	tábà	tábà	tábà	itábà	tábà	itábà	tábà	itabà	tábà	tábà
Cotton	orúru	orúru	orúru	orúru	orúru	èñtuòwú	orurú	òwú	orúru	òwú
Oil palm	etʒitʒòògò	úgo	–	itʒtʒógo	itʒtotʒógo	itʒótʒougù	itʒotʒóúgo	ógò	itʒotʒòúgò	ekpokpukpa
Seed	aʒe	èso	kóro		àti	ógò	àsi	àsi	àsi	èso
Grass	èʒíʒi	isísi	iʒíʒi	iʒíʒi	iʒíʒi	ʒiʒiri	ʒiʒiri	ʒiʒirʒ	iʒíʒiri	koriko
Tree	óhò	óhò	ùŋyo	ùŋyo	ùŋyo	óŋyo	óŋyo	óŋyo	ùŋyo	igi
Leaf	imē	imē	εmē	émē	émē	émē	émē	émē	émē	ewé
Thorn	èdʒē	iʒò	udʒé	udʒé	udʒé	edʒé	edʒé	èdʒé	udʒé	ègú
Charcoal	idʒī	ídʒī	ésī	ésī	ésī	ésī	ési	ésī	ésī	èédú
Smoke	újù	úwú	ówú	ówú	ówú	úvú	ówú	úwú	ówú	èéfi
Fire	etʒo	kitʒo	itó	itó	itó	itʒo	ísó	ísó	ísó	iná
Ashes	odò	òdò	ónò	ónó	òndó	ondo	ónó	òndó	úndó	èèrú



Pot	àtʃà	àtʃà	àtʃà	àtʃà	àtʃà	àtʃà	àtʃà	àtʃà	àtʃà	ikòkò
Calabash	ekú	ekú	ikú	ekú	ikú	ikú	ikú	ifò	ikú	igbá
Mortar	ebú	ebú	ibú	ibú	ibú	ígú	ígú	ígú	ibú	odó
Knife	isé	ùʃé	uḡé	uḡé	uḡé	uḡé	uḡé	uḡé	uḡé	òbe
Hoe	úhò	uhò	ḡvà	ḡvà	ḡvà	ḡvà	ḡvà	ḡvà	ḡvà	okó
Axe	òhò	èḡgè	oḡvó	oḡvó	oḡvó	èḡgè	èḡgè	èḡgè	èḡgè	àáké
Machete	éɛ	ire	àgbé	àgbé	àgbé	àda	àdá	àdá	àdá	àdá
Spear	òkò	òkò	òkò	òkò	ùkò	ùkò	(ètʃi)	òkò	òkò	òkò
Horn	èhò	èhò	ihó	ihvó	ihvó	ògogo	ihvó	ùḡḡgbà	ihḡwá	iwo
Iron	írú	irí	úrè	úrè	úrè	irí	irí	úrè	úrè	irí
Mat	isà	até	(àkòr ògbà)	àsè	aʃe	oròʃe	idòʃe	idòʃe	iaʃe	eni
Basket	ehò	ihò	ihvá	(ìkúrà)	ihvá	ihvá	ihvá	ihvá	ihvá	agbò/a kpèpè
Bag	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò	àkpò
Rope	òkū	òkū	òkū	òkū	òkū	uka	òkū	òkū	okū	okū
Needle	ikéné	iné	ùné	ùné	ùné	ùkene	ùné	ùné	ùné	abéré
Thread	orúru	orúru	orúru	orúru	orúru	òwú	orúru	òwú	orúru	òwú
Hat	éwà	iva	idú	idú	idú	idú	idú	idú	idú	filà
Shoe	bàtà	bàtà	bàtà	bàtà	bàtà	ibàtà	bàtà	ihàùsè	bàtà	bàtà
Money	òkùbà	òkùbà	egó	ewó	ewó	evo	evo	evó	ewó	owó
Town	égú	egú	ikú	ibú	gú	ígú	ígú	ígú	ihú	ilú
Well	kāḡga	kòga	kāḡga	kāḡga	kāḡga	ikāḡga	kòḡga	kāḡga	kòḡga	kāga
Market	adʒa	adʒa	adʒá	ádʒá	ádʒá	adʒa	ádʒá	ádʒá	ádʒá	odʒà
Farm	ijà	ùwà	ùwà	ùwà	ùwà	ùwà	ùwà	ùwà	ùwà	okó
Sea	òkū	òkū	òkū	òkū	òkū	òkū	(ihà)	òkū	òkū	òkū
Stone	éta	íta	íta	íta	íta	íta	íta	íta	íta	òkúta
Mountain	édè	idè	idi	idi	idi	igidì	idi	(ùgbà)	idi	òkè
Sand	ḡḡḡḡ	ihḡḡḡ	nḡḡḡ	nḡḡḡ	nḡḡḡ	nāḡḡ	nḡḡḡ	nḡḡḡ	nāḡḡ	nāḡḡ
Cow	àrògò	àrògò	àràgò	aràgò	àràgò	imàlu	àràgò	àràgò	màlúú	màlúú
Sheep	adò	ándá	aḡá	áḡá	aḡá	ándá	ána	ándá	ándá	àḡútā
Dog	ofò	ófó	ópú	ópú	ópú	ópú	ópú	ópú	ópú	adʒá
Rat	odʒúwà	ifé	òdirì	òdí	òdí	òdí	òdí	òdí	òdí	eku
Monkey	òbo	òbo	aká	áká	àtò	amènte	áká	áká	áká	òbo
Ground	eʃi	eʃi	éʃí	éʃí	éʃí	éʃi	éʃí	íʃí	éʃí	ilè
Earth	iʃa	itʃa	itʃa	itʃa	itʃá	itʃa	itʃa	itʃa	itʃa	ajé
Rain	edʒí	èdʒi	udʒi	ùdʒi	ùdʒi	ùdʒi	ùdʒi	ùdʒi	ùdʒi	òdʒò
Sunshine	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhò	ùhā	òòrú
Moon	eridʒa	eridʒa	òʃúk pá	àʃúk pá	òʃúk pá	òʃúk pá	etʃigbà	èsigbà	òʃúk pá	òʃúk pá
War	olo	oló	oló	òlo	òlo	òlo	òlo	òlo	òlo	ogū
Song	iʃí	uʃé	ùsí	ùsí	ùsí	ùsí	ùse	ùse	ùʃé	orí



Eat	dzo	dzo	dzu	dzu	dzu	dzu	dziho	dzu	dzu	dze
Drink	bo	bo	bo	bo	bo	go	go	gó	bo	mu
Swallow	tʃíromí	tʃíromí	tíròmù	tíròmí	tíròmù	ròmù	síròmí	úròmí	síròmí	gbémí
Vomit	kpà	kpà	kpà	pà	pà	pà	pà	pà	pà	bì
Urinate	tó	tò	to	tó	tó	to	tò	tò	tò	tò
Defecate	jē	jē	jī	jī	jī	jī	jī	jī	jī	jàgbé
Give birth	tʃúwō	tʃúwō	ʃúwō	ʃúwō	tʃúwō	tʃúwō	tʃúwō	tʃúwō	ʃúwō	bímó
Die	kú	kú	kú	kú	kú	kú	kú	kú	kú	kú
Sleep	ʃē	ʃē	ʃē	ʃē	ʃē	ʃē	ʃe	ʃē	ʃē	sū
Go	kéwe	vè	vè	mevè	vè	vè	rívè	rívè	vè	lo
Come	kéwa	và	và	meva	va	va	và	róvà	va	wá
Return	bidzèhè	radze	usí	gusi	gusi	lisi	lisi	lisi	lisi	kpadà
Fall	tʃō	ʃō	jé	jé	jé	jé	jé	jé	jé	ʃubú
Walk	dʒí	dʒè	sē	sē	sē	sē	sē	ʃē	sè	rī
Run	tukò	rīse	ʃi	ʃi	phi	phi	ʃi	ʃi	ʃi	sàré
Fly	kòhò	hò	hú	hú	régo	hú	hú	hú	hú	fò
Jump	táʃijá	ré	gbákáti	bé	ré	bé	bé	bé	bé	bé
See	rí	rí	rí	gò	rí	rí	rí	gò	gò	rí
Hear	ʃe	tʃetʃo	ʃe	ʃótó	ʃé	ʃe	ʃe	ʃe	ʃe	gbó
Touch	gbóhó ʃó	gbów óke	fow óbà	gbów ópà	gbow ópà	búwoké	búwóká	fowóbà	fowóbà	fowóbà
Know	rá	rá	rà	rā	rà	rā	rā	rā	rā	mō
Remember	jídā	jènda	jéla	jéèná	jènda	jènda	jénā	jènda	jedá	rátí
Learn	kó	kó	kó	kó	kó	kó	kó	kó	kó	kó
Laugh	wō	wō	wō	wō	wō	wō	wō	wō	wō	rèèrí
Sing	ʃiʃe	kútʃe	kòtʃē	kòsì	kòsē	kòsē	kòsē	kòsē	kòsē	korí
Dance	rè	rè	jè	jè	jè	jè	jè	jè	jè	dʒó
Greet	bá	ba	ba	bá	bà	wà	wá	wa	và	kí
Send	dó	dó	nó	nó	ndó	dó	nó	dó	nó	rá
Refuse	gó	gó	gó	gó	gó	gó	gó	gó	gó	kò
Take	bà	gbà	gbà	gbà	gbà	gbà	gbà	gbà	gbà	gbà
Steal	dè	de	dédzi	dí	dèdi	dí	dèdi	dèdi	dédzi	dʒí
Sell	sa	sa	ʃa	ʃá	ʃa	ʃá	tʃa	tʃā	tʃa	rà
Give	gbājā	gbājā	gbājā	gbājā	gbājā	gbājā	gbājā	gbājā	gbājā	fú
Buy	bà	dà	bà	dà	dà	dà	dà	dà	dà	rà
Pay	semē	semē	ʃewó	ʃi	ʃewó	ʃéwó	ʃi	ʃeó	ʃewó	sāwó
Count	kà	kà	kà	kà	kà	kà	kà	kà	kà	kà
Divide	mó	mó	mā	má	má	má	má	mā	mā	kpí
Shoot	mí	jībō	jībō	jībō	jībō	jībō	jībō	jībō	jībō	jībō
Kill	kó	kpo	kpú	kpú	kpu	kpú	kpú	kpú	kpú	kpa
Cook	rā	rā	rā	rā	rā	rā	rā	rā	rā	ʃè



Fry	sū	sū	sú	sú	tú	se	ǫí	ǫí	ǫí	ǫí	
Roast	tʃǎ	tʃǎ	tú	tú	sú	tá	sú	tá	sú	sú	
Pound	bu	bu	bú	bú	bú	gú	gú	gú	bú	gú	
Grind	ró	ró	rɔ	ró	rɔ	ró	ró	ró	ró	lò	
Plait (hair)	bá	pá	kpá	pá	pá	pa	pā	pá	pà	kó	
Pull	já	ja	ja	já	já	já	já	já	já	fá	
Break	fó	fó	fó	fó	fó	fó	fó	fó	fó	fó	
Dig	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	
Carve	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	
Pierce	gú	gú	vé	gú	gú	gú	kú	ja	gàrà	gú	
Cover	ngù	dú	dú	dú	wù	bù	ngù	du	ngù	dé	
Close	tú	tú	tì	tì	tì	tì	dú	dú	(wúsi)	tì	
Build (house)	kóso	káso	kéǫe	kóǫe	húéǫe	kóéǫe	kóéǫe	kóéǫe	kóéǫe	máéǫe	kólé
Split	lá	lá	mɔ	lá	lá	lá	mà	ma	la	là	
Bury	lú	lú	(sì)	lú	lú	dʒú	dʒú	dʒú	lu	sì	
Dwell	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	gbé	
Hold (in hand)	dʒádà	jadà	dʒàdà	dʒádà	jàdà	gbèhodà	dʒádà	gómàdʒi	gbàdà	mū	
Know	rǎ	rǎ	rà	rā	rà	rā	rā	rā	rā	mɔ	
Swell	(kɛ)	wù	gú	gú	hú	wù	wù	wù	hu	wú	
Sweep	tɔ	tɔ	ʃe	ʃé	ʃé	(kpà)	tʃé	(kpà)	dʒé	gbá	
Sew	ʃe	tʃè	hú	hú	hú	rótʃatʃɔ	tʃè	ʃé	ʃè	rǎ	
Put on (cloth)	tʃé	tʃao	tí	gbàti	gbàti	gbàbòti	gbàwùsi	gbàsí	sawù	wò (wɔʃɔ)	
Beat (person)	se	se	ri	li	ʃɔ	dàdʒi	dʒi	dʒi	dʒi	lù	
Beat (drum)	lé	le	li	lí	lí	lí	lí	lí	lí	lù	
Bite	rǎdʒò	rǎdʒò	kéǫe	rɔdʒu	gúrɔdʒu	pédʒu	pédʒu	pédʒu	pédʒu	gédʒe	
Stand (up)	ʃɪjɛ	tʃúwɛ	ùwɛ	ʃuwɛ	ʃuwɛ	tʃéjì	dówɛ	ùwɛ	súwɛ	dide	
Sit (down)	ʃiʃi	tʃetʃi	tiiʃi	tééʃi	teéʃi	tʃétʃi	tʃitʃi	tʃitʃi	tʃetʃé	dʒòkò	
Climb	jí	jí	jí	jí	jí	jí	jí	jí	jí	gū	
Walk	dʒí	dʒè	sɛ	sɛ	sè	sɛ	sɛ	ʃɛ	sè	rī	
Enter	sógúbàrà	sóso	ǫéve	ǫéve	ǫéve	ǫéve	ǫéve	ǫéve	ǫéve	wolé	
Arrive	bɔ	radʒe	wódi	pɔ	dí	úvadi	vádi	kpò	pɔ	dé	
Show	gbàga	gbàga	gbàga	gbàga	gbàga	gbàga	gbàga	gbàga	gbàga	filhā	
Want	bi	fé	fé	bè	fé	bé	tʃó	tʃó	tʃó	wá	
Reply	dáhū	dáhū	desi	dágusi	dáhū	dáhū	dʒútʃé	–	gólhē	fèsi	
Ask (question)	bidì	bidirè	dirì	birè	birè	(wámà)	(wúù má)	birè	bidè	bèrè	





Fight	kpidzi	pedze	wéḍɔ	dʒà	dʒà	dʒà	kpidzi	dʒi	kpidzi	dʒà
Call	só	sóni	ḥé	ḥé	ḥé	ḥé	ḥé	ḥé	ḥé	kpè
Fear	sóhɔ	sohó	rohó	rohó	rohó	rohó	rohó	rohó	rohó	bèrù
Take off (Clothes)	hó	hó	ho	kó	kó	ko	kó		hó	bó (èwù)
Push	fí	tí	tí	tí	tí	titú	tí	titú	tí	tí
Wring (clothes)	fó	fó	fó	fóròḍ	fó	fóròḍ	fóròḍ	fóròḍ	fóròḍ	fū (aʃɔ)
Pour	ʃu	ʃu	si	si	si	si	si	si	si	dà
Finish	tá	tá	tá	tá	tá	tá	tá	tá	tá	tá
Catch	hú	hú	hú	hú	hú	hú	hú	hú	hú	mú
Forget	bí	mábi	(gbàg bé)	(lávè)	wi	wi	wi	wī	wī	gbàgbé
Weep	(gogò)	dze	wò	wò	wò	wò	wò	wò	wò	sokú
Say	(kéró)	dʒihè	gbé	ḡmgbé	dò	ḡmgbé	dʒé	dʒe	dʒe	sɔ
Like	férá	fē	fé	féhiē	féhē	fèrà	jé	féérà	férā	férá
Lose	(tʃòhí)	ráwu	ráwu	rawù	fòàwu	údiòrà	ráwu	hólò	ráwu	sònú
Get	dí	dí	riḥe	riḥe	riḥe	riḥe	riḥe	riḥe	riḥe	rigbà
Run	sùkò	se	ʃi	ʃi	ḥi	ḥi	ʃi	ʃi	ʃi	Saré
Turn around	jikpo	sàkpo	jábúsi	kpòji	kpòji	kpòji	soso	kpòji	kpòji	kpòji
Follow	tíʃe	tʃitʃe	wùré	vèré	vòré	odó	ódò	ródò	òdó	tèlé
Mould	mó	mò	ma	má	má	ma	má	ma	má	mɔ
Burn	tʃá	tʃá	tú	tú	tú	dò	dò	dú	dò	dʒó
Bury	lú	lú	lù	lù	lù	dʒù	dʒù	dʒù	lù	Sí
Hoe	kó	hò	ḡgà	ḡgà	ḡgà	(roko)	ḡgà	ḡgà	ḡgà	roko
Surpass	kèwè	ʃòvé	kèvé	kèvé	kèvé	kèvé	tʃitʃivé	kèvé	kèvé	tajo

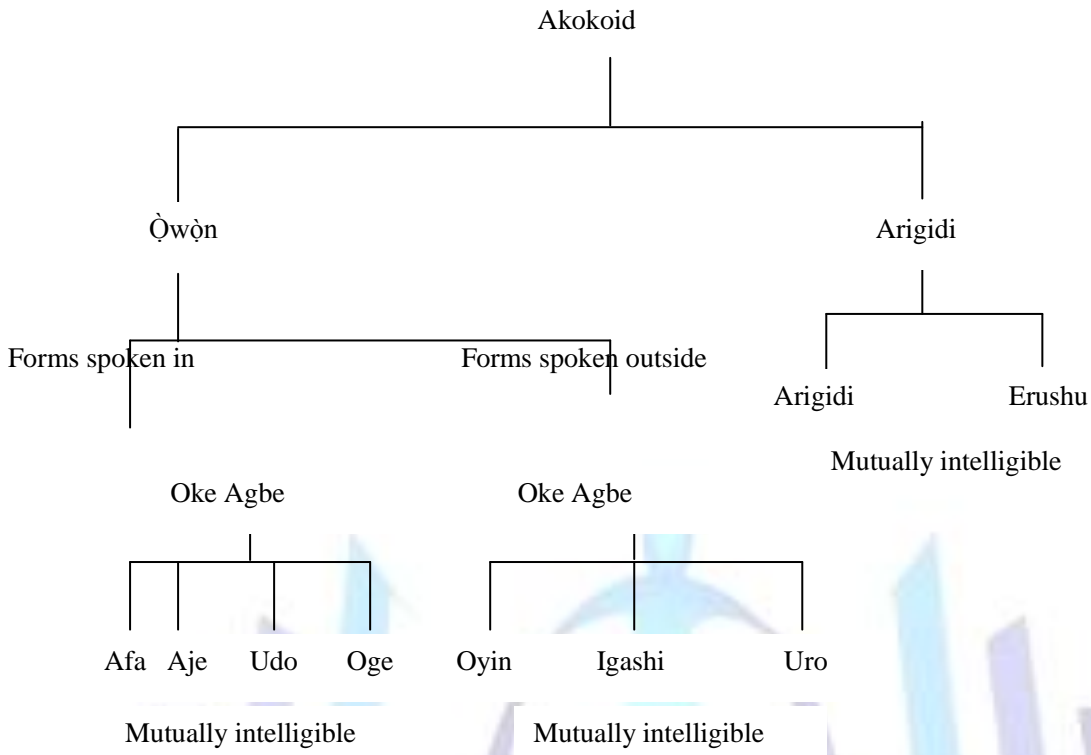
Note: Non-cognate items in Akokoid are put in brackets.

### 2.3 DISCUSSION ON THE COMPARATIVE WORDLIST/FINDINGS

When one looks at the variations exhibited above, one wonders how, in spite of these variations, there is intelligibility among the speakers of the nine speech forms under investigation. The point is that 'intelligibility' is a matter of degree, ranging from total intelligibility to total unintelligibility. Our findings reveal that:

- (i) Arigidi and Erushu
- (ii) Afa, Udo, Oge and Aje
- (iii) Oyin, Igashi and Uro

One to three above are organised or arranged in a dialect continuum, in which a chain of adjacent varieties are mutually intelligible, but pairs taken from opposite ends of the chain are not. Thus: Arigidi and Erushu are mutually intelligible. The same thing applies to Afa, Udo, Oge, and Aje. Oyin, Igashi and Uro are also mutually intelligible. Intelligibility is also mutual between Udo, a member of group (ii) above and Oyin, a member of group (iii) above. The reason, according to the Oloyin of Oyin, Oba L.O. Bamisile, is that Udo and Oyin were together until 1922, when Udo migrated to Oke Agbe to join Afa, Oge and Aje to form Oke Agbe. The story is similar for Igashi and Uro which were together until 1955 when Uro left to join Daja, Ojo, Effa, Iludotun, Oso, Ora and Esuku to form 'Ajowa community'.



**Figure 4:** Akokoid Classification

## 2.4 DISCUSSION ON THE COMPARATIVE WORDLIST

The two major objectives of this work stated in Section 1: 1 above are to:

- (i) Determine the status of the Akokoid speech forms in relation to one another.
- (ii) Investigate the level of intelligibility among the speakers.

These are the issues that shall engage our attention in the rest of the paper.

### 2.4.1 THE STATUS OF THE AKOKOID SPEECH FORMS

As stated in Section 1, the nine lects that constitute the Akokoid speech forms have been lumped together by previous scholars as dialects of the same language without a detailed lexicostatistic investigation. Our major goal in this section is to either confirm this claim or refute it. Swadesh (1951) claims that the relationship between two or more lects can be determined on the basis of cognation percentage as outlined below:

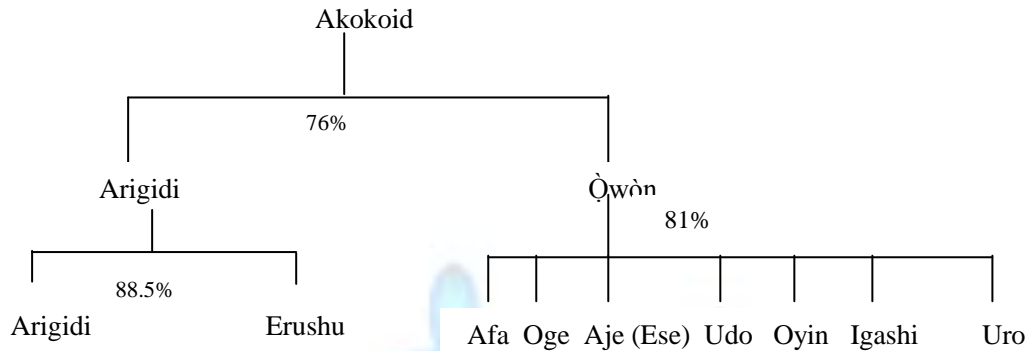
Cognate%	Term
100-81	Language
80-35	Family
34-12	Stock
12-4	Microphylum
4-1	Mesophylum
Less than 1	Macrophylum

Our lexicostatistic count on the basis of the 200 lexical items above, shows that 152 items, which constitute 76%, are virtual cognates. Thus by Swadesh's standard, the nine speech forms belong to the same family. We refer to this family as Akokoid. A deeper look, produces the following breakdown:

- Arigidi and Erushu average 88.5% between themselves. This figure qualifies them as dialects of the same language, referred to as Arigidi.



- Afa, Udo, Oge, Aje (Ese), Oyin, Igashi and Uro average 81% among themselves. This qualifies them as dialects of the same language, which we refer to as *Ọwọ̀n*. The term is particularly preferred in this work because it means 'tongue' in the seven speech forms, even though its previous use was restricted to Afa, Udo, Oge and Aje. The overall title used is 'Akokoid'. It has a general application by virtue of the fact that all the speech forms are located in Akoko.
- Arigidi and *Ọwọ̀n* average 76% between themselves; this established them as two different but related languages. They are jointly referred to as "Akokoid" in this work, as shown below:



**Figure 5:** Akokoid according to cognation percentages

### 2.4.2 MUTUAL INTELLIGIBILITY

Ideally, the distinction between language and dialect is based on the notion of mutual intelligibility. Dialects of the same language should be mutually intelligible, while different languages should not be. Mutual intelligibility is a reflection of the linguistic similarity between the different varieties of speech. From our data above, the issue of linguistic similarity is conspicuous. For instance, the 88.5% cognation between Arigidi and Erushu implies a considerable similarity between the two lects. The same thing applies to the *Ọwọ̀n* lects, which share 81% cognation among themselves. When we compare this with the 76% between the two groups – Arigidi and *Ọwọ̀n*, it would be reasonable to draw the conclusion that the level of intelligibility within each group is very high. Let us extract some data to show this.

**TABLE 2: AKOKOID/EDOID**

Arigidi	Ọwọ̀n	Gloss
egírí	igírí	Head
ódzù	ídzù	Eye
oto	útó	Ear
εpɔ	ípɔ	Breast
ɔgɔ	ìgɔ	Belly
ɔwɔ	úwɔ	Hand
ùhɔ	ùhò	Leg
èdʒe	ídʒi	Body
uto	ìto	Urine
εmε	ímí	Feaces
edʒi	ùdʒi	Water
umu	Imu	Palm Wine
óhũ	íṅxu	Okra
óhɔ	ùṅxɔ	Tree

The Edoid items are extracted from Elugbe (1989)

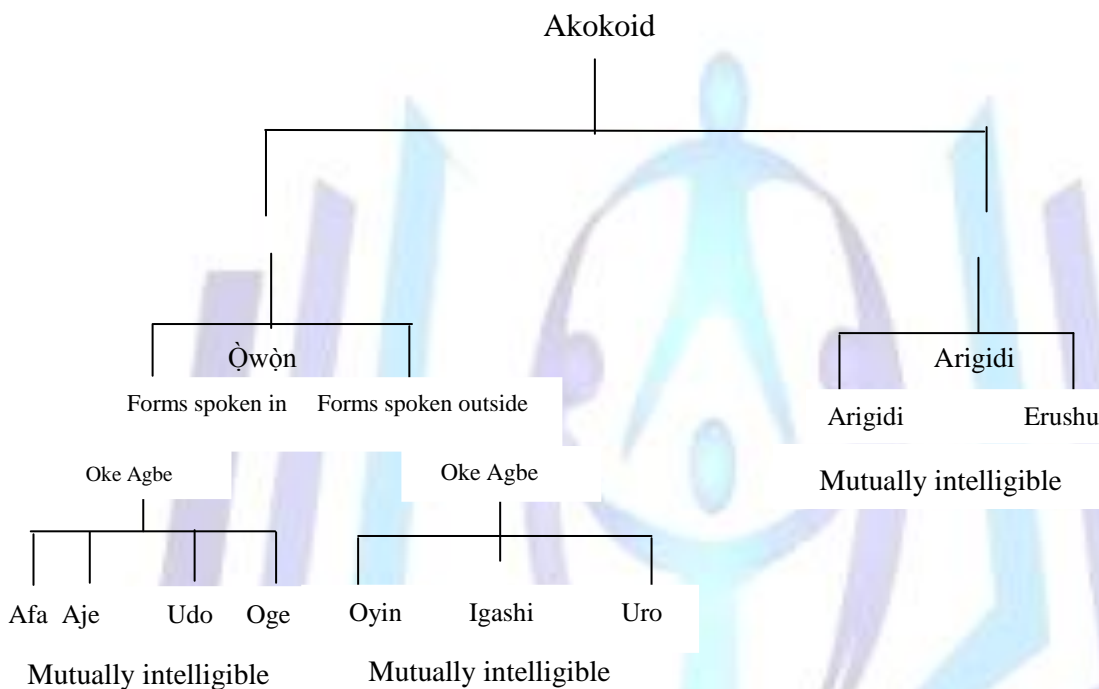
These are just few examples of total cognates within each group among several other ones. Apart from this, there are many others which are examples of partial cognates. Our findings reveal that the following are intelligible:

- (i) Arigidi and Erushu
- (ii) Afa, Udo, Oge and Aje
- (iii) Oyin, Igashi and Uro

I to III above are organised or arranged in dialect continuum, in which a chain of adjacent varieties are mutually intelligible, but pairs taken from opposite ends of the chain are not. Thus Arigidi and Erushu are mutually intelligible. The same thing applies to Afa, Udo, Oge and Aje. Oyin, Igashi and Uro are also mutually intelligible. Intelligibility is also



mutual between Udo, a member of group (ii) above and Oyin, a member of group (iii) above the reason, according to the Oloyin of Oyin, Oba L.O. Bamisile, is that Udo and Oyin were together until 1922, when Udo migrated to Oke Agbe to join Afa, Oge and Aje to form the Oke Agbe settlement. In fact, it was said that the Oloyin had agreed to join them earlier, but as he was preparing to go with them, he was warned by his drummer through the talking drum not to follow them. Likewise, Igashi and Uro, were together until 1955, when Uro left to join Daja, Ojo, Efifa, Iludotun, Oso, Ora and Esuku to form the 'Ajo wa Community.' This account was given by the traditional ruler of Uro Ajo wa, Oba Timothy Sunday Ipinmoroti, who was one of our informants. Thus, there is mutual intelligibility between Uro and Igashi to date because they still interact closely. However, the case is different when one compares Arigidi or Erushu with Afa or Aje (which are members of group (ii) above) or when one compares Arigidi with Oyin (a member of group (ii) above). There is a partial intelligibility. However, it is pertinent to note that intelligibility exists among these speech forms in varying degrees because the overall distance is not considerable and a lot of intermarriages still go on among them. The point we are emphasizing here is that the similarity that exists among the speech forms is not produced by accident. Obviously, they descended from the same proto-form; therefore; they are 'sisters'. So, we postulate a common source for them, in the name of 'Akokoid'. This is summarised in the tree diagram below;



Having discussed the two key issues we highlighted as our objectives, what is now left for us is to discuss how variables like age, gender, location and migration patterns have affected our result.

## AGE

The ages of individual informants have a serious effect on their mastery of their speech forms. Out of the 34 informants used in this research, only 7 were young. The remaining 27 were old. The major problem we had with these young informants was the level of mastery of their speech forms. In fact, during our sessions with them, several gaps were created, at intervals when asked: "What do you call this item in your speech form?" They would respond: "We don't know". Then we would have to resort to the older informants who would quickly supply the data. Several times, the data our young informants supplied were actually Yoruba words and, in an attempt to validate their answer, we would turn to the elders who would tell us the answer in their speech forms. This is a confirmation that these young ones were deficient in the mastery of their speech forms. This aligns with Oyetade's (2007) observation that "ability in Akoko languages among the young ones is gradually dwindling, such that they are not as proficient in their speech forms as the adult speakers." In fact, during our field trips, parents complained bitterly that their children could no longer speak their languages. This is a serious indication that the process of language shift among the youth is ongoing.

## SEX

Research in Western nations affirms that women's speech is considered to be more self-conscious and class-conscious than men's speech, such that data collected from them are not as reliable as those from men because they pretend to be sophisticated and artificial in their utterances. Conversely, men's speech is 'purer' and more original because they are rather 'conservative' (see Chambers and Trudgill 1998 and Francis 1983). This seems to be the case with our female informants in Akokoid. In fact, it was obvious that the men were more competent than their female



counterparts. We had to turn to the male informants several times because the female informants were not able to satisfactorily supply our data. That is why only 5 informants were selected from the female, whereas 29 were males. Oyetade (2007) has reported that the male informants have a higher proficiency in their speech forms than their female counterparts.

## LOCATIONS

Out of our 34 informants, 32 lived in their different Akoko villages, while only 2 lived in Ibadan as at the time of data collection. Our experience confirms that these mobile informants are not as proficient as their non-mobile (stationary) counterparts in their mastery of their speech forms. This is natural and logical. The fact that they have been away from their root for years has detached them somehow from their mother tongues. They were now more comfortable with Yoruba and English which their dwelling in city has better exposed them to. Traditional dialectologists believe that the use of non-mobile informants guarantees that their speech is characteristic of the region in which they live, free from any external influence.

## MIGRATION

According to the traditional rulers of Uro and Oyin, all their ancestors were together in Ile-Ife at the initial stage. But as a result of threats of war, they migrated to Benin. They later had to leave Benin, and migrated to a hilly settlement near their present locations. In 1922, Revd. Lennan, an Anglican priest, encouraged them to leave their hilly settlement because they were isolated. So, it was in 1922 that the first wave of migration took place. More waves of migration followed later, as we have discussed earlier. These waves of migrations have occasioned the differences we see in our data. A careful look at our data also shows that many lexical items are cognate with their Yoruba equivalents. For instance, let us look at the forms for king, cow, cat, cassava, toad, tortoise, crab, bee and snail, and so on. In fact, Fadṛṛ (2013) forthcoming claims that Akokoid is 36% cognate with Yoruba. Also the migration to Benin has left its mark on the speech forms. An extract from Elugbe (1989) will show this.

Gloss	Akokoid	Edoid
Cotton	Oruru	oruru
Lizard	òkòtò	ókído
Bird	òrā	óUra
Nose	úwǒ	úwē
Hawk	àpòpò	ákpukpó
Cap	ìdū	ètù
Year	ēbō	ēzō
Kill	kpú	kpé
Roast	tū	tō
Mould	mā	mā
Vomit	kpà	kpa

The Edoid items are extracted from Elugbe (1989).

A look at the above items reveals a striking similarity. It would not be out of place if one describes them as cognates. From the foregoing, we can safely assert that the migration patterns of these people have left their marks on their speech forms in terms of some of the similarities and variations that exist till today.

## 2.5 CONCLUSION

In this work, an attempt has been made to examine the relationship within the Akokoid speech forms. The data used for this work show that the speech forms are closely related with minor differences at the phonological and lexical levels. In most cases, the items are 100% cognate in terms of consonants, vowels and tones; in some cases, there are minute differences. The similarity of these speech forms in the data establishes a common ancestry for the speech forms. Apart from that, it proves that truly language is not monolithic and that variation in language is a norm rather than an exception. Through the lexicostatistic analysis, we are able to conclude that the nine speech forms are classifiable into two different but related languages, which are Arigidi and Qwōn. This classification is also supported by mutual intelligibility. Finally, the nine speech forms constitute a dialect continuum.

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