

The Sur (Tapshin) language of Central Nigeria and its affinities

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1. Introduction

This is an annotated wordlist of the Sur language, spoken in Tapshin village in Bauchi State, Nigeria. Tapshin is some 25 km. north of the Pankshin-Amper road and reached by a track leading off the main road some 5 km. east of Pankshin. The wordlist was collected by Roger Blench with the assistance of Selbut Longtau from a group of elders in Tapshin on the 21st of March 1998. We would like to thank the chief, Sale Sambo, for calling the meeting and John Tula Rabu for help with translation as well as all those who attended for their good-natured participation.

The only published reference to this language is in Hansford *et al.* (1976) apparently based on some unpublished observations of Kiyoshi Shimizu, who may have claimed that Tapshin was related to Eloyi. The entry in Hansford *et al.* (1976) is repeated in Crozier and Blench (1992) for lack of fresh information. In 1976, Eloyi was considered to be a Plateau language, although Armstrong (1983) was later to point to its equal affinity with Idomoid. What basis, if any, there was for Shimizu’s reported claim is unclear. The principal source for Eloyi is Mackay (1964) which has been compared to the data presented here.

The wordlist was collected as a ‘one-shot’ exercise and the transcription must therefore be regarded as very preliminary. In general, tones are not marked. In view of the problematic classificatory status of the language emphasis was placed on obtaining the maximum number of lexical items. This analysis was prepared by Roger Blench, who added the comparative observations¹. This document is being circulated to scholars for comment.

2. Location, history and sociolinguistic situation

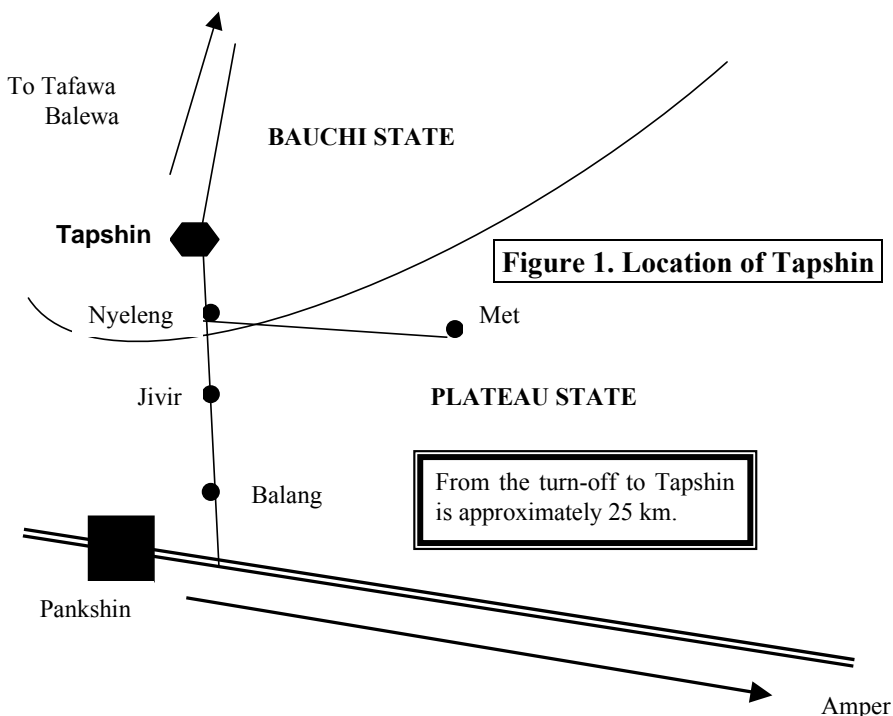
2.1 Nomenclature

The name ‘Tapshin’ is locally considered to be Hausa, although it does not look like Hausa. At any rate, this is the name of the major settlement. The Tapshin call themselves **nSúr** plural **ànSúr** and their language **kiSúr** and the reference name adopted here is Sur. The Ngas people call the Sur ‘Dishili’. The name ‘Myet’ found in some earlier references is one version of the name Met, a settlement some distance west of Tapshin. The people of Tapshin claim that the people of Met speak ‘the same’ language as them, but this has yet to be directly confirmed.

2.2 Location and settlements

Tapshin can be reached by turning north off the main road leading from Jos to Pankshin and Langtang, not long after Pankshin town. The road can only be traversed by a four-wheel drive and may well be cut off completely in the rainy season. Despite this, the area is densely populated with elaborate systems of terraces. Figure 1 shows the location of Tapshin;

Tapshin is one large dispersed settlement with numerous wards.



¹ I am grateful to Selbut Longtau who accompanied me on the field trip and suggested the Tarok cognates, and Kay Williamson for general comments.

2.3 Language status

On the face of it, Sur should be a prime candidate for language loss. All adults appear to be fluent in Ngas and Hausa and Tapshin is an enclave within the Ngas, by whom they are culturally dominated. The number of speakers cannot be more than 3-4000, depending on the status of Met. The figure of 18,000 given in CAPRO (1995) would appear to be a serious over-estimate. However, it was apparent during the interviews that even young children are learning the language and there is no evidence of a decline in competence. Even more surprisingly, but no doubt related, the language is by no means full of Hausa and Ngas loanwords, as is sometimes the case in such situations.

2.4 Sur culture and history

The only source for information on Sur culture is CAPRO (1995:323-327).

3. Phonology

The phonology of Sur is based on rapid observations and should therefore be regarded as tentative at this stage.

3.1 Vowels

Sur probably has seven phonemic vowels;

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

The status of the /ə/ is highly uncertain, as it appears at times to be simply a centralised allophone of /i/. For the present it is transcribed as heard.

3.2 Consonants

Sur consonants are as follows:

	Bilabial	Labio-dental	Alve-olar	Alveopal-atal	Palatal	Velar	Labial-velar	Glottal
Plosive	p b		t d		[c] j	k g		(?)
Nasal	m		n			ŋ		
Trill			[r]					
Fricative		f v	s z	ʃ ʒ		ɣ		h
Approximant					y		w	
Lateral Approximant			l					
Implosive	(6)							

I have occasionally transcribed the implosive /ɓ/, but it seems to be in free variation with its non-implosive counterparts. [r] and [l] seem to be in free variation as do [c] and [ky]; I have consistently transcribed the latter sound as ky.

Some words have /yy/ and /ww/ in initial position, at least phonetically. Their likely source is the merging of i- and u- prefixes with the following approximant. Similar processes occur in some Kainji and Plateau languages, e.g. Kambari and Jju. In a few cases clear u + w sequences seem to occur; why these have not merged is not yet clear.

Only one word, **gwa'ar** 'black cobra', was heard with a glottal stop and the status of this phoneme is best regarded as doubtful.

3.3 Tones

4. Noun Morphology

Sur has completely lost any functioning affix system, perhaps under the influence of Angas. Sur nouns simply add the prefix **â-** to mark pluralisation. No exceptions to this were recorded, even for persons. It does, however, retain clear traces of the former prefix system, as well as some suffixes which could possibly indicate a period of interaction with Adamawa languages.

Table 1 shows the principal non-productive morphemes in Sur;

Table 1. Possible fossil noun prefixes in Sur

bi-	biji 'fire'
i-	iyo 'flying ant', ifum 'termite',
ki-	kiji 'head', kilerem 'tongue', kəlayan 'blacksmith', kijiri tree-trunk, kita 'bow', kiler 'bed',
mu-	mutuŋ 'hyæna',
n-	ntap 'duiker', ŋgafaŋ 'frog', nfyək 'guinea-fowl', ŋkwáŋ 'ladder', nfwak 'salt'
tí-	tiji 'fonio', tisuk 'house-bat', tikaŋkalaŋ 'crab', tikat 'head-pad', tikan 'stone'
tu-	tukwaki 'leg', tukurum 'knee', tukubi 'bone', tukum 'corpse', tukwalaŋ 'mushroom',
u-	urom 'husband', yyaŋ 'leaf', wwa 'dog', wwəl 'goat', yyəŋ 'hunger',

Some of these can be clearly seen to be affixes by comparison with their external cognates. The single example and lack of parallels in other languages suggest that bi- and mu- were incorporated in the stem in pre-Tarokoid times. All of them occur in some form in neighbouring Plateau languages. Others may be disguised compounds. A widespread **ku-** prefix seems to occur principally with back vowels and is probably an allomorph of the **ki-** prefix given above.

5. Verb Morphology

As with many Plateau languages, proto-Tarokoid probably had a rich system of verbal extensions. Tarok has at least one that still functions in part as a singulative, to emphasis a single action when the unmarked form implies a plural. However, in other Tarokoid languages these seem to be unproductive and only recoverable by morphological analysis and comparison with cognate forms in other Tarokoid or Plateau languages. It is true, however, that verbal extensions are not easily elicited in rapid survey work and Sur may in fact have functioning extensions.

-k(y)i

The following verbs suggest a verbal extension k(y)i-

byiki	Break (stick)	cf. Tarok ɓikci
garki	Grow (v.i.)	
kakyi	Catch	cf. Tarok kpán , Yaŋkam kən , Pe kom
karakyi	Dream	
kyirki	Play (games)	
nyinki	Bite	cf. Tarok nyim , the first element is the word for ‘tooth’
reki	Fold (e.g. Cloth)	

The word for ‘break’ shows that the extension is not cognate with Tarok –ci, but does suggest that final -k endings in Tarokoid verbs may be the result of erosion.

-ri

-ri is a widespread verbal extension in Plateau, recorded in many other languages.

deri	Stay / remain	cf. Ngas dar
gəri	Uncover (pot)	
gwəri	Open (door)	cf. Pe kuli
kwari	Hoe (cultivate)	cf. Hasha kwar , Berom kara (ex BCCW). A widespread East Benue-Congo #ka- root
kyari	Cut (rope)	
kyari	Divide (share out)	a widespread #ka- root found throughout Benue-Congo
mari	Lose (s.t.)	
puri	Boil	cf. Tarok fɪl ,
riri	Be sharp	cf. Tarok – riri . This may be a reduplication and not an extension
turyi	Resemble	
wuri	Blow (mouth)	cf. Yaŋkam wurok , Horom wil , Berom wōlōm
wuri	Enter	
yari	Be straight	

-fi

The following verbs appear to have the verbal extension –fi. **bifi** ‘call’ is the only one to have a clear cognate in another Tarokoid language. **lamfi** ‘lick’ is interesting because the cLela (Kainji) cognate suggest this extension can be reconstructed to a considerable historical depth.

bɪʃi	Call (summon)	cf. Pe bisi , Fyem ɓísá
bwaʃ	Be rotten	
i		
lamʃi	Lick	cf. Buji lama , Kwanka lyam , cLela lɛmsÉ , Lamnso la . Forms with initial l- are very widespread and there may be an ideophonic element.
lɔkʃi	Pour	=spit, eject
lɔkʃi	Spit	
nuŋʃi	Smell	cf. Tarok niŋ ⁺ , Yangkam nuŋ , CB #- nùŋk (C.S. 1386) reconstructing back at least to Proto-Benue-Congo
rɔkʃi	Drop	
ʃiʃi	Fear	This may be a reduplication and not an extension
wafʃi	Pluck (fruit)	
zɔkʃi	Shake	

6. Lexical comparison and the classification of Sur

The classification of Sur is unclear from the existing published literature. In view of its previously uncertain classificatory status I have sought to identify as many external cognates as possible.

6. Sur wordlist

Sur nouns have no plural alternations but simply add the prefix à- to all nouns. No exceptions to this were recorded, even for persons.

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
No.	Nouns		
1.	tree	kon	cf. Pe kón , Yangkam koon , Tarok akún ‘firewood’. This root is widespread in Niger-Congo, often meaning firewood.
2.	leaf	yyaŋ	cf. Tarok agwál , Yangkam kaŋ , Pe áwáŋ , Shall yaŋ . Reconstructed as *(g)yaNa for EBC in Blench (ms). Also in Chadic e.g. Ngas yəm
3.	root	ryuŋsuŋ	cf. Tarok alàŋ , Pe u-liŋ , though this may go back to Mande
4.	branch	baya kon	cf. Yaŋkam ɓyala + ‘tree’
5.	trunk (of tree)	kijiri	
6.	grass	pik	cf. Tarok ipìpà , Yangkam sepip ‘forest’, Pe upip ‘forest, bush’. Westerman (310) cites #- pi as a PWS root, but his evidence is restricted to Benue-Kwa languages.
7.	mushroom	tukwalaŋ	
8.	seed/stone/pip	gum	
9.	bark (of tree)	gwok	cf. Tarok akòkci , Pe u-kaŋguk , Yaŋkam gwaŋ , PLC *i-kpók ,
10.	thorn	wu	cf. Yaŋkam wu
11.	charcoal	tikal	cf. Tarok akál , Bu ikóla . Plateau terms often have a ti- prefix though not in a precisely comparable form. The -kal element goes back to Niger-Saharan.
12.	Dust	buruŋ	cf. Bu iwuru
13.	Ashes	duri	cf. Kwanka ndori although both these are probably local variants of the widespread #tu- root often with a final velar nasal in Plateau
14.	rubbish heap	kuburi	ku- prefix + cf. Horom abuk , Kwanka bura
15.	mud	bwok	cf. Ngas ɓòk , perhaps also Tarok aɓer ⁺ , Yaŋkam bwaar , Pe a-bwatibe
16.	clay (for pots)	kimi	cf. Yaŋkam mi ‘earth’, Tarok amè

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
17.	dew	myaŋ	cf. Tarok imimyaŋ , Yaŋkam myaŋ , Pe inyaŋ Reflex of a Niger-Congo root # me-
18.	stone	tikan	? related to Nungu kí-kè , Aten kèè , unless forms such as Bu kita are related by metathesis.
19.	sand	ʃiʃal	cf. Tarok ashishiri , Pe aʃiʃei , Yaŋkam ʃyar , Vute sasé , Kwanja Ndung sǎ , Jangani ʃu , Gaa aʃemʃemta
20.	smoke	nziŋ	cf. Horom ʃiʃeŋ , Pe ntsaiŋ
21.	fire	bifi	Probably borrowed from Chadic ifi forms and assigned a new prefix. Widespread in Bantoid. See discussion in Blench (1996)
22.	water	ryaŋ	
23.	rain	ryaŋ wwot	‘water + ?’
24.	cloud	leri	cf. Tarok ilùlù
25.	lightning	yaki	
26.	rainy season	yuwap	
27.	dry season	giʃi	
28.	harmattan	tuktur	
29.	year	kər	cf. Ijò kúráf .
30.	today	lem	=sun
31.	yesterday	ɔlɔŋ	? cf. Tarok ɛlám
32.	tomorrow	ʃweni	=morning. The same connection is made in Tarok, although with a different root.
33.	morning	ʃweni	also ‘tomorrow’ ()
34.	evening	cirki	
35.	darkness	boobi	cf. words for ‘blindness’, e.g. Berom bwók , Mambila bòb , Nnakenyare bòòp ,
36.	dawn	pyaŋ ʃweni	
37.	day	vitlem	vit [?] + lem ‘sun’
38.	night	gutuk	-tuk is found throughout EBC. cf. Berom túrūk , but also tūk ‘day of 24 hours’. Also Izere kâ-túk , Cara kituk , Rukul atuk
39.	moon/month	pyam	cf. Tarok apé , Yangkam ʃee . A Niger-Congo root. Also Chadic: Fyem fyél , Sha, Kulere fen
40.	sun	lem	cf. Tarok alum ⁺ , Pe u-lom , Yaŋkam loom
41.	Star(s)	mat	
42.	Wind	vivi	cf. Tarok ɛvivil ‘whirlwind’
43.	God	Nen	A widespread root in this region of Nigeria. cf. Angas Nen , Tarok, Pe ìNan ,
44.	sky	kubut	cf. Tarok aɖuɖúr [used in compounds],
45.	bush	bel	cf. Wukari Jukun byě , and possibly other scattered forms with initial b- . ? cf. P- Ijò ʃòù
46.	lake	deb ryaŋ	cf. Bantu ? and Ijò
47.	valley	kitaŋ	
48.	earth, soil	məri	cf. Cara mwel , Berom vwel , Pe mve ‘world’ suggesting a proto-form # mvwel
49.	thunder	yendet	
50.	river	bwøndər	
51.	hill/mountain	dugəl	cf. Tarok aɖur ⁺ ,

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
52.	farm	ram	cf. Fyem rám , Horom rama , Tarok, Pe iràm , Yaŋkam ram . Ngas has màr which looks like metathesis
53.	field	seri	
54.	compound	dugor	
55.	house	galəŋ	cf. Tarok ŋkələŋ ‘family, lineage’, Pe ikalaŋ , Yaŋkam loŋ , also Ngas lu
56.	room	kuʃəŋ	
57.	wall (of room)	gafi	
58.	roof	pir	
59.	granary	besəŋ	
60.	well	gùdúgúrìn	‘water-hole’?
61.	road	gizel	cf. Tarok asəl , Pe u-tsel , Eggon o-fen , ? Bo ma-tel (pl.), also E. Ijọ
62.	town	mel	
63.	village	kwambel	
64.	riverbank	kwaŋ bwəndər	? + ‘river’. cf. Tarok akəŋkòŋ
65.	swamp/wetland	pələr	cf. Pe u-pəən ‘river’,
66.	place	ri	cf. Pe uru pl. aru
67.	person	nimbi	cf. Tarok unim , Ekoid N ŋ-nôm .
68.	man	nukurum	cf. Yaŋkam nyirum , Fyem róm pl. ɓarom . The #-rom- element is a very widespread Benue-Congo root for ‘man/male’, ‘person’ (see discussion in BCCW 59).
69.	woman	ʃer or ʃyar	cf. Tarok ucàr , Yaŋkam ker , Doka o-sal , Lungu ku-tsar , Eggon à-ʃlé
70.	child (general)	mwanəŋ	cf. Yaŋkam ‘children’ munda , Tesu amere , Tikar mwāē , Jaku mín , Bapi mwÉn , Degema ómó . Also PB, Yoruba, Igbo etc. Also Chadic: Wangday min , Geji mil ,
71.	old person	garki	
72.	husband	urom	u- prefix + -rom , a Niger-Congo root for ‘male’ (see discussion in BCCW,II. See Fyem, Horom rom pl. barom
73.	wife	ʃer or ʃyar	see ‘woman’ (Error! Reference source not found.)
74.	father	ba	cf. Yaŋkam ba though this is a worldwide root
75.	mother	naa	cf. Tarok ùnina , Pe u-na , Yaŋkam nan although this reconstructs to PMC level.
76.	son	mwanəŋ	Also ‘child’ (Error! Reference source not found.)
77.	daughter	maʃer	‘child’ + ‘woman’
78.	youth	mwanəŋ	Also ‘child’ (Error! Reference source not found.)
79.	ancestors	(a)gizet	
80.	barren woman	suyur	
81.	friend	be	cf. Yaŋkam ɓər , but also Mambiloid mbi
82.	guest/stranger	zin	cf. Tarok ùnimcin (where ùnim is ‘person’), Fyem cen . A root #kyin- goes back to Proto-Atlantic-Congo (PWN 129). cf. LC sen . Ijoid, Bantu
83.	chief	ler	
84.	hunter	kəpəlɔwak	
85.	thief	laŋ	cf. Yaŋkam ɓəlaŋ
86.	doctor (native)	ʃeni	
87.	witch	nan	

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
88.	corpse	tukum	cf. Tarok akúm , Yangkam ku . The #- kum element is widespread in Benue-Congo and tu- is presumably an unproductive prefix. Also Chadic: Mwashavul kúm ,
89.	blacksmith	kəlayən	la- element may be cognate with Tarok la⁺ ‘to smith’
90.	slave	mwan	cf. Ngas nfwan
91.	widow	ʃer kula	
92.	anger	byen	
93.	fear (n)	ʃiʃi	cf. Nindem sisip , Kadara u-ʃi , Rindre cici
94.	shame	kifi bwagal	
95.	bravery	ryak fi	
96.	truth	kubwana	
97.	wisdom	kubari	
98.	laughter	uwal	? cf. Tarok ñ-yil , Yangkam yil ‘to laugh’
99.	life	yir-vari	
100.	death	ku	cf. Tarok ikú , . A Niger-Congo root #ku
101.	name	kyin	cf. Pe ti-yin , PJ * gyin , CB #- gɪnà . All are probably versions of a PVC root # ɟiri
102.	grave	kigyin	
103.	song	uwum	widespread?
104.	language	kuɲwar	
105.	story	tadi	< H.
106.	word	kusurmi	
107.	lie	ryaya	cf. Tarok arwàp (archaic)
108.	proverb	kifi kuwar	
109.	prophesy	kəraki	
110.	oath	kunser	
111.	news	nugwalgwál	
112.	insult	ɲgarak	
113.	hunger	yyəŋ	cf. Fyem yóŋ , Tarok ayáŋ , Mangar (Chadic) yuŋ and Hausa yunwa .
114.	thirst	yyəŋ-ryaŋ	‘hunger for water’
115.	famine	yyekwan	
116.	horn	dugwot	
117.	tail	kuʃol	cf. Tarok aswál
118.	egg	ʒi	cf. Tarok aci , Pe ti-ci pl. a-ci , Yangkam gyɔ Common in Plateau in this form, but reflects a Niger-Congo root with g- initial (W. 214).
119.	wing	gwanji	the -ji is likely to be a suffix and the gwan- element cognate with other forms with a labial velar. Thus: Mada ɲgbã , Nindem à-ɲgbá Eggon òŋgba , Yashi kwen . (BCCW,101).
120.	beak	kunu nyɔl	‘mouth of bird’
121.	nest (of bird)	galəŋ nyɔl	‘house of bird’
122.	feather	dugur	
123.	bundle	bak	cf. Tarok abak ‘heap’
124.	gum/glue	korgi	
125.	termite hill	galəŋ ʃum	‘house of termite’
126.	hole (in ground)	guduk	
127.	poison	bwat	
128.	war, fight	gwəm	cf. Tarok ikùm , Pe ikom , Yangkam gum . A weakening of the common Niger-Congo root #- kwan (see BCCW,99).

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
129.	work	ʃɔm	A form of the extremely widespread PMC root # tom-
130.	divination (generic)	ʃeni	
131.	medicine (trad.)	gal	cf. Pe u-kali
132.	medicine (charm)	lau	< Hausa layi
133.	money	gɪzám	= iron. cf. Fyem gʻám
134.	Shadow	wuri	cf. Pe wurok
135.	Thing	ni	cf. Yashi nina , Chawai nyen , Kegboid nu , Nupe enya
136.	land/country	mel	cf. Cara mwel , Berom vwel , Pe mve ‘world’ suggesting a proto-form # mvwel
137.	sleep	na	the na- element is extremely common in East Benue-Congo, e.g. Wapan na , Hasha na , Lamnso náá-rî
138.	Gift	nididi	
139.	load	kaya	< H.
140.	market	as Hausa	
141.	soap (traditional)	bwaʃi	
142.	stick	mbyaŋ	
143.	soul	wuriwuri	cf. ‘shadow’ ()
144.	masquerade	rum	cf. Tarok ùrim
145.	time	kubel	
146.	world	tukur	
147.	firewood	kon	cf. ‘tree’ An ancient Niger-Congo root going back at least to PAC. Discussed in BCCW.
148.	disease / illness	ʃwal	? cf. Pe iset
149.	smallpox	sɔ(p)pi	
150.	diarrhoea	ryak zuzuk	cf. Tarok zùk ‘to pour out’
151.	goitre	bəyɔlbəyɔl	? cf. Tarok mbukùm
152.	sore / wound	kinyet	cf. Pe u-nat , Yangkam n-not , Tarok anúnur
153.	cough	fwaram	
154.	fever	yiləyɔ	‘body + ?’
155.	boil (n)	yiwuni	‘body + fruit’
156.	leprosy	kwai	
157.	dream (n)	kəraʃi	
158.	funeral	tukur	
159.	running / race	kyaŋ	
160.	head	kiʃi	The -ʃi is a common root throughout Benue-Congo
161.	eye	ki	
162.	face	ki	= eye
163.	cheek	ʃayal	
164.	forehead	pinkifi	? + head
165.	nose	gəvərum	cf. Yangkam viram ,
166.	ear	koto	cf. Tarok acwáŋ , Pe u-toŋ , Yangkam toŋ . The PVC root -tu for ear with an assimilated ki- prefix. (PWN 556)
167.	mouth	kunu	cf. Tarok anùŋ , Pe unùŋ , Yangkam noŋ . The Niger-Congo root -nu for mouth with an assimilated ki- prefix.
168.	lips	kyan kunu	‘edge of the mouth’ the same term is used for riverbank
169.	tooth	nyin	cf. Tarok inyin , Pe ti-yin . A Niger-Saharan root
170.	tongue	kilerem	ki- prefix + cf. Tarok aðilim ⁺ , Mabo de-rem , cLela d-rémé , ultimately PNC # -lima

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
171.	throat	gwòṅgólòṅ	#goro forms are found throughout Africa (Blench 1996)
172.	neck	mwak	cf. Yaṅkam mwak
173.	chin	kidəgəl	cf. Tarok igèl,
174.	shoulder	pakpal	Despite the appearance of a labial-velar, these do not otherwise seem to occur in Sur and this probably arose at the morpheme boundary. However, #kpa- is a widespread root for 'shoulder' in Niger-Congo.
175.	armpit	zalaklak	<Ngas though compare Nungu lalá
176.	arm/hand	bak	cf. Yaṅkam b ^w ak, Pe u-foḵ, Tarok awó. A Niger-Congo root, usually #bok-
177.	finger	yàribák	? + arm
178.	leg	tukwaki	cf. Yaṅkam kwi, Nungu ù-kprì. The #kwa- element is likely to be a PNC root (Westermann: 239), and the tu- and -ki affixes
179.	breast (female)	mifi	cf. Yaṅkam mi.
180.	stomach	ri	cf. 'eat, food'
181.	belly	ryak	cf. Yangkam lwak,
182.	navel	kumbul	cf. Tarok igum, Pe igum, Yaṅkam kum, Horom kom. Also Mambiloid (Cambap) kúmbūn, PB #kóbù
183.	thigh	ʒ ^(w) ar	cf. Ngas ʒwar. The probable Tarokoid cognates are for 'leg' cf. Tarok aḵár, Aten cwá, Ninzam u-zá probably derived from widespread #ta-roots (BCCW,55).
184.	knee	tukurum	Two possible analyses: either prefix tu- + kuru, a pan-African root for 'knee', or prefixes tu- + ki + -rum a widespread local root for 'knee'. e.g. Yangkam ruṅ, Tarok iriṅ but cf. Fyem dūrúm pl. arúm, Mabo rurum. Reconstructed as #-rúṅù in East Benue-Congo in Blench (ms.) Also in Chadic: Kulere 'arôm, Tangale purum and Mupun fūrùm. This is so widespread in Chadic that the #-rum element may have been loaned into Plateau and its prefix re-analysed.
185.	nail	kəbaṅ	cf. PLC *ùbàrà ? Tarok ifir,
186.	back	zim	cf. Tarok asim, ?Yangkam pinzə, Both this and 'waist' are reconstructed to Proto-Benue-Congo as #-jim (Blench ms.). See also PLC *è-dèm. Also in Chadic: cf. Ngas zəm
187.	chest	nkwak	cf. Tarok ikóksók, ? Tep, Somie kàṅ
188.	waist	jin	see previous entry 'back' (186.) clearly related though not identical
189.	buttocks	kitak kufurum	
190.	penis	gur	cf. Yaṅkam gur, Somie Mambila ṅgōrō 'vagina' and ṅwàr'penis'
191.	vagina	fwən	cf. Yangkam fyel, Horom póré, Nizaa fūr
192.	skin	tùkwá	tu- prefix + cf. Yaṅkam kpa though #kwa is an ancient PMC root. Tarok awá may be a weakened form
193.	bone	tukubi	Prefix tu- + #kub-, cf. Tarok akúp, Pe ukup, Yaṅkam kup but a widespread BC root for 'bone'
194.	rib	tukubi par	'bone' + ?
195.	vein	gizel zəl	'road of blood'
196.	blood	zəl	cf. Tarok ñc̣r, Pe ntsii, Yangkam gyir.
197.	breath	vəri	cf. Pe mve, Vute fíí, Somyev fiélá
198.	tear	iyil	cf. Pe anyul, Yaṅkam yilə. ? cf. Mambiloid e.g. Gembu yón, Gelep yèrmí
199.	saliva	mbyak	
200.	urine	burum	

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
201.	shit	byiŋ	cf. Yaŋkam biyoŋ . #biN- is a widespread PAC root
202.	hair (head)	yil	
203.	beard	ʒod	cf. Yaŋkam ʒar
204.	liver	nci	cf. Ngas nki
205.	body	yii	cf. Yaŋkam yit , Mambila Kb. yeli ; PB #yútu
206.	heart	turum	cf. Yaŋkam nrwoŋ , Pe nteneŋ . Blench (ms.) reconstructs #-duN- for Proto-Benue-Congo which may well be related. Also Chadic: Ngas ður
207.	lungs	fufwak	Forms including fu- are very common and may include a phonaesthetic element. However, see Mambiloid, e.g. Somie fufú
208.	meat	nam	cf. ‘animal’ (209.). Niger-Congo root #nama-, widespread in Plateau, also in Chadic, e.g. Ngas nam
209.	animal	nam	cf. ‘meat’ (208.). Niger-Congo root #nama-, widespread in Plateau, also in Chadic, e.g. Ngas nam
210.	cow	nak	cf. Yaŋkam nak , Pe inak , Tarok inà although widespread in Niger-Congo. Some forms may be borrowed from Fulfulde nagge
211.	goat	wwəl	cf. Tarok iβil , Yangkam be , Pe iβwel , Fyem bʷol . A Niger-Congo root #bok-
212.	he-goat	bus	< H. (?)
213.	castrated he-goat	lukurum wwəl	
214.	sheep	nta	cf. Tarok itam , Pe itamu , Yaŋkam tam but also widespread in West Africa
215.	ram	kunda	
216.	dog	wwa	presumably a reduced form of the more common lexemes with initial b- such as Pe iβwa , Yangkam gba , Tarok iva . A Niger-Congo root
217.	cat*	kyanwa	< H.
218.	horse*	too	cf. Yaŋkam toyo ^(k) but related to widespread West African soo
219.	donkey*	as Hausa	
220.	pig*	as Hausa	
221.	elephant	nanzina	probably ‘animal’ + a form cognate with Irigwe n-ʒè , Mada ezi .
222.	hippopotamus	baktukwa	
223.	buffalo	yyet	cf. Yaŋkam iyeeet , Nupe eya . A root #ya reconstructed for Benue-Congo.
224.	lion	bwar	cf. Ngas mbwar
225.	leopard	gwət	cf. Piti o-kwə , Nungu me-kò and ultimately Westermann’s PNC root, usually reconstructed with a labial velar
226.	duiker	ntap	cf. Tarok itep . Widespread (KW)
227.	porcupine	tumbul	
228.	hyena ²	mutuŋ	cf. Tarok ntuŋ . Also in Chadic: Goemai tumu , Mwaghavul ndùmú
229.	wart-hog	təkʃi	
230.	civet	nda ʃəyəm	
231.	baboon	gwəm	
232.	patas monkey	muni	
233.	squirrel	palaŋ	cf. Yaŋkam pəlaŋ
234.	rat (generic)	bi	cf. Tarok ipi , Yaŋkam pi , Igbo Etiti ʒ-pà , Esimbi è-fimbi
235.	cane rat	zeltem	
236.	giant rat	kwər	cf. Tarok ikpir , Pe i-kot , Yaŋkam ikot , Cara ki-gut

² (*Crocuta crocuta*)

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
237.	hare ³	kafwan	cf. Tyap ??
238.	musk shrew	jabat	
239.	mongoose	luwan	
240.	Fruit-bat	gigyak	
241.	House-bat	tisuk	? Igboid
242.	crocodile	ngebi	the ngge- element is common in Bantoid, especially Bamileke meaning crocodile. Also Mambiloid nga and the -bi element presumably means ‘bad’ as in ‘snake’ (below). it is curious there are no other nearby parallels. Or PB -gubu ?
243.	agama lizard	ɓwari	cf. Pe iɓali , Tarok iɓoli
244.	skink	gut	
245.	gecko	zirkindiŋ	
246.	toad	tubwalabwala	cf. Pe i-ɓwap zhoi , Tarok mɓal atàk
247.	frog	ngafaŋ	
248.	chameleon	kudəkɔŋ	cf. Pe i-ndapsoŋ , Tarok itasum
249.	Bosc’s monitor lizard <i>damo</i>	tukwan	cf. Tarok ikun
250.	water monitor	yyuwar	
251.	tortoise	guguri	cf. Tarok ikwàkkəri . # kul- is virtually a Pan-African root (Blench 1997).
252.	snake (generic)	nambi	‘animal’ + ‘bad’. BCCW gives the examples of Ogbia and Degema where snake is ‘bad thing’
253.	spitting cobra	namdɔyɔm	
254.	black cobra	gwa’ar	
255.	fish	ywak	cf. Yangkam vyak . Connell (1991) reconstructs * é-ɟák /i- for PLC. Also Yoruba ɛja .
256.	crab (water)	tikaŋkalaŋ	cf. Tarok ɲkàm'gwàli , Pe i-gwal , Yangkam ngala . Niger-Congo # kala
257.	bird	nyɔl	cf. Tarok inyil , Pe i-nol , Yangkam noi
258.	chicken	gwari	The -ri is a suffix, and a nasal has almost certainly been assimilated (see ‘cock’). Hence cognates are Horom koŋgo , Yangkam gwoŋja , Berom coŋo
259.	cock	gwanji	see above
260.	guinea-fowl	ɲfyɔk	cf. Tarok irusòk , Eggon i-fugu , Kamanton ɟok . Widespread Plateau # wok forms are probably weakened versions of an initial # ɲfyɔk
261.	duck (domestic)*	agwagwa	< H.
262.	pigeon (domestic)	baru	perhaps shortened from Hausa <i>tantabara</i>
263.	vulture	jintaɟ	
264.	village weaver ⁴	gwal	Reconstructed to Proto-Benue-Congo as # -gba in Blench (ms.)
265.	cattle-egret	palango	
266.	black kite	wwar	
267.	bush-fowl	kwayal	
268.	owl	nyinyi	cf. Ngas yiya
269.	grey parrot	kuler	
270.	pied crow* ⁵	ngwak	cf. Pe i-gokra , Tarok igòrok , Ngas ngak though presumably ideophonic

³ (*lepus crawshayi*)⁴ (*ploceus cucullatus*)

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
271.	woodpecker	nyɔlbəŋ	‘bird of hole’
272.	swallow	barkəlayat	
273.	crowned crane	ʃakulaŋ	
274.	insect (generic)	ámpùŋ	
275.	scorpion	naŋ	cf. Tarok ìnyìnyàŋ, Pe i-naŋ, Yaŋkam naŋ. This root is found scattered through BC and reconstructs back as far as PVC
276.	butterfly	pərpəl	cf. Yaŋkam pilipili. Also Chadic: Ngas purpul,
277.	mosquito	buŋ	cf. Yaŋkam ʃo, LC -bəŋ but a PWN root
278.	spider	nen	cf. Pe i-naan
279.	mason wasp ⁶	ʒiruŋ	
280.	bee	yyək	cf. Yaŋkam vyak, Rukul a-yɔ ^(k) , PB #-yúki
281.	bee-hive	bəŋ yyək	? + ‘bee’
282.	sweatfly	kpaŋʒen	
283.	housefly	nʒim	cf. Pe i-tsiŋ, Tarok ɪcɪŋcɪŋ, Dɔ ʒi, Mambiloid ndʒi but probably part of the larger set reconstructed as #-ciN to Proto-Benue-Congo in Blench (ms.). Also in Chadic: Ngas nʒi, Mwaghavul ndiʒi, Tangale tɪn
284.	ant (generic)	namburna	‘animal’ + ?
285.	louse	dani	cf. PLC *-láŋ, Nizaa lām, PB -dá,
286.	millipede	naŋgwanlaŋ	
287.	cockroach	mpyaman	
288.	termite (generic)	ɪʃum	
289.	Flying ant	iyo	cf. Tarok ñ-yeye, Hasha iyu,
290.	praying mantis	kaltokəri	
291.	earthworm	delele	
292.	centipede	naŋkabari	
293.	sand-fly	dəŋdəŋ	
294.	dragonfly	kalwoni	
295.	firefly	nyalwus	perhaps a compound including wus, the Ngas word for ‘fire’. The Pe word is nkili wus
296.	giant cricket	nakaka	cf. Pe u-kika,
297.	giant snail	kərəŋ fada	
298.	oil	nyii	cf. Pe nnye. Possibly related to the much more widespread Niger-Congo #no-, #nu-
299.	fat	mbip	cf. Tarok m̩p̩p̩ ‘animal fat’, Yaŋkam mbyep. East Benue-Congo #mbyep in Blench (ms.)
300.	salt	nʃwak	cf. Pe ntok,
301.	soup	kuri	cf. Tarok akəri, Yangkam kuru
302.	food	ri	cf. ‘to eat’
303.	sorghum beer	yya	cf. Yaŋkam iyam
304.	peelings	gwanmi	cf. Tarok akwàŋkwaŋ, Pe u-konkoŋ, Yaŋkam gwan
305.	rag	nʒap	cf. Ngas nʒak
306.	handle (of tool)	kupup	cf. Pe u-pomni, Yangkam pəp, Cara pop, Nupe efú, Mambila fù, PB #-péni. Reconstructed to PBC as #-fu[pu] in Blench (ms.)
307.	cutlass	ada	< H.

⁵ (*corvus albus*)⁶ (*belenogaster* spp.)

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
308.	iron (metal)	gɪzám	? cf. Tarok acám , Yangkam gyim ,
309.	axe	pel	
310.	adze	duk	cf. Pe iduk
311.	hoe (gen)	nuwari	
312.	hoes I	nuwari dɔ̀yɔ̀n	
313.	hammer	boro	
314.	knife	mbaram	
315.	comb	bayera	
316.	broom	kafi	
317.	fireplace	kifar	cf. Tarok acir , Pe iciri
318.	shoe	tukwa	? < H. but see Tarok akwàp , Yangkam taxap , Pe kap
319.	cloth (wrapper)	lulu	see ‘cotton’ ()
320.	hat, cap	tagya	< H.
321.	grindstone (lower)	dugwa	cf. Yangkam gyamgwan
322.	grindstone (upper)	mwaɲdugwa	‘child of lower grindstone’
323.	mortar	guzuɲ	gu + zuɲ . cf. Tarok atúm , Pe utuɲ , Horom u-duɲ . The two words seem to be reversed in Fyem, thus Fyem huduɲ ‘pestle’ and tun ‘mortar’. Also in Chadic: Ngas ʃəɲ . This is likely to be a Niger-Congo root derived from the verb ‘to pound’. Hausa túrmíi may be from this source.
324.	pestle	bak gusuɲ	‘arm of the mortar’
325.	pot (clay) (generic)	bɪʃar	cf. Yangkam ʃayara
326.	cooking pot	dikel	
327.	waterpot	kubalaɲ	? cf. Kegboid bá , cf. Mamb/LC?
328.	head-pad	tikat	ti- prefix + #kata A Proto-Benue-Kwa root (PWN 199) cf. Pe ti-kat , Yangkam kə́dà , Tarok akár ,
329.	basket (general)	mbandar	cf. Tarok, Pe mbàndar , Ngas bandar
330.	winnowing tray	kuburi	
331.	mat (gen)	karam	< Ngas karam
332.	mat (sleeping)	pal	
333.	bag	zari	cf. Tarok azhal ⁺ , Ngas nɔ̀zwal
334.	spear	gafi	cf. Tarok ɲgafɪp , Yangkam gəs
335.	bow (weapon)	kita	ki- prefix + Niger-Congo #-ta-
336.	arrow	dɔ̀kfi	
337.	quiver	gwaɲ	? cf. Tarok ijaɲ , Pe i-gigyaɲ both for ‘bow’
338.	needle (thatching)	mwalani	
339.	rope	zet	
340.	chain	zabta	
341.	stool	yizaɲ	
342.	bed	kiler	cf. Tarok alér ,
343.	door	pinpin	cf. Yangkam nonpyaɲ ,
344.	fence	ze	
345.	ladder	ɲkwáɲ	cf. Tarok ɲgwàɲ , Pe i-kon
346.	fish-net	zarna	< H. ?

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
347.	snare	kimbala	
348.	one	ʒaŋna	cf. Tarok ziŋ , Che ʃin , Jari zíní , Hyam zini , eLela ciŋ
349.	two	barap	The ba- element is extremely ancient and can probably be reconstructed back to Niger-Saharan. The -p might be an affix for a count form or else the Chadic #rop has been compounded with the ba- . Note Ngas bap
350.	three	tat	a PNC root
351.	four	ni	a PNC root
352.	five	ʃyɔŋ	cf. Yaŋkam sooŋ , Pe coŋ . A weakening of the more common roots of the form #toon- widespread in Niger-Congo, e.g. Yaŋkam sooŋ , Nembe sòndò , P-Ijò sóŋóróó . Discussed in KW ‘Towards Niger-Congo reconstruction’
353.	six	itar	connected with the root for ‘three’ (and evidence for the duodecimal counting system in Plateau). Cf. Horom taran , Aten taara , Jari gátár , Fyem táárin , also Fyer táán , which are connected with the widespread Plateau root #taani and may have originally represented a reduplicated version of the word for ‘three’
354.	seven	tòk aʃi	a compound whose elements are unclear
355.	eight	kəpakni	perhaps from Ngas pòkwun with deletable k- prefix (see ‘nine’)
356.	nine	pakni ʒaŋ na	‘eight’ + ‘one’
357.	ten	zup	? originally a word for ‘nine’ cf. Yaŋkam zopi . For ‘ten’ ? cf. Kona dup , Anaang dùòp
358.	eleven	zup lə ʒaŋ na	ten + one
359.	twelve	zup lə rəm barap	ten + two
360.	twenty	ʒim barap	cf. Tarok isəm used in compounds for multiples of ‘ten’
361.	thirty	ʒim tat	10 x 3
362.	forty	ʒim ni	10 x 4
363.	hundred	dari	< H.
364.	black	kibi	bi- is an extremely widespread root for ‘black’ in West-Central Africa (Blench 1996a).
365.	white	kipyaŋ	ki- + cf. Ngas pye . P-Ijò pínà’
366.	red	kəzaŋ	cf. Tarok -rizaŋ
367.	half	kijeri	
368.	hot (as fire)	ləyɔ	cf. Yaŋkam doyozu
369.	cold	rusəŋ	cf. Tarok rusok
370.	sweet (tasty)	nyim	
371.	old (of person)	gofi	
372.	new (of thing)	pi	cf. Tarok pipe , Pe mpe , Yaŋkam pyaŋ . Niger-Congo #pi- Also Chadic: Ngas pwi .
373.	wet	fyigur	
374.	dry	womi	cf. Tarok wom , Pe nwoom , Yaŋkam mwom , Takum Jukun wom ⁺ .
375.	all	njyap	
376.	good	bwaŋ	cf. Tarok ḃén
377.	bad	bwaŋtak	
378.	deaf	kotodaŋ	ear + x
379.	dumb	war mitak	
380.	blind	rwak	
381.	empty	warna	

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
382.	full	yilyil	cf. Tarok yíl
383.	many	ri	
384.	Abuse	sòksòr	
385.	Accompany	adak kwula	
386.	Add to	kaŋ	cf. Pe kaŋa
387.	Arrive	kwan	
388.	Ask (question)	byi(bu)	cf. Yaŋkam bip , Tarok ɓip , Pe gigyip but a Niger-Congo root, cf. PLC *bíp , Gbari byibe , P-Ijò ɓi , Reshe bípà
389.	Awaken	yem	cf. Pe yemsel , Tarok yendəl ⁺ , Yangkam yirak
390.	Be bitter	nyələŋ	
391.	Be blunt	ritək	
392.	Be hard	kwətar	cf. ‘be strong’ (400.)
393.	Be heavy	sasa	
394.	Be rotten	bwaʃi	
395.	Be round	lyeklyek	cf. Pe rik ,
396.	Be sharp	riri	cf. Tarok -riri (a.)
397.	Be short	gyeri	
398.	Be small	derʃwet	
399.	Be straight	yari	
400.	Be strong	kwətar	cf. ‘be hard’ (Error! Reference source not found.)
401.	Be tall	lulu	
402.	Beat (drum)	rək	
403.	Beat (s.o.)	cip	cf. Pe cí
404.	Beg	bip	see under ‘ask question’
405.	Begin	mwaru	cf. Tarok rú ,
406.	Bite	nyinki	cf. Tarok nyim , the first element is the word for ‘tooth’
407.	Blow (mouth, wind)	wuri	cf. Təsu wuri , Yaŋkam wurok , Horom wil , Berom wōlōm , Len Mambila èwəl ,
408.	Boil (v)	puri	cf. Tarok fīl ,
409.	Break (stick)	byiki	cf. Tarok ɓikcí
410.	Breathe	yi vəri	cf. Tarok yi
411.	Build (house)	mi	see ‘mould’ (Error! Reference source not found.) cf. Pe, Tarok me ⁺ , Mada mè , cLela ma . Widespread in Plateau but also Niger-Congo.
412.	Burn	pyegel	
413.	Bury	lu	cf. Tarok li ⁺ but a common Benue-Congo root, also found in Ijò. Discussed in Williamson (1992:393) and reconstructed as ɗu to PP4 (Gerhardt 1983).
414.	Buy	rup	=sell. Sur rup , Fyem rép , PLC #-lép , PB #dip . but widespread in BC and reconstructed as #-rÉp- in Blench (ms.). cf. PLC #-lep . Discussed in Gerhardt (1983) and also found in some neighbouring Chadic languages.
415.	Call (summon)	biʃi	cf. Pe bisi , Fyem ɓísá
416.	Carry (child on back)	bəyɔ	
417.	Carry (load)	ya	cf. Tarok yár ,
418.	Carve (wood)	gwa	cf. Tarok gú ‘carve calabash’, Mbembe gwá , Tiv gbà , Yala gba , Mama gbagba . The Jukunoid forms #hwa could well be weakenings of this.
419.	Catch	kakyi	cf. Tarok kpán , Yaŋkam kən , Pe kom

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
420.	Chew	tayal	cf. Pe taŋdi but the ta- element is an ancient Niger-Congo root
421.	Choose	tul	
422.	Climb	fwəŋ	A scattered root in Plateau, cf. Yaŋkam fwəm , ? Tarok fīŋ (pl. of ‘climb down’), Fyem fùŋ , Yeskwa fó , Hyam fó-r , and Che hu
423.	Close (door)	gwək	cf. Tarok kùk
424.	Come	man	
425.	Continue (to do s.t.)	rim bala	
426.	Count	kərəŋ	cf. Tarok kúŋ , Pe kumdi , Kwanka kori , Abuan -kəol and Rindre -kla . All these are versions of a more ancient root #kaLa widespread in Niger-Congo. Also Chadic: Kofyar kwan , Zaar kunaan ,
427.	Cover (pot)	gək	cf. Tarok kùk
428.	Cut (cloth)	kyak	cf. Tarok ca⁺ ,
429.	Cut (rope)	kyari	
430.	Cut down (tree)	kyak	
431.	Cut off (head etc.)	kyak	
432.	Dance	bwəŋ	presumably related to the Mambila bene and Proto-Bantu #bin- though it is strange to find it so isolated. Igbo -bũ .
433.	Defecate	taya	
434.	Descend	zur	
435.	Die	ku	cf. Tarok, Sur, Yangkam kú , Pe pu , Eggon kpù , Tesu kwe , Kenyi kie , Surubu kee . Niger-Congo root #-ku .
436.	Dig	ʃin	cf. Pe sum , Yaŋkam suŋ , Fyem cin , Horom sim , Tesu ʃumu , Kulu cem , Berom ciŋ
437.	Divide (share out)	kyari	if the -ri is a fossil extension, as in other Plateau languages, then this is cognate with the widespread #ka- root found throughout Benue-Congo
438.	Do/make	ʃi	
439.	Drag, pull	nap	? Tarok dàpci , Pe dapti ,
440.	Draw (water)	nap	cf. Kwanka nap
441.	Dream	kərakyi	
442.	Drink	wá	cf. Yaŋkam, Tarok, Arum wá , Pe wu , perhaps reduced from Ngas mwak ? See also Mambiloid, LC, Igboid
443.	Drop	rəkʃi	
444.	Dry in sun	ʃyan	perhaps Anaang sát , almost certainly Bamileke languages, e.g. Bamenjinda saŋ and Bamenyam siê
445.	Dry up	womi	cf. Tarok wóm ‘to be dry’, Yangkam ŋwom , Pe wom .
446.	Dwell, live	ŋar	
447.	Eat	ri	cf. Tarok, Pe rí , Fyem dé , Horom ɗye , linked to the widespread -ri , -di roots found in Niger-Congo
448.	Enter	wuri	
449.	Extinguish	ku	=die
450.	Fall (rain)	wət (man)	cf. Yangkam bowot ,
451.	Fall	gu	Proto-Bantu #-gwa , but also Yala gwo
452.	Fear	ʃiʃi	
453.	Feel (cold etc.)	gwəl	
454.	Fight	gwən	cf. Pe kom , Tarok ikùm ‘fight’,
455.	Filter (e.g. Beer)	ʃifak	cf. Tarok ʃäk ‘to sieve’

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
456.	Finish (a task)	sər	
457.	Flow (water)	zur	
458.	Fly	yel	also ‘stand’ (541.). cf. Fyem yila , Horom yala , Pe yel , Tarok yel ⁺ ‘float’
459.	Fold (e.g. Cloth)	reki	
460.	Follow (behind)	yal kəlmə	
461.	Forget	yelyeŋ	ye + ‘think’
462.	Fry (in oil)	wum	cf. Yangkam wuŋ
463.	Gather (things)	ʒoŋ	? cf. Pe com
464.	Get (obtain)	pit	
465.	Give	dyu	
466.	Give birth	kibyel	
467.	Go out/exit	tur	cf. Yangkam turuk , ?Tarok tur ⁺ ‘to remove’, Nindem doru , Mada dorwe , and possibly also Ribina sùrú and Ekoid M dúù but also in Chadic, Bokkos đu , Fyer đoo
468.	Greet (salute)	yemna	
469.	Grind (vt)	gwak	cf. Yangkam gba , Tarok kpà Also Chadic: Ngas gwak
470.	Grow (v.i.)	garki	
471.	Hatch (egg)	bwaya	cf. Pe, Tarok pwák
472.	Have	myanana	
473.	Hear	gwəl	cf. Tarok kol ⁺ ‘listen to every detail’ Reconstructed to Proto-Benue-Congo as #gbó in Blench (ms.)
474.	Hide	wak	
475.	Hoe (cultivate)	kwari	cf. Hasha kwar , Berom kara (ex BCCW). Perhaps the more widespread East Benue-Congo #ka- root with a fossil extension
476.	Hunt	bar	cf. Pe bai , Tarok abàr ‘hunting expedition’. Also in Chadic: cf. Bokkos faar , Tangale para (n.), Ngizim bàrá and Hausa fàráwtàà
477.	Jump (1)	dam	
478.	Jump (2)	yur	cf. Pe yel
479.	Kill	wəl	cf. Pe wel , Yangkam wyu , Fyem, Horom wol , Pe wel , Kwanka won , Olulomo wùlú although as #wu this is widespread in Niger-Congo
480.	Kneel	zugwəl	
481.	Know	yək	cf. Tarok nyí , Pe yi , Yangkam yakwi ,
482.	Laugh	wal	cf. Tarok wal ⁺ ‘to jeer at’
483.	Learn	kwasal	
484.	Leave	gat	cf. Tarok gà ‘go’
485.	Lick	lamʃi	cf. Buji lama , Kwanka lyam , cLela lɛmsÉ , Lamnso la . Forms with initial l- are very widespread and there may be an ideophonic element. The -ʃi is probably a verbal extension
486.	Lie (down)	zura	cf. Tarok, Pe rá , A widespread Niger-Congo root, often meaning ‘sleep’
487.	Like, want	paləŋ	< Ngas
488.	Listen	dak koto	probably a recent calque
489.	Live (exist)	yivəri	=breathe
490.	Look at	ʃaŋ	
491.	Lose (s.t.)	mari	
492.	Make a mistake	lar	
493.	Marry	rəm	A widespread root related to Niger-Congo #rom ‘man’
494.	Mix	kaŋ	cf. Pe kaŋa , Tarok gwaŋ ⁺
495.	Mould (pot)	mi	see ‘build’ (Error! Reference source not found.).

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
496.	Move (sth.)	gwəp	
497.	Open (door)	gwəri	cf. Pe kuli
498.	Pass (by)	nambal	
499.	Pierce/stab	bor	
500.	Plait (hair) I	lök	cf. Tarok lök ‘to weave’, but widespread
501.	Plait (hair) II	pap	
502.	Plant (tubers)	nyer	
503.	Play (games)	kyirki	
504.	Pluck (fruit)	waji	
505.	Pound (mortar)	səya	
506.	Pour (vt)	lökji	=spit, eject
507.	Push	töksul	
508.	Quarrel	ʃəyɔ	
509.	Receive	ga	cf. Tarok kóm
510.	Refuse (request)	nyi ruwa	This root (nyi-) appears in CB, but not elsewhere in EBC
511.	Remember	lyeŋ	=think. cf. Tarok riŋ ⁺ , Pe leŋkat , Yanƙam ryan
512.	Reply (question)	gamtu	
513.	Resemble	turyi	
514.	Return	kaman	cf. Yanƙam kom
515.	Ride (horse etc.)	fɔn	
516.	Roast	vəŋ	cf. Yanƙam vaŋ , Tarok wàŋ , Pe mva , Eggon vòm , Kohumono vəβ , Obolo fũŋ and some Grassfields. But perhaps see also ‘fry’
517.	Rub	gwarkat	
518.	Run	kyekwul	
519.	Say	wwar	cf. Yanƙam wur
520.	Scratch	kwal	
521.	Search for	pyarimi	
522.	See	ʃaŋ	
523.	Sell	rup	=buy. See commentary under ‘buy’
524.	Send (s.o. To do s.t.)	ʃɔm	a reflex of the Niger-Congo for ‘work’ #tom-
525.	Sew	ŋar	
526.	Shake	zəkʃi	
527.	Sharpen	ryu	cf. Tarok lwà ,
528.	Shoot	tat	cf. Tarok, Yangkam, Pe tat ⁺ . A Niger-Congo root often found as #-ta ‘bow’
529.	Show	ʃer	
530.	Sing	bəŋwum	The bəŋ element is probably connected with the widespread Plateau #bom- . But see also ‘dance’
531.	Sit (down)	zuzəŋ	
532.	Skin (v), flay	wət	
533.	Slaughter (animal)	kal	
534.	Sleep	gudna	see discussion under ‘sleep’ (noun) (137.).
535.	Smash (pot)	ŋaya	cf. Yanƙam nyam , Tarok nyáp ,
536.	Smell	nunʃi	cf. Tarok niŋ ⁺ , Yangkam nuŋ , CB #-nùŋk (C.S. 1386) reconstructing back at least to Proto-Benue-Congo

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
537.	Sneeze	tɪjim	
538.	Sow (seeds in holes)	ɓi	
539.	Speak (a language)	wwar (kunu)	
540.	Spit	lɔkʃi	
541.	Stand (up)	yel	se under 'fly' (458.).
542.	Stay / remain	deri	cf. Ngas ɗar
543.	Steal	rilaŋ	cf. Yaŋkam laŋ
544.	Stir (soup)	zɔymi	
545.	Suck	wa	see under 'drink' (442.).
546.	Surpass	nambal	
547.	Swallow	mərək	cf. Tarok məkən ⁺ , Yaŋkam mər
548.	Sweep	byak	
549.	Swell (as boil)	fɔŋfɔŋ	? cf. Tarok fil ,
550.	Swim	kuwa	
551.	Take	ya	cf. Tarok yár ,
552.	Take off (clothes)	tul	cf. Tarok tur ⁺ ,
553.	Talk	wwar	
554.	Taste	ʃyam	
555.	Tear	suŋ	
556.	Thank	dabu dɔyɔn	
557.	Think	lyeŋ	see under 'remember' ().
558.	Throw	rɔk	
559.	Tie (animal with rope)	ʒit	
560.	Tie (e.g. Bundle)	ʒit	
561.	Touch	zɔk	cf. Tarok dòk ,
562.	Trap (set a)	kəbalak	cf. Tarok lwák ,
563.	Turn round	gəsəl	
564.	Twist (rope etc.)	myerkat	cf. Yaŋkam, Tarok myar ⁺ , Pe mande
565.	Uncover (pot)	gəri	
566.	Untie	pun	cf. Tarok fɪn
567.	Uproot (g. Nuts)	ʃin	=dig. cf. Yaŋkam suŋ , Horom sim
568.	Urinate	lɔk burɔm	'spit urine'
569.	Vomit	gwaksa	
570.	Walk	ʒen	cf. Tarok cèn , Nindem sen , Yashi ʃin , Tiv, dzèndè , Common Ekoid jèn , Legbo sɛŋ , LC sàŋ . These forms are probably related to a wider series with a stop in C ₁ , reflecting CB #-gènd-. Discussed in Williamson (1992: 393)
571.	Want	palaŋ	=like probably a loan from Ngas
572.	Wash	ŋgal	cf. Tarok nàl , Pe nyali , Yangkam nwi ,
573.	Wear	nyak	
574.	Weave (e.g. Cloth)	lɔk	see under 'plait'. An ancient Niger-Congo root
575.	Weep (cry)	mwa	
576.	Wipe	byak	cf. Tarok gbàk

	Gloss	Kisur	Commentary
577.	Work	ʃiʃɔm	A reduplicated form of the ancient Niger-Congo root # tom- . See also under 'send'
578.	Worry	lyenlyen	'think' reduplicated
579.	Wring (clothes)	yerkat	
580.	Write	war	
581.	Yawn	ŋaŋaŋa	ideophonic?
582.	I	mi	cf. Tarok mi ⁺
583.	you	bu	cf. Tarok bu
584.	he/she/it	neme	
585.	we	yiyi	cf. Tarok yi
586.	you	nyinyin	
587.	they	bami	
588.	here	roma	
589.	there	yina	
590.	this	mam	
591.	that	ma	
592.	who?	waŋ	
593.	which?	minan	
594.	what?	iyan	cf. Pe iyana ,
595.	where?	wanan	

No.	Gloss	Singular	Commentary
596.	Guinea yam	girki	
597.	aerial yam	gùrtá	
598.	taro ⁷	mwálám	
599.	new cocoyam ⁸	wáli	< H.
600.	cassava	rògò	< H.
601.	sweet potato	lāwùr	< H.
602.	sorghum	yeri	cf. Mambiloid
603.	3-month sorghum	didar	? < <i>jigaari</i>
604.	millet (<i>maiwa</i>)	mər	cf. Tarok imàr , Yangkam marak , Pe ime but perhaps these are loans from Ngas?
605.	millet (<i>geero</i>)	gari	
606.	Eleusine* ⁹	sargi	cf. Tarok izànziŋ , ? Pe i-zan̄di , Yangkam saraŋa ,
607.	fonio	tiŋi	cf. Pe itisa , Tarok ibìshí , Bu isu , Gbari esu
608.	iburu	tiŋi-musum	
609.	maize	balbo	< Fyer bálbo , Ngas balwo
610.	rice	ʃinkafa	< H.
611.	cowpea ¹⁰	sandok	< H. for the 'coiled pod' cultivars
612.	Bambara groundnut	fadari	
613.	groundnut(s)	maken	
614.	garden egg ¹¹	nzi	
615.	okra	lanpat	
616.	chili pepper	ʃita	< H.

⁷ (*C. esculenta*)⁸ (*Xanthosoma mafaffa*)⁹ (*Eleusine coracana*) (H. *tamba*)¹⁰ (*Vigna unguiculata*)¹¹ (*solanum melongena*)

No.	Gloss	Singular	Commentary
617.	onion	alabasa	<Hausa
618.	tomato	tumatur	<Hausa
619.	<i>guna</i> melon ¹²	boro	
620.	edible squash ¹³	bat	
621.	sorrel	swa	cf. Yaŋkam zaŋ
622.	sesame seeds ¹⁴	lām	cf. Tarok il̩mpyar , Pe ilumsa ,
623.	black sesame ¹⁵	ŋimji	
624.	sesame leaves	ngamŋi	
625.	waterleaf* ¹⁶	aleho	< Hausa
626.	bitterleaf	rumji	
627.	banana ¹⁷	ayaba	< H.
628.	gourd (generic)	gigəl	
629.	gourd-bottle ¹⁸	ribji	
630.	gourd (spherical)	gəl ləyən	
631.	tobacco	taba	< H.
632.	cotton	putuk	
633.	fan-palm ¹⁹	wayar	cf. Ngas wakar
634.	oil palm	wurbaj	
635.	Canarium tree ²⁰	mpat	< Ngas pet
636.	wild date-palm ²¹	gaŋ	cf. Tarok ngàŋ , Pe ngaŋ
637.	baobab	rəŋji	
638.	silk-cotton tree ²²	kum	cf. Yaŋkam, Rukul kum , Pe kukum , Tarok ikumkum (snuff-box tree) also Mambiloid but this root is found widely in West Africa, often applied to the baobab
639.	shea tree ²³	kura	cf. Pe ì-kup
640.	locust ²⁴	lwal	cf. Yangkam roi , Tarok ilur , Horom riyḏl , Bu ērḥ
641.	locust fruit	wuni-lwal	
642.	locust-bean cakes	nizi	
643.	tamarind	ndum	cf. Tarok it̩l̩l̩m , Pe itum , Yangkam ɗum ,
644.	Black plum ²⁵	zi-kibi	
645.	<i>Calotropis procera</i>	fɔnkapan	
646.	monkey-guava ²⁶	kuza	

¹² (*Citrullus lanatus*)¹³ (*Cucurbita pepo*)¹⁴ (*Sesamum indicum*)¹⁵ (*S. radiatum*)¹⁶ (*Amaranthus* spp)¹⁷ (*Musa* AAA)¹⁸ (*Lagenaria siceraria*)¹⁹ (*Borassus aethiopum*)²⁰ (*C. schwein-furthii*)²¹ (*Phoenix reclinata*)²² (*Ceiba pentandra*)²³ (*Vitellaria paradoxa*)²⁴ (*Parkia biglobosa*)²⁵ (*Vitex doniana*)

No.	Gloss	Singular	Commentary
647.	<i>Faidherbia albida</i>	wukipiyaŋ	

7. The affinities of Sur

The present study suggests that Sur is certainly a Plateau language. It shares a numerous common lexical items, and there is evidence for a fossilised system of class–prefixes in accord with those in nearby languages. The existing suggestion, that it is related to Eloyi, is so far from the truth as to make it likely this was an erroneously transcribed remark. No single common lexical item between the two languages was identified that was not also common to numerous other languages. The sections below consider the links with Plateau, Tarokoid and the shared vocabulary with Chadic.

7.1 Links with Plateau

Sur shows a number of ‘classic’ Niger-Congo roots, whose sources can be consulted in Westermann (1927) and Mukarovsky (1976-1977) (e.g.).

7.2 Relationship with Tarokoid

Sur people do not know of any language that resembles their own, and given their Ngas orientation would probably be surprised that its closest relatives are Tarokoid. This is not all that surprising, given the enclaving of Tapshin among the Ngas, which is similar to the position of Pe, further down the road toward Langtang. The Tarokoid group consists of Tarok, Pe and Yanƙam but excludes Turkwam and Arum-Chessu, formerly listed as members (Blench 1996b).

Items shared with all members of Tarokoid

Items shared with Yangkam

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Error! Reference source not found., 277.

Items shared with Pe

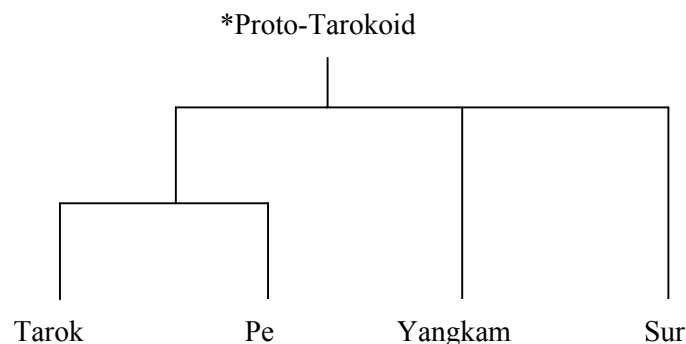
Items shared with Tarok

As the data tables show, Sur shares more lexical items with the Tarok group than any other branch of Plateau. Impressionistically, the language closest to Sur is Yanƙam, and the two share a number of lexical items not found elsewhere in Tarokoid (e.g.).

Error! Reference source not found. presents a tentative structure for the Tarokoid group based on present evidence. A full reconstruction will be undertaken in due course.

²⁶ (*Diospyros*)

Figure 2. Internal structure of Tarokoid



The evidence presented here seems to further the suspicion that Tarokoid should not have the distinctive status it has acquired in recent classifications (see also Blench in press).

7.3 Influence of Chadic languages

Apart from recent Hausa borrowings, the cognate list shows substantial mutual influence with Ngas. In some cases this is simply the borrowing of material culture items, such as baskets and mats (**Error! Reference source not found., Error! Reference source not found., Error! Reference source not found.**). The direction of borrowing is harder to determine in other cases, for example bird names (**Error! Reference source not found., Error! Reference source not found.**). In the case of ‘house-fly’ (**Error! Reference source not found.**) the widespread presence of the root in Benue-Congo languages suggests that the word was borrowed by Ngas, though not necessarily from Sur, of course. Why words such as ‘thigh’ (**Error! Reference source not found.**) should be borrowed is hard to imagine.

7.4 Conclusion

To summarise these results;

- a) Sur is a Plateau language
- b) Sur is part of the Tarokoid group and is probably most closely related to Yangkam.
- c) There has been substantial mutual influence with the Ngas language, and Ngas is in some cases clearly the receptor language, despite its present-day numerical importance
- d) Despite virtual bilingualism in Hausa there has been very limited influence except for recent items of material culture.

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