

# A WORD-LIST OF ELOYI

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The Eloyi people<sup>1</sup> (called *afo* by the Hausa, and *epe* by the Idoma) are indigenous to the southern districts of Nasarawa Division of Benue Province. The Eloyi are divided into two main dialect areas known as Eloyi Mbambu (those along the Benue River who tend to live in larger villages) and the Eloyi Mbeci (lit. the Eloyi of the Rocks) around and to the north of Edeje (called Udegi on most maps). Both sections are strong animists and each compound has its own network of fetishes and idol houses.

They form one of the many smaller tribes of the Niger-Benue Valley area, but it is very difficult to estimate their number (perhaps something in the region of 10,000-20,000) as their villages generally consist of various tribal sections. The area contains much fertile farming land which attracts people from surrounding areas - particularly the Idoma, Bassa, Igbirra and Hausa. Owing perhaps to the highly complicated structure of Bantu-type plural and concordial forms, few people from other tribes can speak their language, even after having lived in the district for many years.

Many of the Eloyi along the Nasarawa-Loko road can speak Hausa through contact with Government departments, traders, etc., and most of the Eloyi Mbambu can understand the Agatu dialect of Northern Idoma by their contact with Agatu markets across the Benue and with the number of Agatu-speaking people who live in their area.

As no data for this language has been previously published, the following word-list has been obtained through the author's knowledge of Idoma, and must be regarded as tentative.

## PHONEMICS<sup>2</sup>

The phonemes of Eloyi seem to be as follows:

### CONSONANTAL

Plosives	labial	labio-dental	alveolar	palatal	velar	labio-velar
voiceless	p		t		k	kp
voiced	b		d		g	gb
Affricates						
voiceless				c		
voiced				j		
Nasals						
voiced	m		n	ɲ	ŋ	
Fricatives						
voiceless		f	s	ʃ		
voiced		v	z	ʒ		
Lateral						
voiced			l			
Vibrant						
voiced flap			r			
Semivowels						
voiced	w			y		

<sup>1</sup> See endnote.

<sup>2</sup> The Editors have retranscribed the author's material in a broader notation.

