

A wordlist of Abureni on illnesses, diseases, and global pandemics

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Abstract

The Abureni language is spoken along the southern borders of Bayelsa and Rivers States of Nigeria. It has names of common illnesses, diseases, and global pandemics that its people had suffered in the past, but they are not documented in any extant literature. The objective of this article is to address the identified gap by providing a wordlist on the diseases and illnesses in the Abureni language. The main tool for data elicitation was Roberts & Snider (2006)'s SIL Comparative African Wordlist (SILCAWL), from which illness and disease-related words were drawn and expanded. The data were presented in different linguistic domains and reviewed with selected native speakers, especially medical professionals. The author notes that during a global pandemic, native speakers used new language and interplay of words to describe the illness or disease that was prevalent. The interplay with words became more pronounced for novel diseases than for known types of diseases. It is anticipated that the results from this study will serve as resources to an Abureni wordlist or dictionary, thus minimizing the dearth of literature on Abureni disease names.

Keywords: Abureni, illnesses, diseases, global pandemic, wordlist.

Abstract in Abureni

Nà òkpa mà Onu Abureni dà rogbaḱi esoromà Ebhugh Abayelsa nà Ebùgh Aribhij dà Anaiziria. Anwunom Abureni enwunà mà aridien rasunwer ya awa inwereghu mà obhel ola nà aten, nà iya itei ebla radede, yaa, ta oge do omution. Ezin wa utun uge mà adire onon bho, bha omution adire aridien rasunwer. Adire wa ukpon uge mà idiar bho, bha Adire Otuoghom Idiar Ogbo ASIL Da Ronuema Afirika 'SIL Comparative African Wordlist', ola Aroboti 'Roberts' nà Asinaida 'Snider' igè mà ala 2006 bho. Uson aridien rasunwer ise, sa ulogioghom ipan ureghemeni. Ubigh dà ogir onon maa, igiel asunwer ola atei ebla radede asor, bha anwunom bho nà emutioghom imom ronuema, nà egba nà ebebelegiom asunwer bho. Igir okua boka, ogba ogboloma mà ororu asunwer bho, dà

onuema olá eblá ogbo ta emughonyan. Idi robhel, anwunom na ebhin aguo asunwer wa atei eblá radede bho na etuom asunwer olá awa uloghom, sa na ekpon okua na eghol adien. Na obem ologi maa, idiar ya uge umutiom bho, ta edigh esi da ogir oge Adire Aridien Idiar, bodo, Adire Ogba Ezin Idiar da Onu Abureni. Sa ta obhin adire onon ologhom ani da radire Onu Abureni ya na oge bho.

Introduction

The Abureni language is spoken along the southern borders of Bayelsa and Rivers States in the South-South Geo-political region of Nigeria in West Africa. It is classified severally as a member of the Niger-Congo, Atlantic-Congo, Volta-Congo, Benue-Congo, Cross River, Delta Cross, and Central Delta families of languages (Eberhard et al., 2021; Faraclas, 1989; Williamson, 1989). In Udoh & Okon (2008), Abureni is similarly listed in the political classification and linguistic affiliations of languages in Bayelsa and Rivers States, and in Central Delta Group. For administrative purposes, Daniel (2017) and Etire (2015) note that the communities and the satellite settlements that constitute Abureni are currently located in two separate States of Nigeria: Bayelsa State and Rivers State, and in the three Local Government Areas of Abua/Odual, Nembe, and Ogbia. Abureni people have names of common illnesses, diseases, and global pandemics that they had suffered in the past, but the ailments are not documented. This is because members of the speech community use oral tradition as the predominant means of communication. Abureni native speakers use orality to communicate their historical accounts, belief systems, cultural features, and how they understand their environment or emerging issues. The ways the people respond to a disease and its treatment protocols are based on the knowledge of the disease and how it manifests on patients. There is a common adage in Abureni that says, *Asunwèr olá úlóghóm àdièn, ná ábùr òkòkò*, meaning, ‘A disease with a known name is easy to cure.’

According to Rogers (2020), the World Health Organization (WHO) is responsible for declaring a pandemic and monitors the activities of the disease on a global scale from a network of centers located in countries worldwide with a preparedness plan. For such disease control and recovery plans to be effective, community members, health service providers, patients, and the public, need to have a common understanding of the issues at stake. In a discourse on the challenges associated with the language of public health in Tiv, Ianna (2017) argues for the need of people to have grounded knowledge of the conceptualization of diseases. Furthermore, Ianna (2017) states that “if these laymen present themselves before doctors and the two parties use medical terms with different concepts and meaning in mind they may be talking at cross-purposes. The language and terminology of health needs to be appropriate for all user groups.” For a local population with non/limited access to government health facilities, such as Abureni, the inhabitants need appropriate awareness of the preventive and curative procedures relating to both the common and emerging illnesses, diseases, and pandemics. This can be enhanced through

suitable health education of the people, and providing them with user-friendly health literacy materials, such as a translated wordlist of illnesses, diseases, and global pandemics.

The forgoing narrative influenced the objectives of this study which is to first state the Abureni-given names of illnesses, diseases, and global pandemics that are either familiar or alien to the people and explain their meanings and backgrounds. The second objective is to produce a wordlist as the final output to serve as input to an ongoing Abureni Language Development and Documentation Project. Finally, this wordlist is expected to be a starting point or reference material for those who may wish to work on any aspect of the taxonomy, and compilation of a dictionary of the Abureni language. Few scholars have expressed concern over the dearth of linguistic research, and literature in some Benue-Congo languages where Abureni belongs. According to Babaev (2019), “The East Benue-Congo families of Cross River and a few genetically isolated languages of Nigeria are still far from being sufficiently studied or even described, and the amount of linguistic data for many of them remains quite scarce.” Similarly, in a discourse of Central-Delta languages, Ndimele et al (2009) listed Abureni among the languages with dearth of literature, stating that they did not know of any published work in it at the time. Specifically, the author does not also know of any previously published wordlist on Abureni that focuses on illnesses, diseases, and global pandemics. In the absence of any previously written literature on their research subjects in Abureni, Daniel (2017) and Robert (2019) separately note that they relied on oral tradition to gather information for their studies. Similarly, the present study relies on oral tradition to gather the historical and cultural features of the investigated data. It is anticipated that a written wordlist on disease-related vocabulary will be useful in communicating the meanings of illnesses, diseases and pandemics to the people, in a consistent manner.

Literature review

Some indigenous scholars (Akari, 2014; Daniel, 2014; Ebua, 2017a; Etire, 2023; Robert, 2019) have listed the names of diseases, illnesses, and pandemics as part of their language documentation projects. This is driven by the effect of globalization on the way people are expected to communicate and respond to emerging health challenges to their benefit. For example, Echernó (2001) provides an English-Igbo Index containing over sixty Igbo-given names of diseases, illnesses, and pandemics, such as chicken-pox, cholera, cough, diarrhea, disease, epidemic, epilepsy, headache, illness, influenza, leprosy, malaria fever, mental illness, plague, and smallpox. In the same vein, Emenanjo & Anyanwu (2013) included in a comparative wordlist of five Igbo Dialects, the Igbo-given names of illnesses and disabilities like blindness, deafness, hunchback, skin (flay), swell (of boil), cough and vomit.

In a lexical comparison between Tiv and Ugare languages, Alyebo (2017) scantily mentions words that related to illnesses and diseases, although their two-hundred wordlist

contained the names of several parts of the human body. In a critique of the effectiveness of health communication in Tiv communities, Ianna (2017) uses the names and description of ten diseases to explain the need for both patients and medical practitioners to adopt a knowledge-based approach to the conceptualization of disease terms. Furthermore, Ianna (2017)'s list was limited to two eye diseases (glaucoma and cataract), three heart diseases (dilated, hypertrophic, and restrictive), one sickness of the bile (jaundice), two stomach/intestinal ailments (gastric ulcer and duodenal ulcer) and Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) which is a pandemic.

Over the past two decades, notable native speakers of Abureni (Akari, 2014; Daniel, 2017; Ebua, 2017a; Ebua, 2017b; Etire, 2015; Etire, 2016; Etire, 2017; Etire, 2023; Etire Daniami & Patience, 2021; and Robert, 2019) have similarly documented the Abureni-given names of various things including aspects of ill-health and cure, albeit within the scope of their research works. The study notes that Blench (2008)'s comparative wordlist and historical reconstructions of Central Delta languages captures certain words in Kugbo, and that in Blench (2008, p.14) 'diseases, sickness, measles, fever, influenza, yellow fever, and madness,' are listed in the gloss. It is noteworthy that Etire (2023, pp. 22-28) presents a list of words on health and diseases from which this study also elicited some data that is relevant to the topic under discussion. The significance of this study lies in its addition to the body of literature provided by earlier scholars in health communication, especially in translating medical terms to indigenous languages.

Abureni Alphabet is made of thirty-five letters, of which twenty-five are consonants and ten are vowels (Akari, 2014; Ebua, 2017a; Ebua, 2017b; Etire, 2015; and Etire, 2016). The twenty-five consonants include six digraphs. Also, Akari, Ebua, and Etire observed that Abureni vowels are ten in number, and that they display vowel harmony. In addition, Abureni is a tonal language with five identifiable tones, being high, mid, low, rising, and falling tones (Etire, 2015). The forgoing features of the language were applied in the documentation of this wordlist.

Methodology

The main tool for data elicitation was (Roberts & Snider, 2006)'s SIL Comparative African Wordlist (SILCAWL) of 1,700 words. What influenced this approach is that the Abureni language is still at the early stage of documentation, and there is need to learn from the publications of indigenous linguistic researchers who had effectively adapted it on similar studies. For example, Etire (2023) applied SILCAWL in compiling a wordlist of Abureni, and Obikudo & Obi-Okolo (2022) adapted it in a discourse on Alege vowels. Furthermore, the instrument used for the study is the structured interview. The reason for this choice of methodology is that the research is qualitative in nature. The study recognised that the array of illnesses, diseases and global pandemics with their translations and concepts required validation by competent native speakers and medical practitioners. Scholars had adopted

structured interview in such research and attested to its benefits. George & Merkins (2023) defined structure interview as structured interview as is defined as “A data collection method that relies on asking questions in a set order to collect data on a topic,” and further explained that they are often quantitative in nature and can also be used in qualitative research if the questions are open-ended. Similarly, Macleod (2024) stated that “It involves asking structured or open-ended questions to elicit responses that can provide insights into various psychological phenomena.”

Random sampling was used to select the participants who were native speakers. To ensure a representative sample and a balance of views, the participants were selected from among literate, non-literate, youth, men, women, elderly, dialect groups, locally resident, and diaspora populations. The total number of participants was forty-seven. Fifteen of them were above sixty years of age, twenty-one were aged between forty and sixty years, while eleven of them were aged below forty years. They were selected to find out how they understood the names and meanings of the illnesses, diseases, and global pandemics through face-to-face and telephone interviews. Additionally, the interviews with the computer-literate participants included email and WhatsApp messages, such that the resulting instrument was a combination of physical and digital conversational tools. Competent native speakers were consulted to either translate the illnesses, diseases, and pandemics familiar to them, as well as critique other entries. For example, the information on diseases, illness presentations, and related treatment procedures were reviewed and validated by a medical doctor who also made significant input to the raw data. Similarly, elderly members of the society were relied upon to validate historical events, while indigenous teachers and linguists reviewed the linguistic entries, and so on. The intuitive knowledge of the researcher as an Abureni native speaker also helped to orientate the study.

The words are first listed in English and translated to Abureni in a parallel text format and transcribed to benefit both native speakers and non-native speakers of the language. Where a particular illness or disease is called differently in more than one dialect, the entry is repeated in the gloss. Abureni is a tone language, as such, each of the listed words is presented phonologically with the applicable symbols and tone marks using the International Phonetic Association (IPA) chart (Newton & Esling, 2015) to benefit both native and non-native speakers.

Results

Wordlist of the Abureni illnesses, diseases, and pandemics

The words listed under sections 1 and 2 are names of illnesses and diseases that affect various parts of the body. Section 3 contains the names of global pandemics, which refer to infectious diseases that impact large populations across international boundaries, such as Coronavirus disease (COVID 19). The study listed and analyzed a total number of two hundred and fifty-eight (258) words presented below in English-Abureni side-by-side format.

Illnesses affecting internal parts, products, and bodily discharges

The underlisted nine (9) words in this subsection are associated with the illnesses that lead to bodily discharges.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. belch (n) | ikub̄an /i-kùb̄án/ |
| 2. earache (excessive earwax) | asunw̄er ato /àsòṅ ^w èr átò/
(ìkparakpar akan ato /i-kpàràkpár àkàn átò/) |
| 3. sinusitis infection (yellow phlegm) | asunw̄er iwara ededia /àsòṅ ^w èr í-wàrá édfédíà/
asunw̄er edogh /àsòṅ ^w èr édf̄y/ |
| 4. bromhidrosis (body odour) | asunw̄er edu ozu /àsòṅ ^w èr èdũ ó-zù/
(edu ozu /èdũ ó-zù/) |
| 5. chronic sinusitis (nasal mucus, snot) | asunw̄er ogbo uzon /àsòṅ ^w èr ò-gbò úzòn/ |
| 6. hunch, lipoma | ekpu /é-kp̄ô/ |
| 7. hypersalivation | ogbo ighor /ò-gbò íyòr/ |
| 8. cloudy/blurred vision (eye) | obigh ibugh /ò-bìy íbôy/ (ibugh adien /í-bôy édf̄ièn/) |
| 9. sweat dirt (body) | ininor /inìnòr/ |

Illnesses related to body states and conditions

The underlisted twenty-five (25) words in this subsection are associated with the illnesses that cause change in the physical state or condition of the body.

Irregular conditions

10. wrinkle	<i>iwabha /íwàβà/; iwabha ozu /í-wàβà ózù/</i>
11. pimple	<i>oso /'ósò/ (ekpo oso /è-kpò ósò/)</i>
12. boil	<i>ebebià /èbèbíà/</i>
13. whitlow	<i>obhobhobhobh aguo /òβòlòβòl ágòò/</i>
14. pile (hemorrhoids)	<i>obube edughulom /òbùbé édùγùlòm/</i>
15. hump (of hunchback)	<i>ekpu /é-kpù/</i>
16. bow-legged	<i>adé /àdɛ/</i>
17. withered (part of body)	<i>kparian /kpariàn/; ikparian /íkpariàn/;</i>
18. emaciate	<i>kír /kír/</i>
19. emaciated, shrunken I	<i>obhe ozu /ò-βè ózù/</i>
20. emaciated, shrunken II	<i>nyibhighan /niβiyàn/; inyibhighan /í-niβiyàn/</i>
21. emaciated, shrunken III	<i>nyaghan /nàyàn/; inyaghan /í-nàyàn/</i>
22. emaciated, shrunken IV	<i>kpogholan /kpòγòlàn/; ikpogholan /í-kpòγòlàn/</i>
23. hyperextended knee, K-leg	<i>ibegh /ì-βèγ/</i>
24. poliomyelitis	<i>idudughan asike /i-dùgùγàn àsíké/</i>
25. limp (walk), to limp	<i>sekuom /sèkùòm/; osekuom /ò-sèkùòm/</i>
26. diabetes mellitus	<i>asunwer osigiri /àsòη^wèr ósigíri/</i>
27. obesity	<i>asunwer /àsòη^wèr íbàlòbòγ/</i>
28. elephantiasis	<i>awel obenam /əwèl óbènàm/</i>
29. keloid	<i>ekpam /èkpàm/</i>
30. goiter, struma	<i>ekpu orum /è-kpò órùm/</i>
31. weal	<i>igbororon /igbòròròn/</i>
32. scar, mark (injury)	<i>ebar /èbàr/</i>

33. black dot on skin I alubu /àlòbò/
 34. black dot on skin II alubu ta enainy /àlòbò tá énainy/

Abnormal qualities (adjectival)

The underlisted ten (10) words in this subsection describe abnormal conditions that affect certain sensitive parts of the body such as the head, eye, and the reproductive system.

35. (be) bald kuruna /kùrùnà/
 36. bald head okurunakuruna emu /ò-kùrùnàkùrùnà è-mó/
 37. (be) blind ekpom adien /è-kpòm à-díen/
 38. (be) myopic, short-sighted obigh ma etuan /ò-bìy mà ètúàn/
 39. (be) thin ogbara ekpo /ò-gbàrà é-kpò/
 40. (be) impotent emar /è-màr/
 41. barren emar /è-màr/
 42. barrenness, childlessness emarani /è-màr-áni/
 43. side eye (defect) adien emigiri /à-díen é-mìgìri/
 44. side eye (look) emigiri /émìgìri; okpon emigiri /ò-kpòn é-mìgìri/

Handicapped people

The underlisted twenty-eight (28) words refer to the names given to persons who are physically or mentally handicapped, including those with low/poor cognitive attributes.

45. barren woman emarani /è-màr áni/
 46. blind person oni ikpom aridien /òni ì-kpóm ór-í-díen/
 47. deaf (mute) person emunwa /émùŋ^wà/
 48. hunchback I ekpu aman /è-kpò áman/
 49. hunchback II egha aman /èyá ámàm/

50. cripple (n)	ukulā /ùkùlǎ/
51. dwarf	ukpūor /ókṙòòr/
52. fool (v)	mā /mǎ/; omāghu /ò-mǎ-ghù/
53. fool, fooling (v)	susulā /sùsùlǎ/; osusulā /ò-sùsùlǎ/
54. fooling (n)	esusulā /è-sùsùlǎ/
55. fool (n)	emā /émǎ/
56. foolish person I	emā onī /émǎ ónì/
57. foolish person II	osusulāsusulā /ò-sùsùlǎ-sùsùlǎ/
58. stupid person I	odeiny /ò-dèìṅ/
59. stupid person II	oḅotọbo /ò-bótótó/
60. stupid person III (empty head)	ovobh /ò-vóβ/
61. good-for-nothing (worthless person)	obhobho ìkṙo /ò-βóβó íkṙò/
62. vagabond	oḍim /ò-dím/
63. senile person	onī esusughudjān /òní é-sùsòyòdīān/ onī eweletān /òní éwèlètàn/
64. mad person I	onwer mā elal /òṅ ^w èrmèlǎl/
65. mad person II	onī emū oleghān dō /óní èmó ó-lèyàn dō/
66. madness, insanity I	elal /èlǎl/
to (be) mad, insane	onwer elal /òṅ ^w èr èlǎl/
67. madness, insanity II	ozol igalaga /ò-zòl ígàlàgà/
68. madness, insanity III	ozēr oḅaghala /ò-zèr òbáyàlà/
69. madness, insanity VI	nā agbi mā igbigbi mā oḅaghan /nè è-gbì mè ì-gbìgbì má óbàyàn/
70. madness, insanity IV	bō mā enen /bò má énèn/

71. madness, insanity V nā atibereni /nó á-tíberèni/
 72. madness, insanity VII nā awol iwai /nè à-wòl í-wàì/

Health and disease

The underlisted sixteen (16) words in this subsection are associated with body wellness, treatment, and healing procedures with their Abureni equivalents.

73. (be) healthy kpo mā aluzu /k̀pò ḿé é́lúzù/ (kpoluzu /k̀pò-
 lúzù/)
 74. (be) well ðum /dũm/ (idume /ídũm-ê/)
 75. (be) sick, (be) ill nwɛr /ɲʷɛr/ (ɔnwɛr asɯnwɛr /ò-ɲʷɛr asóɲʷɛr/)
 76. hurt oneself ðighianmā /dĩɣì-àn-mà/
 77. hurt (n) eðighian /è-dĩɣì-àn/
 78. cure (v), to cure koko /kòkò/; okoko /ò-kòkò/
 79. cure (n) alikoko /àlì-kòkò/
 80. healing (n) alikoko /àlì-kòkò/
 81. medicine ɔghoghò /òɣóɣò/; ighoghò /ìɣóɣò/
 82. get well, recover, be strong kpo mā aluzu /k̀pò ḿé é́lúzū/ kpoluzu /k̀pòlúzū/
 83. revive nwegi /ɲʷègì/
 84. treat, to treat koko /kòkò/; okoko /ò-kòkò/
 85. heal, to heal koko /kòkò/; okoko /ò-kòkò/
 86. heal (full recovery) okoko oðumeni /ò-kòkò ó-dũm-èni/
 87. treatment alikokuān / àlì-kòkùân/
 88. hospital otu alikokuān /òtù èlì-kòkùân/

Abnormalities

The underlisted twenty-seven (27) words in this subsection are associated with illnesses or health situations that change the normal configuration of the internal or surface parts of the body, such as bruise, burn, cancer, disability, hernia, tumour, scar, sore and ulcer.

89. abscess	ebebiā /èbèbíā/
90. swelling I	ekpū /é-krò/
91. swelling II	alūbhū /àlòβù/
92. swelling III	obhōlobhōl /ò-βòlòbòl/
93. swell, be swollen I	bhulom /βùlòm/; obhulom /ò-βùlòm/;
94. swell, be swollen II	wubh /wùβ/; owubh /ò-wùβ/
95. tumour	ekpū /é-krò/
96. bruise (v), to bruise	diron /dìròn/; odiron /ò-dìròn/
97. bruise (n)	idirina /í-dìrìnà/; esi abar adiron /ési àbár édìròn/
98. burn (v) I	nū /nò/; onū /ò-nò/
99. burn (v) II	nūomeni /nò-òmèni/; onūomeni /ò-nò-òmèni/
100 burn (n)	esi anya anūomeni /ési ànà ànúómèni/
101 hernia (umbilical)	odidigh oghugh /ò-didīγ ó-γūγ/
102 enlarged scrotum (scrotal mass), hydrocoele	eghele /èγelè/
103 ulcer (leg)	ebe /èbè/
104 wound, sore	ekete /èkèté/
105 septic head sore	eḅol /èḅòl/; eḅol emū /èḅòl èmú/
106 pus	ededia /è-dè-díà/
107 puncture, incise (abscess)	kēdon /kèdòn/; okēdon /òkèdòn/;
108 incise (surgery)	gu /gù/ (ogu /ò-gù/)

109 scar	e̲bar/èb̲är/
110 intestinal worm	al̲iga /àlìgà/
111 keloid	e̲kpam /èk̲pàm/
112 athlete's foot (<i>Tinea pedis</i>)	al̲egh /àlèy/
113 disability	e̲gha /èyá/
114 deformity	e̲gha /èyá/
115 cancer	e̲be /èbè/

Diseases

The underlisted sixty-seven (67) words in this subsection include the Abureni given names of the three key English disease terms in the study, viz., illness, disease, and pandemic with their plural forms.

116. illness, illnesses	as̲unw̲er /àsòᵂèr/; ras̲unw̲er /r-àsòᵂèr/
117. sickness	as̲unw̲er /àsòᵂèr/
118. disease, diseases	as̲unw̲er /àsòᵂèr/; ras̲unw̲er /r-àsòᵂèr/
119. pandemic, pandemics	as̲unw̲er /àsòᵂèr/; ras̲unw̲er /r-àsòᵂèr/
120. epidemic	as̲unw̲er /àsòᵂèr/
121. eczema	oghon /ò-yôn/
122. elephantiasis	awel ob̲enam /əwèl óbènàm/
123. ringworm	okorobo /òkòròbò/
124. Guinea worm	okparakpar em̲u al̲iga awel /òkpàràkpár èm̲ö alígà éwèl/
125. yellow spot	oghon /ò-yôn/
126. leprosy I	as̲unw̲er ekidigh /àsòᵂèr ékidiy/
127. leprosy II	as̲unw̲er akiliniki /àsòᵂèr ákílíniki/

128. malaria I	akam /ákám/
129. malaria II	akam eguade /ákám éǵúódè/ akam ibom reguade /ákám íbrèǵúódè/
130. fever (not malaria)	amum obhiy /àmòmòβij/
131. pain (v)	gam /gám/
132. pain (n)	aligam /àlì-gám/
133. give pain, hurt	ḍighi /ḍiyì/ (oḍighi oni /ò-ḍiyì ónì)
134. give pain, hurt (self-injury)	ḍighianma /ḍiyì-èn-mè/ oḍighianma /ò-ḍiyì-èn-mè/
135. throb (with pain)	puru /pùrù/; opuru /ò-pùrù/; (esi ma opuru oni)
136. vomit (solid) (v)	molo /mòlò/; omolo /ò-mòlò
137. vomit I (nonsolid) (v)	zugi /zùǵí/
138. vomiting I (n)	izugi /ì-zùǵí/
139. vomiting II (v)	kuḅo /kùbò
140. vomiting II (n)	ikuḅo /ì-kùbò/
141. vomit (mucous in babies) (v)	biḳ /bìḳ/
142. vomit (mucous in babies) (n)	ìbiḳ /ì-bìḳ/
143. vomiting (frequent), cyclic vomiting syndrome I	izugi /ì-zùǵí/
144. vomiting (frequent), cyclic vomiting syndrome II	oḅu asugbarawel /ò-ḅù àsúǵbàrèwèl/
145. stomach-ache I	aligam eghun /àlì-gám éǵùn/
146. stomach-ache II	aligam okurogh /àlì-gám ókùròǵ/
147. upset stomach I	eghun ola na ati /èǵùn ólè né é-tì/
148. upset stomach II	okurogh ola na ati /òkùròǵ ólè né é-tì/

149. headache	alìgam emu /àlìgàm émó/
150. hypertension	asunwer ekpoyghan ologi /àsòṅwèr èkprójóyán ólògì/
151. vertigo	ebhelebhele /èβèlèβèlè/
152. stooling	ogìobhìy /ògìóβìj/
153. diarrhea	okarabh ogìobhìy /òkàràβ ògìóβìj/ ogìobhìy /ògìòβìj/; osor obhìy /ò-sòr òβìj/
154. scratch (itch) (v)	robhì /ròβì/
155. itch (v)	kpakpàiny /kṙàkṙàìṅ/
156. itch (n)	ekpakpàiny /èkṙàkṙàìṅ/
157. scabies (the itch)	adobhìan /adóβìàn/
158. scabies	ikpurum /ìkṙúrùm/
159. rash (skin) I	otaghabh /ò-táyâβ/; ekpo otaghabh /è-kṙò ò-táyâβ/
160. rash (skin) II	ikpurum /ìkṙúrùm/
161. dropsy	wunopel bhò /wúnópél βò/
162. yaws I	ebe /èbè/
163. yaws III	asunwer odìgh otu /àsòṅwèr ò-dìy ótù/; odìgh otu /ò-dìy ótù/
164. yaws III	obei obhìy /ò-béí óβìj/; asunwer obei obhìy /àsòṅwèr ò-béí óβìj/
165. asthma	ebhoghuma /è-βóyùmà/
166. cough	okonon /òkònòn/
167. whooping cough	agbatugholtughol /àgbátúyóltùyòl/
168. sputum	iwara /í-wàrà/

169. cold	okirika /òkiríkà/
170. mumps	aderikpogholor /àdèríkpòḡòlòr/
171. bronchitis	okonon na aligam edogh /òkònòn nàligàm édḡḡ/
172. tuberculosis I	obom okonon /òbòm òkònôn/; asunwer obom okonon /àsòḡ ^w èr óbòm òkònôn/
173. tuberculosis I	okonon asi /ò-kònòn ási/; ikonon asi /í-kònòn ási/
174. tuberculosis III	okpukpurutu /òkḡpùkḡpùrùtù/
175. sleeping sickness	asunwer ibom adila (ibadila) /àsòḡ ^w èr íbàdìlà/
176. sleeplessness	asunwer okodu do ma adila (okodu do dila) /àsòḡ ^w èr ó-kòdùdḡdìlà/
177. foreign body in the eye I	otaghatagh da adien /ò-tàḡátàḡ dḡ ádièn/
178. foreign body in the eye II [Loiasis (eye worm, parasite)]	okarabh da adien /ò-kàràḡ dḡ ádièn/ (okarabh /òkàràḡ/)
179. conjunctivitis	obabam (ekpo) adien /ò-bà-bám èkpò àdièn/
180. epilepsy	asunwer ena bho /àsòḡ ^w èr enè ò/
181. Tetanus disease	asunwer ididigh na enyaghagh /àsòḡ ^w èr ìdìdìḡ nḡ éḡnàḡâḡ/, bḡdḡ asunwer ididigh nḡ ekpasi /àsòḡ ^w èr ìdìdìḡ nḡ ékḡpási/
182. unknown disease	asunwer ologhodozien /àsòḡ ^w èr ólòḡòdḡzièn/

Life and Death

The underlisted fifty-nine (59) words in this subsection are associated with life and death issues, such as the pains experienced by a woman during childbirth, aging factors, shortage of breath, sudden death triggers, and emotional responses.

183 life I	aghudum /ə-ḡù-dúm/
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184	life II	awudum /ə-wù-dũm/
185	(be) alive; to live	ɖum /dũm/; oɖum /ò-dũm/
186	menstrual period	asunwer anwanì /àsòŋ ^w èr àŋ ^w ání/
187	menstruate, to menstruate	bighan /bìy-àn/; obighan /ò-bìy-àn/
188	menstruation	ibighan /í-bìy-àn/; / /
189	menopause	ibhuneni /í-βùnèní/ (àsòŋ ^w èr àŋ ^w ání)
190	(be) pregnant	mumor /mùmòr/; omumor /ò-mùmòr/
191	pregnant, to be pregnant	omumor /ò-mùmòr ójì/
192	pregnancy	eghun /é-yùn/
193	pregnant woman	anì eghun /ání é-yùn/
194	labour (n), birth pains	igunà /ì-gùn-à/
195	bear (child), give birth	mar /màr/; omar (onyì) /ò-màr ójì/
196	(be) born	mar /màr/; omar /ò-màr/
197	nursing mother	anì amugbo /áníámógbò/
198	midwife	anì amaka /áníámákà/
199	miscarriage I	eghun aɖua /èyùn á-dùà/; eghun akpòtina /èyùn á-kpòtìnà/
200	miscarriage II	enainy aɖighi /ènàŋ á-dighi/
201	abortion, to abort	oɖa eghun /ò-dǎ éyùn/; o-kpòton eghun /ò-kpòtòn éyùn/; osighe eghun /ò-sìyè éyùn/
202	birth, procreation	imara /ì-màrá/; omar onyì /ò-màr ójì/
203	(be) young, youth	okubh /ò-kúβ/; ikubh /ì-kǔβ
204	grow up	bhobh /βòβ/; obhobh /ò-βòβ/
205	growth	alibhobh /èlì-βóβ/

206	mature	odigh emu /ò-diy è-mó/
207	(be) old (not young)	kpo /k̀p̀ò/
208	aging (n), agedness	alukpo /àlò-k̀p̀ò/
209	old person (elderly)	okei-oni /òkíónì/
210	die, to die	mugh /mùγ/; omugh /ò-mùγ/
211	death I	omugh /ò-mùγ/
212	death II (premature)	omugh imom /ò-mùγ í-mòm/
213	death III (elderly person)	ogi enainy otu /ò-gì ènájín ótù/
214	death IV	adugh aze ma igbara na ikei /èdũy à-zé mó ígbàrá nè ikéì/
215	death VI (combat, war, blood)	adugh egham /èdũy éγàm/ omugh adugh egham /ò-mùγ èdũy éγàm/
216	death (person whose parent(s) are alive)	omugh ola asor oloko /ò-mùγ ólá á-sòr òlókó/ osor oloko /ò-sòr òlókó/
217	sudden death I	awai omugh /áwài ó-mùγ/
218	sudden death II	omel omugh /ò-mèl ó-mùγ/
219	sudden death III (slump and die, heart failure)	eguade agur agigh /ègúádè ágòr à-gíγ/
220	heart disease	asunwer ekpologi /àsòŋ ^w èr èk̀p̀ólògì/;
221	heartache	aligam da ekpo ologi /àlìgàm dǎ ék̀p̀ólògì/
222	trauma	edighianma /è-díγì-ənmə/ (/è-díγònəmə/); edighian ibom ikunu /è-díγì-ən íbikónò/
223	coma	onu na adu /ò-nò ná édũ/
224	(be) dead, to die	mugh /mùγ/; omugh /ò-mùγ/
225	corpse	eguade /ègúádè/

226 dead (adj)	omumugh /ò-mù-múy/
227 dead body	omumugh- <u>oni</u> /ò-mù-múy óni/
228 beheaded body	eputa /èpùtə/; eputa ozu /èpùtə ózù/
229 breathe	poghu /βòyù/; opoghu /ò-βòyù/
230 breath	ipoghu /ípòyù/
231 shortage of breath	ebhobhora epobh /èβòbórə épòβ/
232 losing breath	bher /βèr/; obher /ò-βèr/
233 breath of life	ekpo epobh /èkpròépòβ/
234 last breath (breath of life)	ekpo epobh na asobhan /èkprò épòβ ná ásóbàn/
235 missing someone (absence)	ebhebhia /èβèβià/
236 day of birth	adama omar /ədámə ó-màr/
237 day of death	adama omugh /ədámə ó-mùy/
238 destiny	eru /èrù/ (eeru /èrù/)
239 cry, crying (n); to cry	edi /èdí/; oleghe edi /ò-lèyè èdí/
240 groan (in pain); to groan	kìbh /kìβ/; okìbh /ò-kìβ/; ogba igbir /ò-gbà ìgbír/
241 weeping (n)	ogba igbir /ò-gbà ìgbír/

Global Epidemics and Pandemics

Sources: List of pandemics are drawn from (a) (Balita-Centeno, 2020) in World Atlas - 10 Pandemics throughout history, and (b) (World Health Organization, 2023) - Epidemic and pandemic prone diseases.

The under-listed seventeen (17) diseases in this subsection are those that had impacted large populations across regional and global boundaries.

242. Flu pandemic	asunwer <u>ebe</u> <u>da</u> <u>edogh</u> (ma obom emi)
influenza pandemic	/àsòŋwèr ébè dǎ éđɔy óbémì/

243. Avian influenza (Bird flu) [respiratory disease, pink eye (conjunctivitis)]	asunwer inur /àsòḡw'èr inör/ [respiratory disease, pink eye (conjunctivitis)]
244. Spanish flu	asunwer ebe da edogh (ma obom emi) /àsòḡw'èr ébè dǎ édɔy óbémì/
245. Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS)	obom ebhoghuma inu (obebhoghuma inu) /òbèβóγúmá ínò/
246. measles	asunwer ikpurum ozu igbaranwiny /àsòḡw'èr ikpúrúm ózù ígbàráḡw'īn/
247. smallpox pandemic	asunwer ta Itila /àsòḡw'èr tó itilâ/
248. chicken pox	ogbara asunwer ta Itila /ògbàrá àsòḡw'èr tó itilâ/
249. monkey pox	asunwer inamanyu /àsòḡw'èr ínàmánò/
250. Ebola disease I	asunwer asi da ebla ozu /àsòḡw'èr asi dǎ éblá ózù/
251. Ebola disease II	asunwer igbounw /àsòḡw'èr ígbôḡw'/
252. cholera I	obokarabh ogiobhiy na izugi /òbókàràβ ògíóβij nè í-zùgì/
253. cholera II	akolera /àkólèrà/ (borrowed and nativized)
254. Acquired Immuno- deficiency Syndrome HIV/AIDS	asunwer ikpoghlan /àsòḡw'èr íkpòḡḡlàn/ (asunwer obhe ozu /àsòḡw'èr òbé ózù/)
255. Apollo disease	apolo /əpólò/; asunwer ibom igamamení adien /àsòḡw'èr íbìgàmàmèní àdièn/
256. tuberculosis	asunwer ikonon asi /àsòḡw'èr íkònòn asi/ (ikonon asi /í-kònòn asi/)
257. Covid-19 pandemic I	asunwer akovid / àsòḡw'èr àkòvìd/ (akovid)

Data analysis and findings

The elicited data captures the Abureni-given names of various ailments that the present and previous generations have suffered as presented in different linguistic domains above. They were reviewed and validated with selected native speakers such as medical professionals, chiefs, and the elderly custodians of the history and culture of the people. Some of the participants had firsthand experiences of the diseases and gladly authenticated the data and translations they were familiar with. The study noted that whenever the people of Abureni suffered from a novel disease, it created an opportunity for them to introduce new vocabulary to the language. The approach involved interplaying with words and describing such illnesses or diseases in familiar terms. Thus, the wordlist extended beyond known diseases, indicating that the language is dynamic and is sensitive to the effect of globalization. The total number of investigated illnesses, diseases and global pandemics with their associated vocabularies is two hundred and fifty-eight (258).

Names exist in Abureni for common illnesses and diseases that are familiar to the people, some of which are given phrase names that describe the way the sufferers are impacted either physically or behaviourally or mentally. The study also observed that the people use euphemism or code words to describe some illnesses and diseases that appear harsh or embarrassing such as leprosy and insanity. However, the people borrow and nativize the names of some illnesses and diseases to align with the sound system of the language, especially those that are foreign or strange to them. The wordlist also contains names of diseases and illnesses with superstitious connotations like complex cases and those that result to slumping or sudden death. Furthermore, the study notes that the suite of words covers the symptoms of an illness, the changes in the patient's body condition during the periods of ill-health and recovery, including treatment protocols. Dialectical differences exist for some of the listed illnesses and diseases, but they are mutually intelligible across Abureni. Such a perspective aligns with Etire (2015:2)'s assertion about the Abureni language that, "There are dialectical differences, but they are mutually intelligible in the full sense of it." From the foregoing findings, the study considered that the Abureni given names of the illnesses, diseases, and pandemics can be classified into six categories. These are: historical events, traditional beliefs, source of illness, presentation of illness, unfamiliar or strange illnesses, and diseases that are described using coded words or euphemism. They are described under subsections below.

Names of illnesses derived from historical events

Leprosy *asunwɛr akiliniki* /àsòṅwɛ̀r ákìlínìkì/ ‘clinic disease.’ It was derived from the first clinic that was built in Abureni, to treat people with leprosy in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. The lepers were quarantined in thatch-roofed mud houses in an isolated area located between Emago Kugbo and Amuruto Kugbo. The houses have since fallen, and the clinic is currently non-existent as the Community Secondary School Emago Kugbo is built on its site. However, *asunwɛr akiliniki* has become an alternative name that the people have euphemistically given to leprosy disease. It is noted that only the elderly who knew the clinic when it was functional understand the origin of the name. That explains why leprosy is more commonly called *asunwɛr ekidigh* /àsòṅwɛ̀r ékìdìḡ/ in Abureni, especially among the younger generation.

Smallpox *asunwɛr ta Itila* /àsòṅwɛ̀r tó ítìlâ/ ‘Hitler’s disease.’ *Itila* ‘Hitler’ (nativized). A wave of smallpox spread during World War II (1939-1945) in which Germany’s Hitler was the key protagonist.

Names of illnesses derived from Traditional Beliefs

Hepatitis *akam eguade* /ákám egúádè/ ‘malaria of the devil’ or ‘Ghost/devilish malaria.’

Stroke *igurogh eguade* /ìḡòròḡ egúádè/ ‘ghost flogging (whipping).’

Eguade agurogh ‘Flogged by ghost’ literally, but it means ‘He/she suffers from stroke.’

Cholera *obokarabh ogiobhij na izugi* /òbókàràḅ òḡíóḃìj nà ízùḡì/ ‘very bad going-to-the-waterside.’ In Abureni, people go to toilet at the waterside which is the normal traditional practice among riverine dwellers. Even if a person used the water closet at his home on land, he is said to have gone to the waterside. However, the people term cholera disease as a very bad way of going to the waterside, to say the least.

Miscarriage *enainy adighi* /ènàṅ ádìḡhì/ ‘caused by heavens.’ This expresses a belief that the heavens allowed the incident to happen, instead of directly saying *eghun adua* /èḡùn ádũà/ ‘loss of pregnancy.’

Names of illnesses derived from the Source of Illness

These are zoonotic diseases transmitted from animal to man, and from man to man, e.g.,

Avian influenza *asunwɛr inur* /àsòṅwɛ̀r ìnũr/ ‘bird disease.’

Ebola disease *asunwɛr igbounw* /àsòṅwɛ̀r íḡbôṅw/ ‘bat disease.’

Lassa fever *asunwɛr iwo* /àsòṅwɛ̀r ìwó/ ‘rat (rodents) disease.’

Monkey pox *asunwɛr inamanyu* /àsòṅwɛ̀r ìnàmáṅyù/ ‘monkey disease.’

Names of illnesses derived from the Presentation of Illness

Flu pandemic *asunwɛr ebe da edogh (ma obom emi)* /àsòŋwɛr ɛ̀bɛ̀ dǎ ɛ̀dɔ̀y ɔ̀bɛ̀mì/ ‘disease of sore in the throat.’

HIV/AIDS *asunwɛr ikpogholan* /àsòŋwɛr ikpòŋɔ̀làn/ ‘wasting disease.’

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) *obom ebhoghuma inu (obebhoghuma inu)* /òbɛ̀bɔ̀yúmá ínò/ ‘high breathing rate of severe magnitude.’

Tuberculosis *ikonon asi* /íkò̀nò̀n á̀sì/, meaning ‘coughs of blood.’ This is derived from the fact that coughing up blood in sputum is a common complication among patients who do not get early treatment.

Tetanus disease *asunwɛr ididigh na enyaghagh* /àsòŋwɛr idídìy ná ɛ̀náyây/, meaning ‘disease that causes the muscles to jerk.’ According to (Tiwari et al., 2006) in a U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report, tetanus is known to cause muscle contraction particularly of the jaw and neck muscles and is commonly called lockjaw.

Names of unfamiliar or strange illnesses and diseases

The names of diseases in this category are either nativized or phrase names are used to describe the way they present on the patients. At instances, such diseases are described in reference to familiar ones if their symptoms are comparable.

Apollo disease *apolo* /ə̀pólò/; *asunwɛr apolo* /asunwɛr ə̀pólò/ (nativized).

COVID-19 *ororu akam* /òròrúá ákám/ ‘strange malaria’ or ‘new malaria.’

Chicken pox *ogbara asunwɛr ta Itila* /ògbàrá à̀sòŋwɛr tá ítìlâ/ ‘small Hitler disease.’

Names of illnesses and diseases described by coded words or euphemism

Epilepsy *asunwɛr ena bho* /àsòŋwɛr enə̀ bɔ̀/ ‘the disease of the fish.’ Here, the fish being referred to is the freshwater rat-tail, also commonly called Aba Aba knifefish (*Gymnarchus niloticus*) with *esa* /ɛ̀sà/ as its Abureni given name. It occasionally suffers from spasm. The people see the presentation of epilepsy on humans as a phenomenon that is akin to the spasms (disease) suffered by ‘the fish.’ The name of the fish is kept secret, although it is common knowledge to the indigenous people who are familiar with the characteristic features of the marine life of their environment.

Leprosy *asunwɛr ekidigh* /àsòŋwɛr ɛ̀kìdìy/ ‘the disease of the clawless bush baby species.’ Here, the reference code is a species of the bush baby (*Galagidae*) with deformed digital parts of its limbs. It is one of the nocturnal primates that is found in Abureni rainforest.

Vomiting frequently, cyclic vomiting syndrome *obu asugbarawel* /òbù à̀súgbárə̀wèl/ ‘digging bushpigs.’ Here, the coded object is bushpig (*Potamochoerus larvatus*) and the reference word is ‘digging.’ The commonly stooping posture that humans take, and the manner they throw up the content of their bowels, is likened to the way a bushpig grunts and forages to feed.

Euphemism is also applied in describing mental illness. The English word ‘mad’ or ‘insanity’ translated as *elal* /èlál/ in Abureni is considered harsh in normal conversations. Thus, the statement *Anwa na anwer elal* /ánàŋ^wēr èlál/ ‘You are mad’ is obviously rude and abusive. To present ‘insanity’ in a less sensitive manner, the people use palliative phrase names to refer to a person suffering from it. For example, the expression “He/she is insane” could be restated using any of the following coded phrases:

Na azol igalaga /nè à-zòl ígàlàgà/ ‘He/she mends roofs by sticking palm fronds.’

Na azer obaghala /nè á-zèr ò-báyàlà/ ‘He/she has marched on a piece of broken palm kernel shell.’ The reference is that a person who walks on the sharp edges of broken kernel shells risks foot injury and impaired movement.

Bq ma enen /bò mé énnè/ ‘He/she is not here’ at the normal side of the world.

Na gtibereni /nó átíbèrèni/ ‘He/she has turned around’ with abnormal behaviours.

Na awol iwai /nè èwòl íwài/ ‘He/she sells African butter fruit species.’ In the olden days, *owai* (plural: *iwai* /íwài) was a common and abundant fruit that was free for anybody to pick from the forest of Abureni. It was never sold, therefore anybody hawking it must be insane.

Na agbi ma igbigbi ma obhaghan /nè ègbì mè ígbígì mé óbàyàn/ ‘He/she launches closed-basket type fishing gears at flow-tide,’ instead of setting them at ebbtide as is conventionally practiced by the people.

Challenges and Recommendations

The study observed that there was limited reference scientific and linguistic data on Abureni as the language is still at an early stage of documentation. Native speakers and linguistic scholars are, therefore, called upon to research and publish on various aspects of the language. While comparing the understanding of culturally related health issues by elderly respondents against the youth, the study perceived that only the elderly people could relate with the origin of the names of illnesses derived from traditional beliefs, and those associated with historical events. This requires a conscious collaborative effort by elderly native speakers and educationists to teach the younger generation about traditional beliefs and historical events as part of the school curriculum. Some respondents from the youth did not understand the meaning of the names of diseases that are derived from fauna species as they had never heard nor seen such creatures. This is particularly true of children in the diaspora and should be taught.

Dialects exist as some illnesses and diseases are called differently, although they are mutually intelligible. It would be worthwhile to produce a comparative wordlist of the different dialects of the language, but this will be the subject of a separate research to provide further input to the Abureni Dictionary work. Another area of concern is the funding of the research which was entirely voluntary as the author and contributors were

driven only by interest, passion, and need to sustain their language. Such limitations will reduce the potential gains of the study like carrying out informed health awareness and emergency mobilization campaigns. Therefore, there is need to grow this into a formal Private-Public partnership involving the communities, academia, non-governmental organizations, and government, to enable the people themselves own and partake in health campaigns in a sustainable manner.

Conclusion

The ensuing suite of data from the study contains Abureni words and phrase names that are drawn from various linguistic categories and semantic domains that relate to ill-health and associated vocabularies. The list contains names of illnesses, diseases and pandemics that are either familiar or foreign to the indigenous people. For example, the list captures certain words that are associated with historical events, traditional beliefs, orthodox and traditional medicine, socio-culture, and native fauna species that are linked to certain illnesses. The people use loan words for certain diseases but nativize them in line with the vowel harmony system of the language. Furthermore, the output of the research highlights a healthy collaborative effort by interested native speakers of the language, especially among the elderly and health care givers to provide relevant and authenticated data on the subject matter. It is anticipated that this wordlist would serve as input to the ongoing effort to document and preserve the Abureni language and its literature, as part of efforts at implementing the National Language Policy in line with the recommendation of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC).

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