

**KAWOYI NƏ DOROYI**

**ᐃA IHYÃ WA MBOI**

*Reading And Writing*

*Mboi Language*

**Benson Abi**



Mboi Trial Alphabet Series One

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Benson Abi

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## 1 BACKGROUND

Mboi Language group people are about 37,000 speakers (Joshua project 2001-2005) are located in the central part of Adamawa, in the North-East of Nigeria. Their settlement is at neighbouring with Gombi Local Government Area from the North, Shelleng from West, Fufore from East and Girei from the South. All these are the LGAs in Adamawa State of Nigeria. They are from the language family Niger Congo which is said to be the world's third language family in terms of speakers and Africa's largest in terms of geographical area, number

of speakers and the number of distinct languages,  
described as the largest language family in the world.

The language is from the Bəna family and has the code  
of identification 'moi' (Ethnologue 18<sup>th</sup> ed. 2015)

## 2 INDIGENOUS ORIGIN

“Mboi Language got the name from the onset at the Tower of Babel (The Biblical historical place which nursed a belief that it was the first place of Language variations creation)” Says Rev. Ezekiel Gummiya. The name was from the two words *mei* meaning “I say that...” and *boi* sometimes addressed as *abo* meaning “brother or fellow” (as of male). These were the keywords that gave signals to the first group of people to identify themselves as “people of the same language”. These terminologies were used between



them until the time that other languages identified them with the regular use of *boi, mei...* “Brother, I say that...” Although linguistically, the word “mboi” is seldom used among Mboi people to refer to as an interrogative sentence (what is the reason?). Therefore, by the frequent use of the terms *boi, aboi, mei* and *mboi*, it became a day-to-day words in the hearing of most of the people around them and were continued to be addressed as “The People of Mboi” and they themselves proudly agreed with the name given

unto them since it was an acceptable and remarkable word being used among them.

Mboi people left Babel, and found their way to Niamey the Capital city of Niger, then after settling for some years, some left for Tanzania and others to Zimbabwe.

Majority of the two groups later relocated to Mandara at the borders of Cameroun, then others to Yarma part Northern Nigeria, presently Borno State. The live in Yarma was not that comfortable for the group of the people where they left and trooped to Mukan and still in the northern part of the Nigeria-Cameroon border from

the Benue River (South) to Mora, Cameroon (North). That was a place of abode for them, since they stayed there for a long time; say a century, yet majority of them parted to Kance and Cimboi, Zoyõ, Shitto and Pyazhi mountains. Apart of Handa people as a dialect, the Mboi dialect were scattered on a flat-top mountain of different locations namely Batan, Brazefta, Bukci, Damlam, Biba, Dana, Bufano and Murvici. These ancient residential locations have good fertile green pasture and vegetation that are watered by enough running water and marshy steep slopes. As of present days,

most of those areas are occupied by Fulani herdsmen and some of the Mboi farmers that climbed up there for the farming purpose. Almost all the inhabitants left the flat-top mountain areas around 1912 and went down to their present communities. Presently, Mboi as a group of language people are majorly located in Song Local Government, then in Gombi, Girei, Shelleng and Fufore Local Government Areas of Adamawa State in Nigeria Republic, across the West African borders.

### 3 ALPHABETS

The Alphabet of Mboi consists of monographs and multigraphs. It consists of both vowels and consonant sounds. However the presentation below shows basic alphabets of Mboi; whereas, the comprehensive letters is found on number eight (8) towards the end of this document which comprises of modified articulators to produce some convention order than monograph (single letter), thus makes the sound system of Mboi comprehensive for writing.

## Mboi Basic Alphabets

a ã b ɓ c d ɗ e ẽ ə ã f g gb h  
i ã j k kp l m n nd ng o õ p r s  
sh t th ts u ã v w y ɜ

The single alphabet are what we call monographs while those more than one letter are called multigraphs. In this booklet we are going to learn how to use the alphabet in grouping them together to form words in order to serve as an example for beginner learners. Doing so will help us learn a lot on how our alphabet works within basic systems.

## 4 SHORT VOWELS

There are six oral vowels in Mboi language with their nasal counterparts (when I say nasal vowels, I mean such vowels are pronounced with air passing through the nostrils while pronouncing the word in which it occurs) which makes it twelve basic vowels as written below with a few word examples to guide you on how such conventional symbols differ from each other. It is good that we learn how our vowels differ from each other

because they constitute core system of how we can formally write Mboi language.

**a hin ɖa (as in)**

akre	husband/man
Arige	God
abwa	dog
agbange	lizard
gbangza	lizards
daa	father
vadza	lies

**Ã hin ɖa (as in)**

vã	ziziphus mauritania
thã	to shoot
ã	palm rat
ãza	Palm rats
zã	snake
zãza	Snakes/age mate
thã	to hunt

**e hin ɖa (as in)**

shede	leave
gbenje	snail
yene	tomorrow
aɖefe	month/moon
ajelge	trivets pot

**Ẽ hin ɖa (as in)**

aglangãyẽ	Piglet
děiyõ	Wild cat
forẽyã	corn leaf
fẽufẽunde	electric fish
gẽuta	bush



Christmas  
tree fruit

**ə hin ɖa (as in)**

wondimsə      wise

buzəfici      twenty

gəna      wealth/people

dəm      many

**ẽ hin ɖa (as in)**

kẽngbo      bomba  
caceae tree

ẽ'ẽ      disagreeing

ẽm      affirming

**i hin ɖa (as in)**

ifiya      sun

ishiya      waist

ine      me

isho      idol

ishã      broom

isho      god

iza      you (PL)

**ĩ hin ɖa (as in)**

Bĩbĩ      serious

Bĩfo      sweet gum  
tree

Fĩ      mucus

tidĩta      lime soil

rhĩ      to soak

vĩso      star

abalabĩbĩ      common  
swift bird

**o hin ɖa (as in)**

**õ hin ɖa (as in)**

obo	sometimes	ambõrẽ	caterpillar
oboza	some	fofõida	common fig
oguno	ancient	ambõgum	licking fish
bonga	sausage tree	fõrõ	tick
bolbol	different	mbugõ	birch

#### u hin ɖa (as in)

uru	yesterday
bundu	well
bugu	to beat
bugariya	heat
aɓulkuɓulku	katydid
aɓuhã	lad

#### Õ hin ɖa (as in)

bũ	hole
kwabũ	paradise
halbũ	cappadocian maple
Fũ	rot
Sũ	grind
Zũta	pet

## 5 LONG VOWELS

There is a few lengthened vowels recorded in Mboi language, four among the six oral vowels are lengthened in some vocabularies of Mboi. The four lengthened vowels have their nasal counterparts as presented below:

aa hin ɗa (as in)		ãã hin ɗa (as in)	
apaate	hawk	mbihããɗe	vehicle
aacene	daughter	tããgən	three
daa	father	wãã	grey
ii hin ɗa (as in)		ĩĩ hin ɗa (as in)	
diina	religion	zhĩira	breast
wiido	middle	ĩĩ	yes

oo hin đạ (as in)

awoo          okay

õõ hin đạ (as in)

hõõ          pick

uu hin đạ (as in)

kuuda          robe

ũũ hin đạ (as in)

bũũa          holes

## 6 NDƏFKƏNTƏ PAKPAK WA (DIPHTHONGS)

Mboi records five diphthongs which is a combination of vowels to form a systematic sound either by glide or sequence of vowels. Below is the presentation of such diphthongs with a few words to serve as an example for basic learning on how Mboi diphthongs work:

**a** hin ɗa (as in)

**u** ndau this?

ɗauɗau good

dauci cherry-red

mwau again?

**ai** hin ɗa (as in)

mai to build

hai to clean

bwarangai Community  
name

kai	to	aihãzəgã	shade gras
	consider		

**ei hin ɖa (as in)**

bei	see
-----	-----

pei	later, before
-----	------------------

Gabei gado	Water maple
------------	----------------

eiye	yes
------	-----

**əu hin ɖa (as in)**

adasəuru	desert barbarisa
----------	---------------------

həuwə	wayward person
-------	-------------------

ləuləu	fine
--------	------

səusəu	sour
--------	------

**oi hin ɖa (as in)**

aɓoi	colleague
------	-----------

mboi	tribe's name
------	-----------------

foiden	coil
--------	------

kandawoi	cocoyam
----------	---------

## 7 PRIMARY (BASIC) CONSONANTS

Mboi language has a lot of consonant systems which I categorize them in sections. This section gives us basic letters which is a monograph symbol representing a single sound that are found in Mboi language with some vocabularies to serve as an example on how that letter is pronounced. It is good for Mboi speakers or language users to pay careful attention in learning this section because it guides us to understanding some complex multigraphs that will further be discussed

subsequently. Thus, we have twenty one basic consonants which a few are not monographed but constitute basic sounds of Mboi language as presented below:

<b>b</b> hin dā (as in)	<b>ḅ</b> hin dā (as in)
babada all-day rain	ḅaḅe Male initiation ground
mbiya Water	ḅeḅḅe hot
mbəra Water	ḅonga Sausage tree
brayi genesis	ḅoliya pumpkin
bondo ball python	ḅelengə thin/slim
<b>c</b> hin dā (as in)	<b>d</b> hin dā (as in)
cima top	daa Paternal uncle
cĩgik flamingo	dabza coffin



cigwegwe	Palm nut	damlo	the only child
cĩyã	faeces	dala	posterior
			knee

**ḍ hin ḍa (as in)**

ḍimi	think
ḍungulta	stones
ḍekḍek	clean
ḍerwel	book
ḍukora/ ḍokoya	buttock

**f hin ḍa (as in)**

fandi	one
fanda	exactly
fanta	mortar
fedo	idol
fěufěude	electric fish

**g hin ḍa (as in)**

gado	river
gafayã	Cone-headed
gamba	crab
gakoyi	attaching
gangawal	purlin pillar

**h hin ḍa (as in)**

haaru	hundred
hago	plier
hako	Camel's foot tree
hala	to pack something
halbũ	Cappadocian maple

	gano	speech	hidikya	hiccup
<b>j</b>	<b>hin dā (as in)</b>		<b>k</b>	<b>hin dā (as in)</b>
	jelengo	bucket	kelengta	he-goats
	jellə	dwarf	kwalangda	tiger nut specie
	jigimo	dirt	kokdoma	spoons
	jibi	seep	kaaya	alarm
	jiyã	grinding stone	kama	hybrid/clan
	jimleya	heteropogon contortus	kadən	Amen
<b>l</b>	<b>hin dā (as in)</b>		<b>m</b>	<b>hin dā (as in)</b>
	lãã	well-done	mbikaza	clothes
	laḃo	rosewood tree	mbakedma	fingers (Mbo)
	lamo	scar	mbangkpetma	fingers (Hnd.)
	lãro	Sausage fruit	mbəzheza	foods
	lellebya	sprout	masa	sister in-laws
	laukaya	shame	mafuriya	Spondias birrea fruit

**n hin dā (as in)**

ndugu	farm
nduga	bother in-laws
naza	cows
nado	leg
nagən	early

**p hin dā (as in)**

pamo	caning
pabəlgo	blue fescue
padəya	foot/hand palm
pafəto	yellow beniseed
patalo	cutlas

**r hin dā (as in)**

rhada	Mild olive fruit
rābwa	enzymes
rigēyā	margin
rəgəma	pleiades
rəgo	genus populus

**s hin dā (as in)**

sado	fig tree
sabda	strap
sasabiya	centipede
satata	full
shedek	cros-tie

**t hin dā (as in)**

tangsa	hitherto
tado	fear

**v hin dā (as in)**

vadza	lies
vā	to deceive

tāima	condolence	avele	king
talo	ash tree	vəla	tiger
tolo	tail	avərvər	beetle
tango	Poplar grey tree	vengevenge	giraffe
Tamuta	sandals	vāvəla	bitter ziziphus

#### w hin dā (as in)

wargā	ribs
wabudo	Sapotaceae tree
waya	fire
wama	leafs

#### y hin dā (as in)

yalma	sweat
yado	weed
Yhandiya	calamagrostis
yartəfo	storm

#### z hin dā (as in)

Zadā	Bamboo
zā	snake
zābito	cobra

#### ʒ hin dā (as in)

ʒiyā	breast
ʒino	mahogany

8 NDƏFKƏNTƏ NƏ MBATĀGƏN DƏBDƏB WA

(SECONDARY LETTERS)

There are sixty-two (62) secondary letters in Mboi language which comprises of labialization, palatalization, pre-nasalization, aspiration, affricates and some other articulators coming together to form a unit of sound within a single syllable structure in Mboi vocabularies. This is one of the sections that makes Mboi language rich in sound system and are not common in some languages of literacy that Mboi speakers are exposed to at their elementary schooling.

It is very important that we (Mboi speakers) should value these and learn them gradually as presented below in order to help us write our language accurately.

bh	hin ɗa (as in) bhano shoulder bhĩ sneeze	hy	hin ɗa (as in) hyerən excessive hyābarde ejaculation	sk	hin ɗa (as in) ska day after ɗ tomorrow
bl	hin ɗa (as in) blado wedding  blada fabric robe	hw	hin ɗa (as in) hwido viper	sw	hin ɗa (as in) swalka smooth ɗak
bn	hin ɗa (as in) bno Iron wood	kh	hin ɗa (as in) khūza calabashes	th	hin ɗa (as in) the thigh ya

tree

akhĩ

calabash

tha Squarrose

ro

khĩyõyĩ to skin

thũ rats

za

br

hin ɗa (as in)

kp

hin ɗa (as in)

tr

hin ɗa (as in)

Bran happened

kpaɗago

trə libs

mta

brayi

genesis

kpayo

date

mbra

water

palm

leafs

kpamsalo Bonsai

tree

kpanglaya Balanite

fruit

bw

hin ɗa (as in)

kr

hin ɗa (as in)

ts

hin ɗa (as in)

bwāgo half

kra

men

dət smoke

so

bwaya Founda  
tional  
raft

kro

Male  
animal

ace small

tsə

ɓh

hin ɗa (as in)

kw

hin ɗa (as in)

tw

hin ɗa (as in)

ḡhaloyi to plait

Kwalang improved

twa carry

-da tiger nut

kwabũ Paradise

wacin worship

i

kwaya Hydrated  
magnesium  
silicate  
rock

ḡl hin ḡa (as in)  
ḡlediya altar  
ḡledidi destined  
soil

ky hin ḡa (as in) ty  
kyõ to tell

hin ḡa (as in)  
tyẽ tiny  
tyẽ

ḡw hin ḡa (as in)  
ḡwalang high  
  
ḡwa divide  
  
ḡwaloyi stirring

mb hin ḡa (as in) wh  
mbikaza clothes  
  
mbihãḡe vehicle  
  
mbiya water  
mbutu seven

hin ḡa (as in)  
whi  
rya  
whi viper  
do  
whis bruise  
oyi

cw hin ḡa (as in)  
cwãya intest  
ine

mw hin ḡa (as in) yh  
mwade Wilder-  
ness

hin ḡa (as in)  
yhan Calamagros  
diya -tis



cwāta	intest ines	mwala	pull	yhākur	Miscanthus o giganteus grass
-------	----------------	-------	------	--------	------------------------------------

dh	hin ḍa (as in) dhā baby sling dhavəla Butter -fly dhāna ancient sandals	nd	hin ḍa (as in) ndugu farm ndakude Snake eagle ndaro antelope ndəfkənta twins	zw	hin ḍa (as in) zwā parasiting do
----	---	----	---	----	--

dw	hin ḍa (as in) dwal- Adj. dwal dwoza quicker	ng	hin ḍa (as in) nge You (SG) ngodo medicine	Zh Zhā zhāza	hin ḍa (as in) to you blower motor
----	---	----	---	--------------------	--

ḍh	hin ḍa (as in) ḍhā live	nj	hin ḍa (as in) njelema Black mamba snake njebe to prick	fy	hin ḍa (as in) fye sharpen d
----	----------------------------	----	---	----	------------------------------------

njelengo water  
jar

ɖw	hin ɖa (as in) ɖwalɖwal drops of liquid	ns	hin ɖa (as in) nsod cook	gb	hin ɖa (as in) gban lizards gza gbaɖ inner lock ak gbāyō White pine tree
fw	hin ɖa (as in) fwanta mud fwoyā hedgehog fwata whining	ph	hin ɖa (as in) phā pharəya	gh	hin ɖa (as in)  ghī measure ghiyōn unity uta
gl	hin ɖa (as in) gla rearing aglēgē pig	pr	hin ɖa (as in) pragbeng Mounta prewel in names	gwh	hin ɖa (as in)  gwha boast riya
gr	hin ɖa (as in)	ps	hin ɖa (as in)	ndw	hin ɖa (as in)

grən

psal shirt  
psalza shirts  
psamya race

ndwa  
me

gw hin ɗa (as in) py  
gwã to wait  
gwãta careless  
visit  
gwēda breakf  
ast  
gwadoyi boiling

hin ɗa (as in)  
pyaji/p Name  
yazi of  
mounta  
in

mbw hin ɗa (as in)  
mbwa doodah  
mbwa all  
d  
mbwan this thing  
da

mbh hin ɗa (as in) rh  
mbhema tears  
mbhayã mat

hin ɗa (as in)  
Rha Mild  
olive  
tree  
Rhã Worm  
Rhĩ to wet

mbt hin ɗa (as in)  
mbta limestone  
mo

mbr hin ɗa (as in) rw  
mbra water

hin ɗa (as in)  
rwaden tickled  
rwada tickle  
harm

shw hin ɗa (as in)  
shw silent  
ed

ngb	hin dā (as in)	Sh	hin dā (as in)
	ngbām to cut		
	ngbangbang strong	shishi	hard luck

ḡwh	hin dā (as in)	shike	go	zw	hin dā (as in)
	ḡwhāḡdā Righteo	shama	Hut		zwi termite
	ma -usness		entrance		ya mound
		shenda	Carefuln		
			-ess		

## 9 MBOI COMPREHENSIVE ALPHABETS

Following the above data presentation and findings which has given us a clue on how Mboi language works in terms of sound system that constitute some syllables in the order of words or vocabularies in the language. It is proper to have a clear view of such comprehensive letters that any Mboi language users, researchers, and language developers to note the following letters that are proposed as a trial version to Mboi community in order to reduce the language into written form. The below letters comprises of monographs, digraphs, and

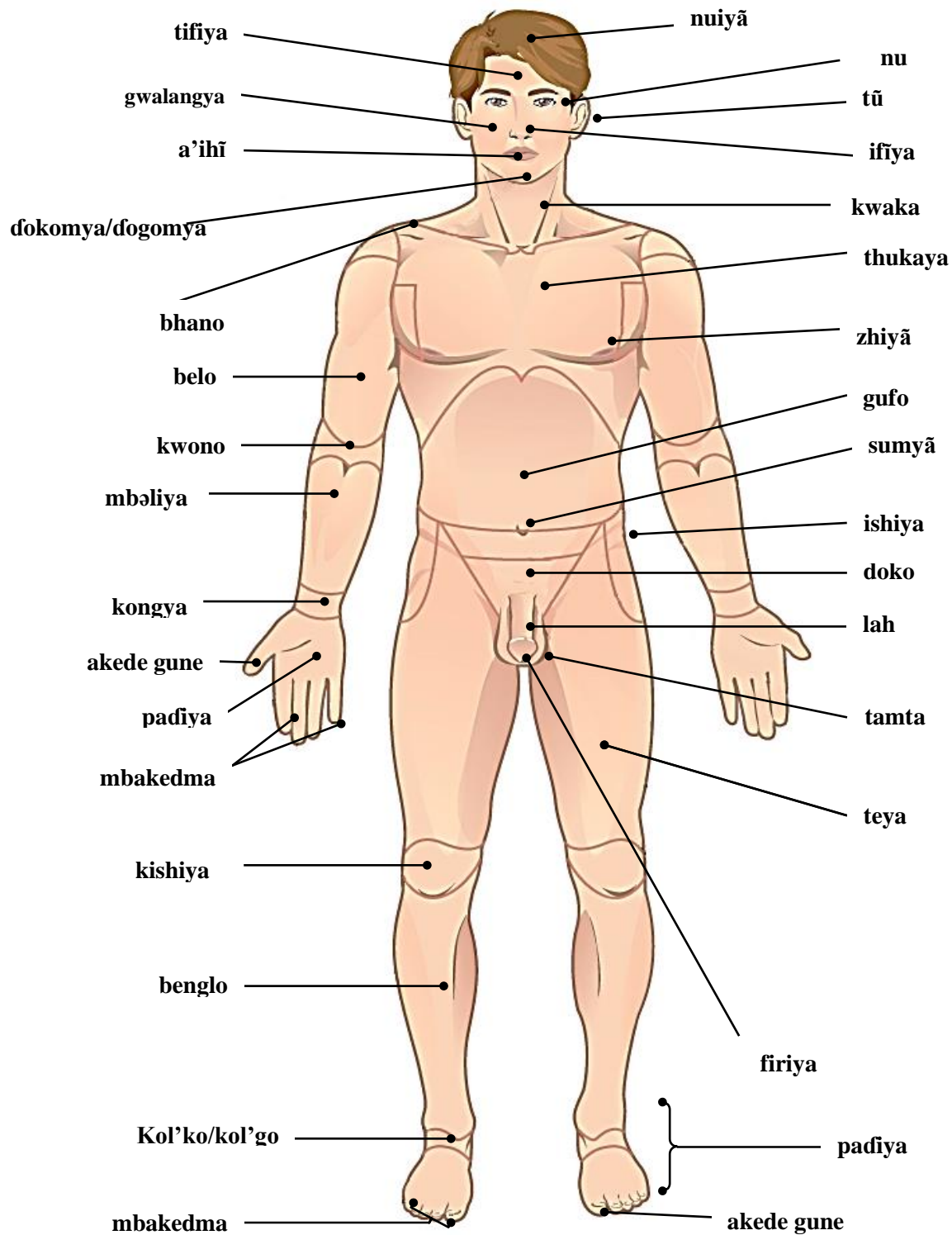
trigraphs that are found in the language. Just as mentioned earlier, we need to learn these symbols with all passion in order to promote our language and to encourage Mboi people to continue to use the language without apology.

Nevertheless, the comprehensive letters are presented below:

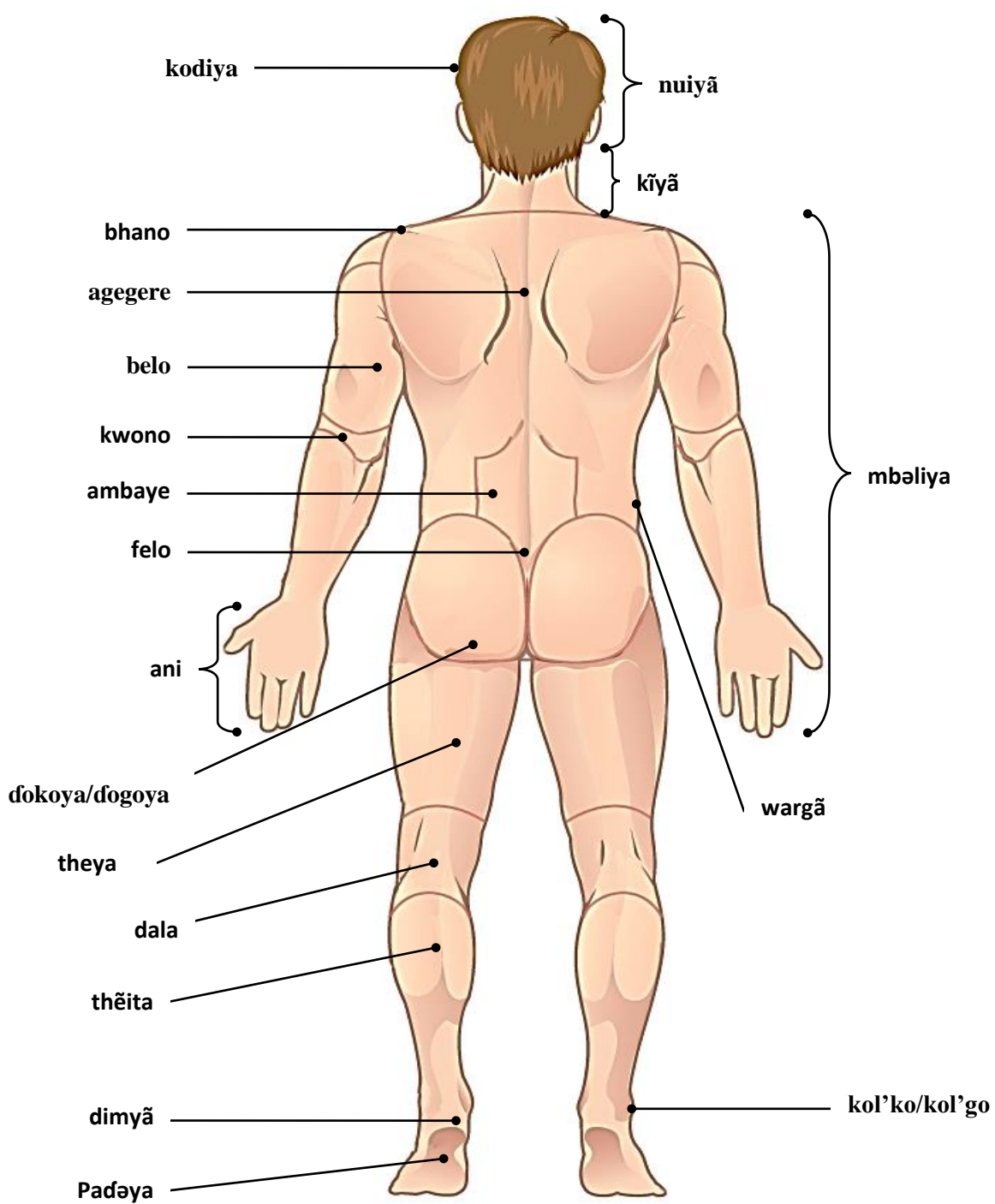
a ã aa ãã b bh bl bn br bw ɓ ɓh ɓl ɓw ɓwh c  
cw d dh dw ɗ ɗh ɗw e ẽ ə ẽ f fw fy g gb gh gl  
gr gw gy h hw hy i ã ii ã j k kh kp kr kw ky l m  
mb mbh mbr mbt mbw mw n nd ng ndw ngb nh  
ngy nj ns o õ oo õõ p ph pr ps py r rh rw s sh

sñ sk sw shw t th tr ts tw ty u ñ uu ññ v w wh  
y yh z zw zh 3 3w

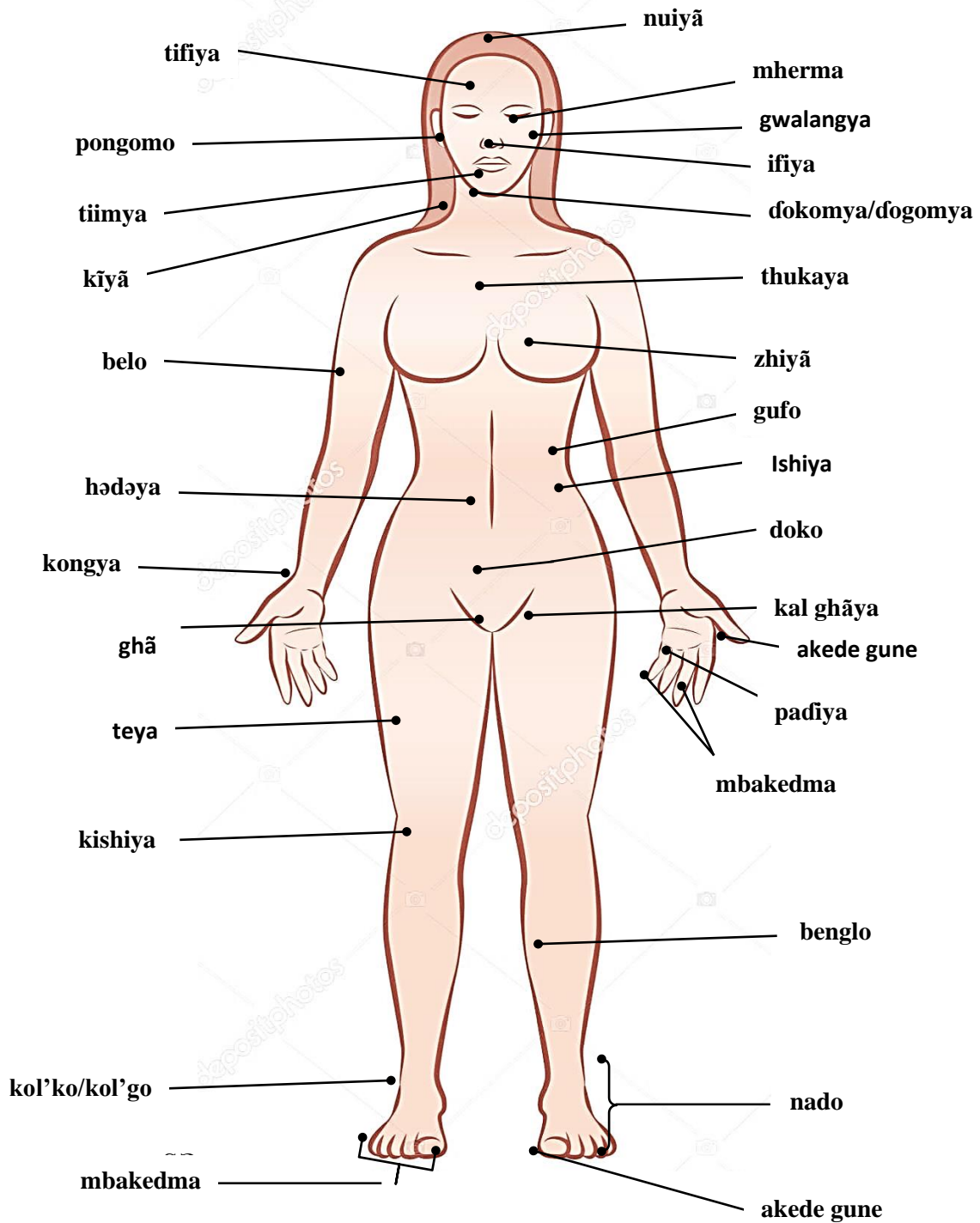
## 10 Barma Afikema (Male Parts of the Body Front and Back)

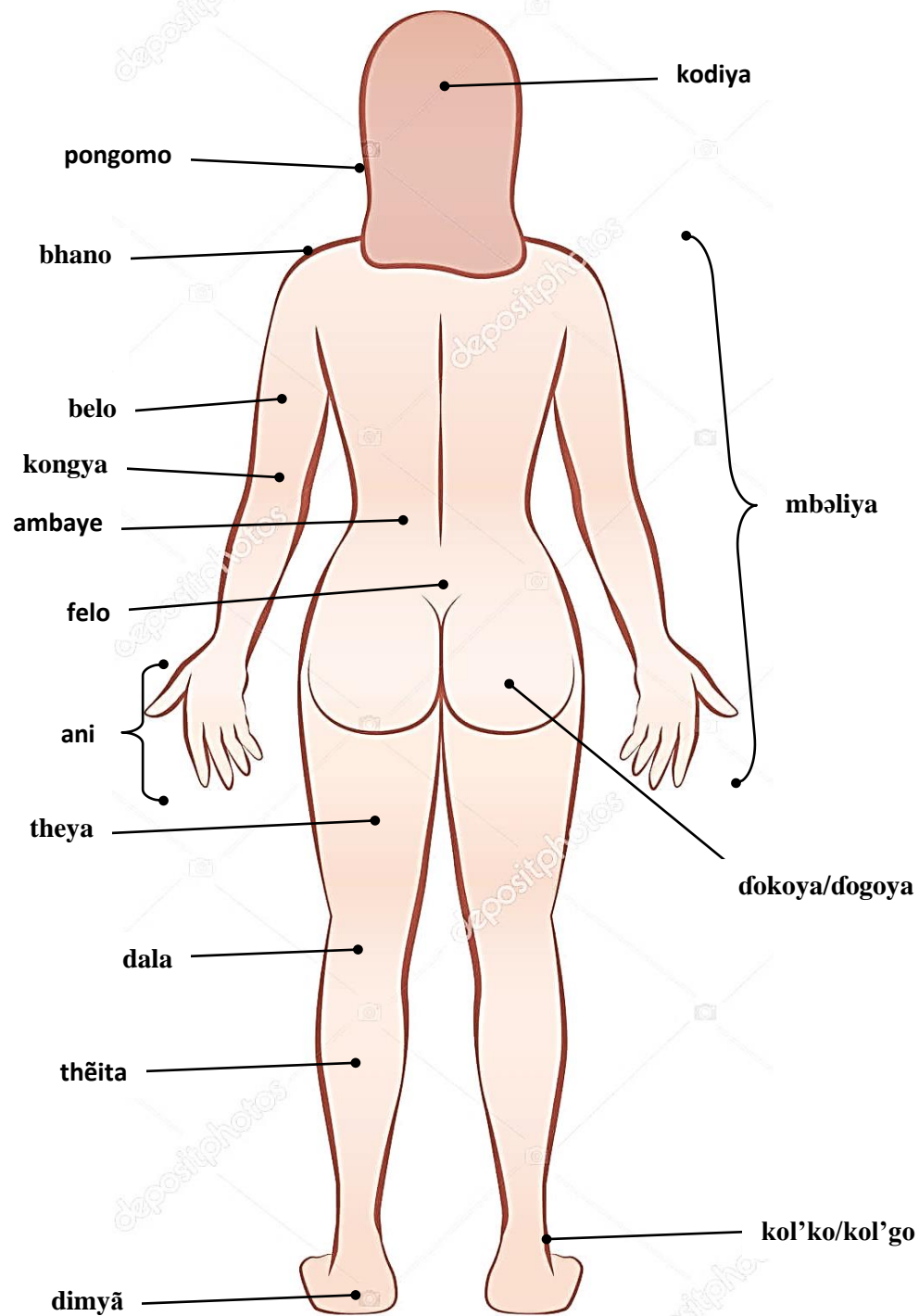




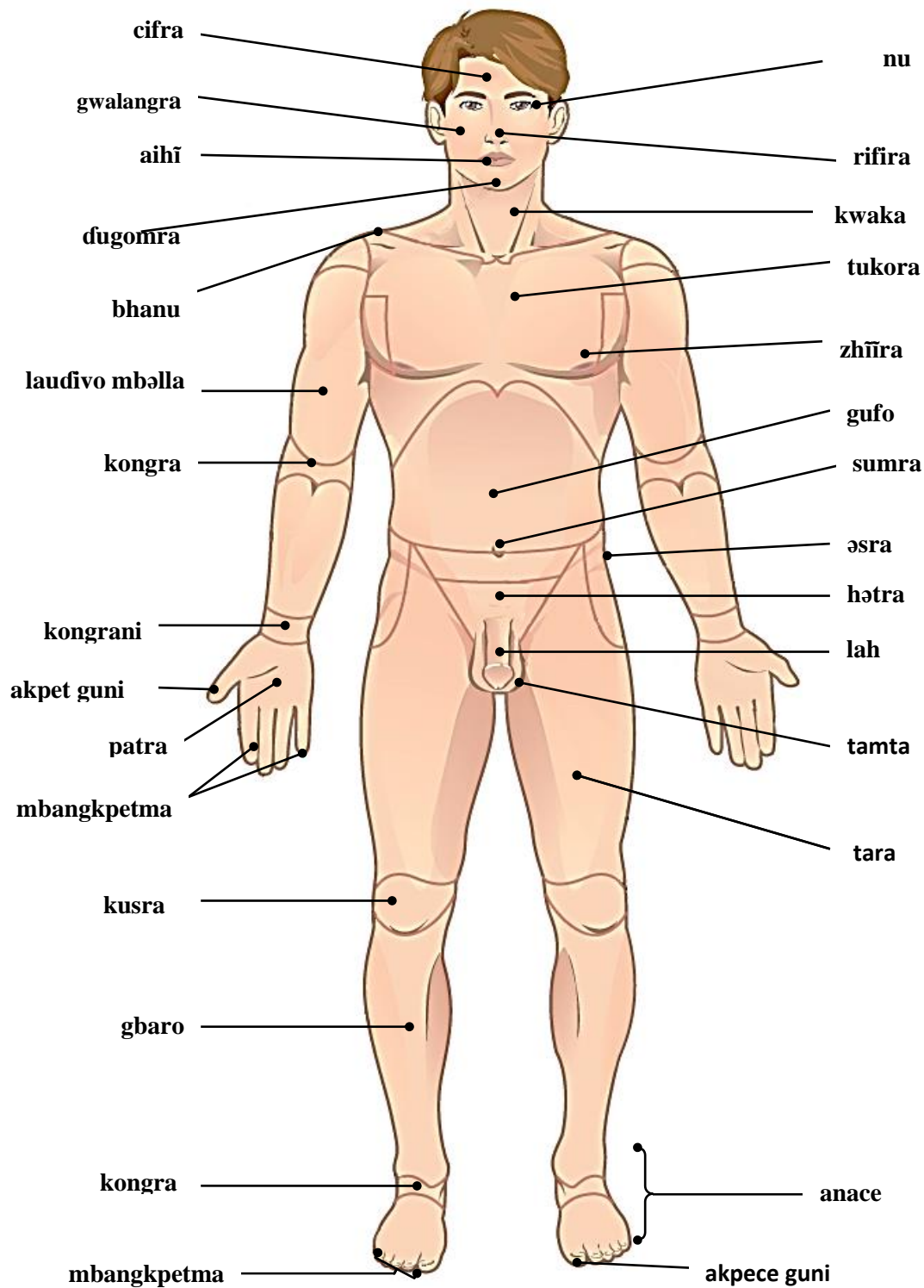


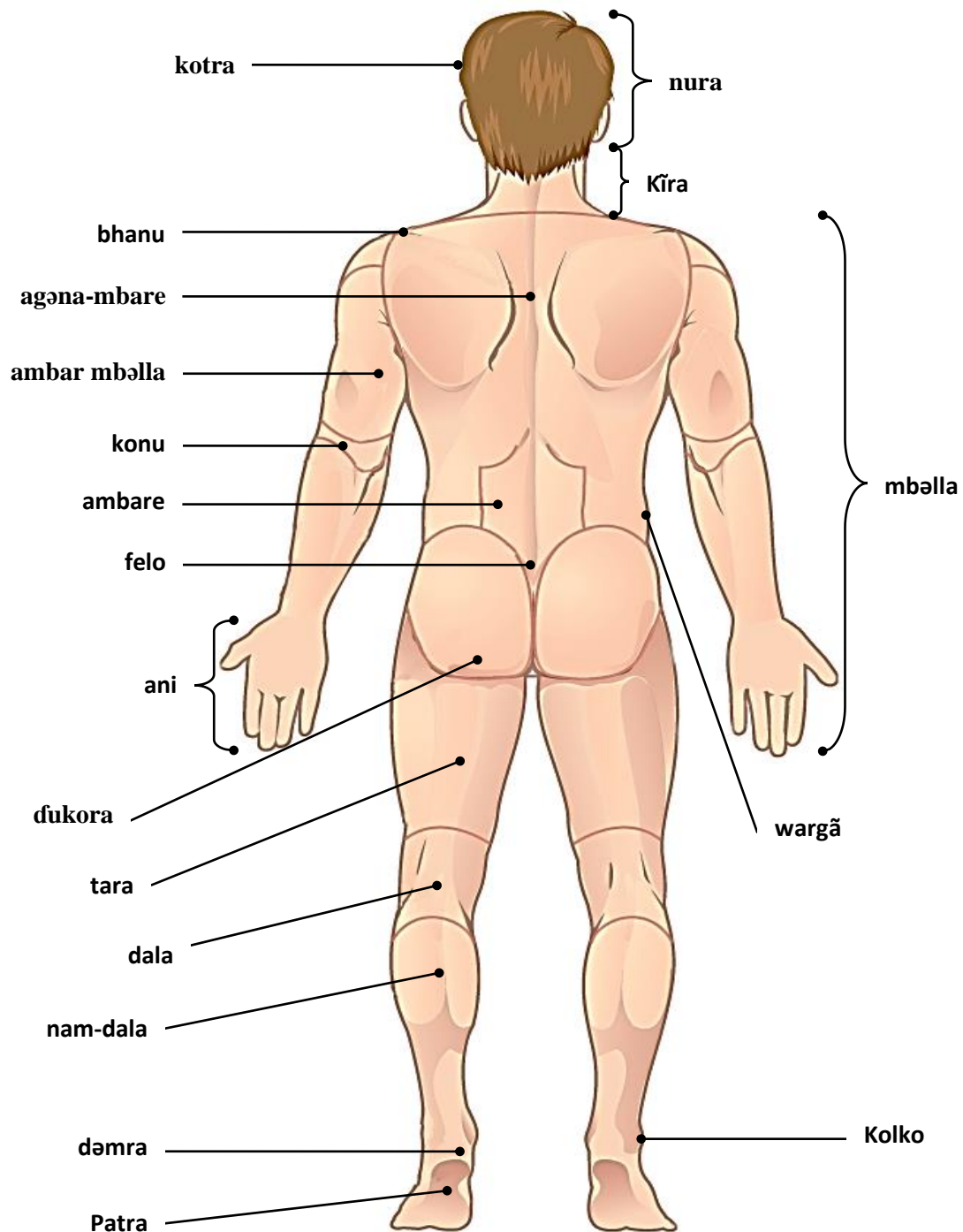
## Barma Afikema (Female Parts of the Body Front and Back)

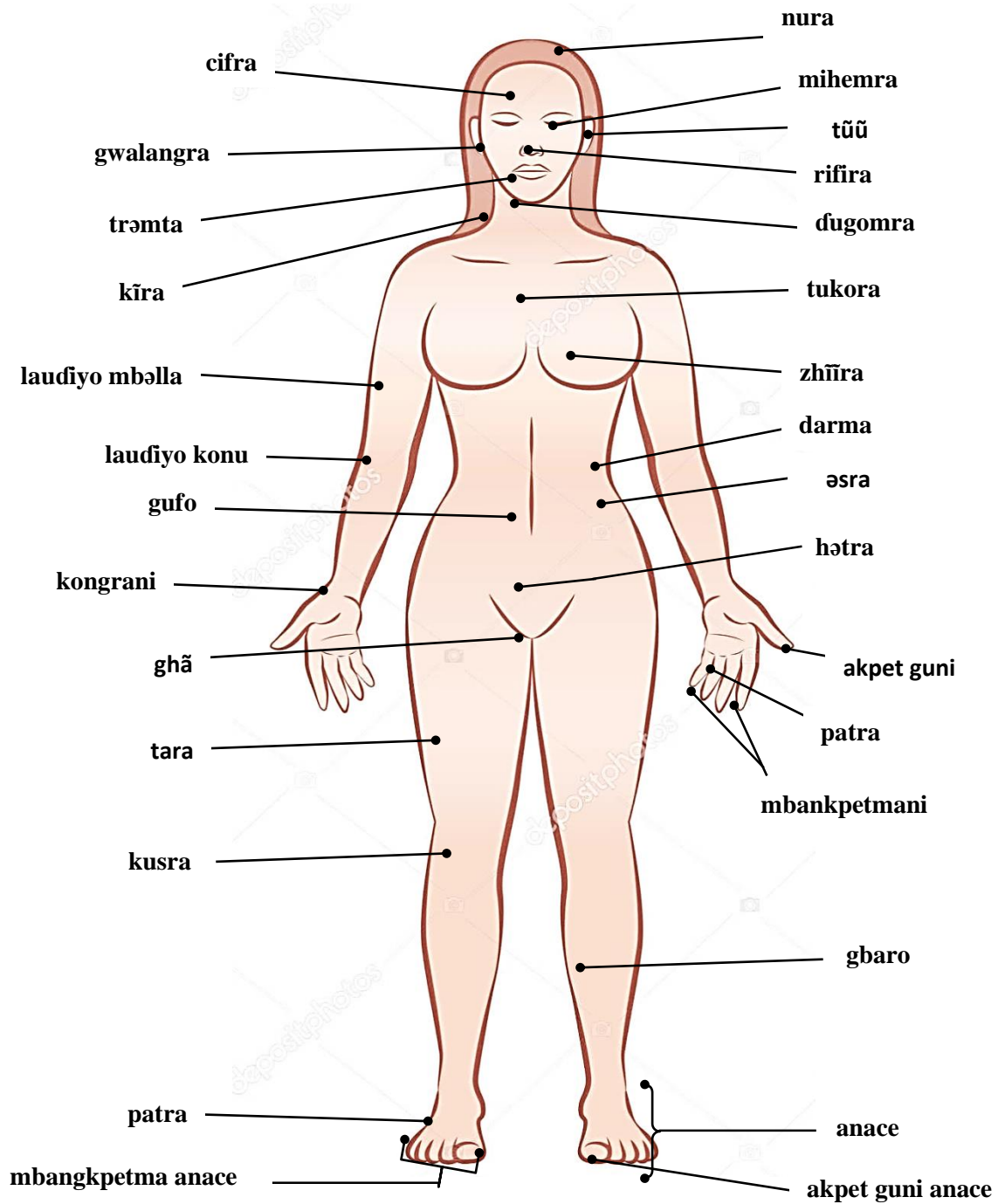


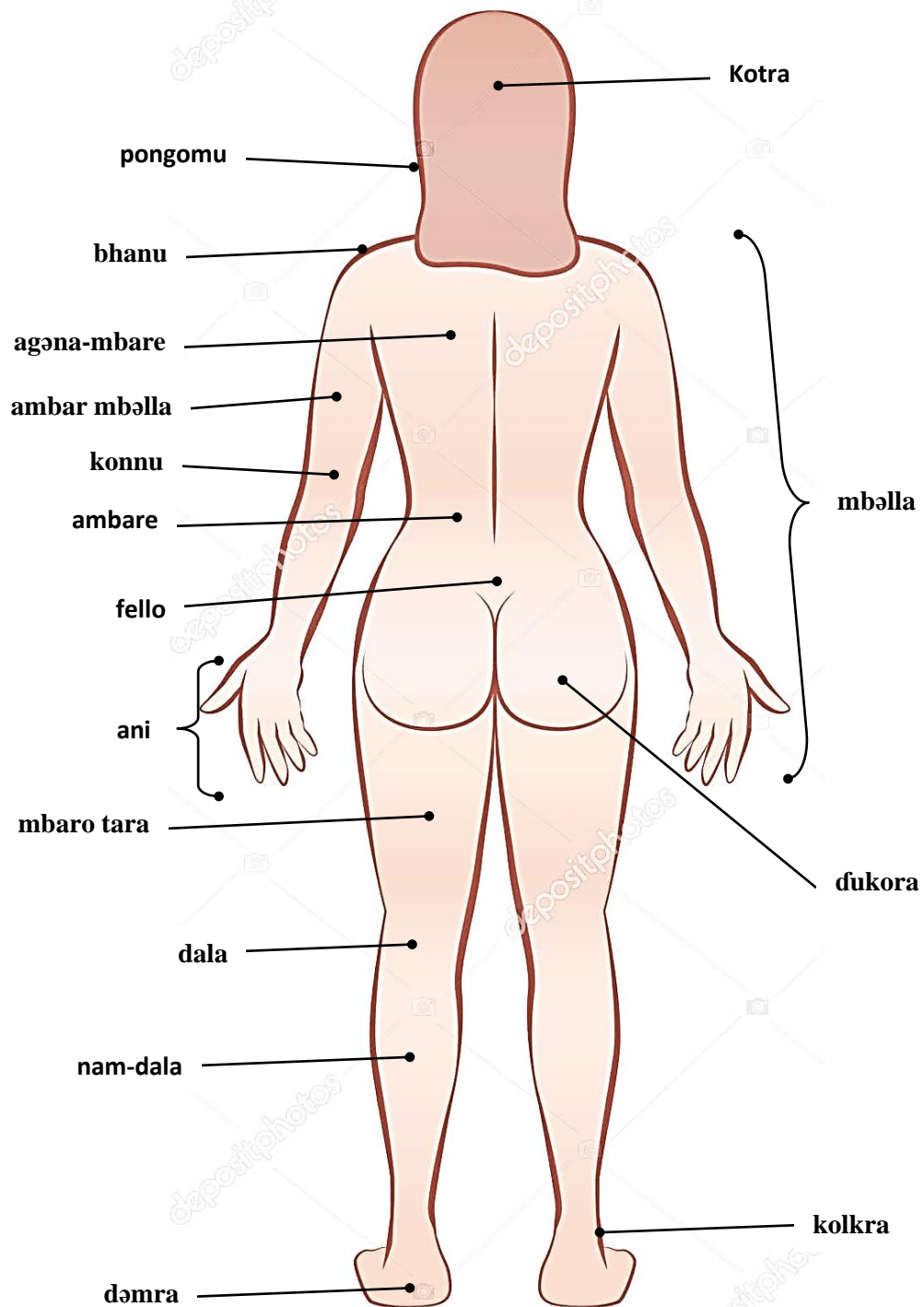


## Kongtafike (Male Parts of the Human Body in Mboi [Handa] Language)











## 11 SUMMARY

This booklet comprises of the sounds that constitute the Mboi language alphabets and how it should be used for reading and writing at a beginner level. The alphabets are presented here alongside some word examples that make the language writeable and readable for the learners at all levels.



## 12 RECOMMENDATION

Mboi language is linguistically very rich and have come a long way in order to formalize herself into writing. Following the passion the community has for the language, the on-going research has been positively supported by notable Mboi speakers which gave birth to this analysis. The author wishes that the proposed alphabets should be used for further language development and documentation in order to help in preserving Mboi language use.

I also wish to recommend that Mboi people should use this document in order to help write down all documents mainly for Mboi readers to be documented in Mboi language only. Minutes of meetings, royal data, archiving and reports that are for Mboi people should be written in Mboi language. The way to sustain a language is by writing it down.

## **ABOUT THE BOOKLET**

KAWOYI NƏ DOROYI DA IHYĂ MBOI is a booklet that consists of a proposed (trial ed.) alphabet for a lay learner and interested readers and speakers of Mboi language. It presents the phonemes in a simpler to complex way with word examples alongside English gloss in order to enable a learner read and write Mboi language in an easier way.

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