A Variationist Study and Mutual Intelligibility Testing of Yoruba and Variants of Ìgbómìnà Dialects in Kwara State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This work is a variationist study of Standard Yoruba and variants of Ìgbómìnà dialect spoken in Kwara state. The objectives of this study are to (i) examine the differences between Standard Yoruba and variants in Ìgbómìnà dialect; (ii) investigate variation in Ìgbómìnà dialect at the phonological and lexical levels; (iii). look into the dialectal differences in the Ìgbómìnà dialect;(iv). to examine the factors that are responsible for variations in Ìgbómìnà dialect; (v). to determine the level of mutual intelligibility among the Ìgbómìnà varieties; A variationist theory of empirical linguistics was adopted, and a comparative method of analysis was used. The Ibadan 400-word list was used for the collection of lexicons from two competent native speakers, from the selected towns making a total of sixteen (16) respondents from Ìfélódùn, Ìsin and Ìrépòdùn LGAs. Two respondents from each local government area were interviewed, making a total number of sixteen (16) respondents. The study revealed that: (i) Ìgbómìnà and Standard Yorùbá share a higher percentage of lexical items;(ii). Ìsin and Ìrépòdùn varieties are quite similar in phonemes and lexicons. ; (iii) while the Ìfélódùn variety differs from Ìsin and Ìrépòdùn; and (iv) a geographical distribution of Ìgbómìnà communities and language contact are the factors responsible for the variation in Ìgbómìnà dialect. The study concludes that Ìgbómìnà exhibits variation, the variations however are not significant to disrupt mutual comprehension. One of the contributions of this paper to knowledge is the postulation of a model that whenever there is a movement of a community at the centre to the periphery, there is bound to be changes in their cultural values, social disposition to language use, which will eventually lead to variants of the language being spoken at the centre.

Keywords: Variationist, Sociolinguistics, Mutual Intelligibility, Variation theory, Comparative approach, Ìgbómìnà.

Introduction

Variation appears to have been an inherent characteristic of all languages. It is impossible to study the language forms used in natural texts without being confronted with the issue of linguistic variability. Variability is inherent in human language, a single speaker will use different linguistic forms, on different occasions, and speakers of a language will express the same meanings using different forms. This has been a principal concern in sociolinguistics. There is more than one way of saying the same thing. It is difficult to find any two speakers who use their language(s) in exactly the same ways. Our speech is somewhat like our signature - it is unique. Mohammed A, Badri A, Ayman H. (2015) opines that variation is far from being a defect of a language. It is true that human language is governed by a system in which a huge amount of creativity is one of the important characteristics of it. Speakers may vary pronunciation, word choice, lexicon or grammar, but while the diversity of variation is great, there seems to be no boundaries on variation.

Variationist sociolinguistics is concerned with varieties of language, a variety being used as a general

term to talk about variation without specifying whether what is being considered is an accent, a dialect or a language. However, sociolinguistic variation has been referred to as a phenomenon whereby speakers will use language differently, depending on one or more regional or social variables (Hymes 1971).

According to Falk (1978), the term *dialect* can be used to describe differences in speech associated with various social groups or classes. O'Grady and Katamba (2011) have interchangeably defined language and dialect as a language variety that is systematically different from another variety of the same language and spoken by a socially identifiable subgroup of some larger community.

Dialects are simply different but related forms of the same language. They are usually mutually regional or social varieties, differing in lexical, phonological, syntactic and/or semantic ways (Wolfram, 1997; Burton, 2007). There are two separate ways of distinguishing them and this ambiguity is a source of great confusion. Haugen (1996) argues that the reason for the ambiguity and the resulting confusion is precisely the fact that dialect was borrowed from Greek, on the other hand, there is a difference of size, because a language is larger than a dialect. That is, a variety called a language contains more items than the one called a dialect. According to (Trask 1999), 'a dialect is a variation in grammar and vocabulary in addition to sound variations. Dialectal variation is a very important aspect of research in sociolinguistics, it shows how close or wide apart a particular language diverges from another.

Dialects of Yoruba language also exhibit phonological variation. Arokoyo (2012) states that apart from standard Yoruba which does not allow the high back vowel [u] to begin a word, some other dialects of Yoruba language especially the Ekiti, Akoko, Owo axis attest [u] at word initial position. Examples are illustrated below;

	OYO	IJESHA	EKITI	GLOSS
i.	Ilé	ulé	ulé	'house'
ii.	Isu	usu	usu	'yam'
iii.	Iná	uná	uná	'fire'
iv.	Iyán	uyán	uyán	'pounded yam'

Crystal (2008) defines the lexicon as the 'the component containing all the information about the structural properties of the lexical items in a language, i.e. their specification semantically, syntactically and phonologically". Hence, lexical comparison is a comparative analysis and study with the aim of investigating the similarities and differences between two languages. The comparative study could be carried out in the lexicon (vocabulary), phonology (pronunciation), and grammar (morpho syntax and grammar).

According to Rickford (2002, p.2), differences in vocabulary is an aspect of dialect diversity which people notice, readily, and comment on quite frequently. A lexical variation is to use a linguistic element instead of another, without making changes in the meaning of words or phrases. Phonological variation refers to differences in pronunciation, within and across dialects (Wolfram and Fasold, 1974).

Most local areas have specific lexical items that serve to identify their speakers (Schmitt, 2010). For example, your nose is a *neb* in Yorkshire, a *square* is to Philadelphians what a *block* is to a New Yorker, an American *resume* is a British *CV*, which is South African *biodata*, South African robots are British traffic

lights, and American police batons are British *truncheons* which are Indian *lathis*. All languages change over time, and vary according to the place and social setting. Three main aspects of language change over time are vocabulary, sentence structure and pronunciation. ((Lakoff, 1972).

In linguistics **cognates** also called **lexical cognates** are words that have a common etymological origin. They are often inherited from a shared parent language, but they may also involve borrowings from other languages. For example, the English words *dish, disk* and *desk* and the German word *Tisch* ("table") are cognates, because they all come from Latin *discus*, which relates to their flat surfaces.

Longe (1995) defines Mutual Intelligibility "as a possibility of speakers of the same language to understand one another". The term is sometimes used to describe a language when two varieties of a language are said to be characterized by shared similarities. Mutual Intelligibility is an overall criterion that may tell us in a psychologically relevant way whether two languages are similar or close.

Arokoyo (2014) conducted a study on the lexicostatistics comparison of Yoruba, Igbo and Olukumi languages. The study carried out a comparative and lexicostatistical analysis of two varieties of Olukumi; Ugbodu and Ukwunzu with Yoruba and Igbo in order to discover their cognates. The essence of the study was to discover the similarities and differences and to examine the level of mutual intelligibility that exists among them. It was discovered that the two varieties examined are different from one another. Cheng (1997) computed structural similarity measures for all pairs of Chinese dialects from a large multi dialectal, lexical phonological database. Gooskens and Schneider (2007) measured the degree of Mutual Intelligibility in four languages using Raga, Suru karian, Suru Rabwanga and Suru Mweram. They were able to establish Mutual Intelligibility between speakers of four related languages and varieties spoken in the northern half of the Island of Pentecost in Vanuatu. They established that intelligibility between three dialects is asymmetric. They were able to draw their conclusion basing the measurement on a quantitative measure of linguistic and non-linguistic factors. However, to establish the degree of variation in Ìgbómìnà dialect, and standard Yoruba, both the dialects and standard Yoruba are subjected to mutual intelligibility testing.

This study is basically a comparative study of Standard Yoruba and variants of Ìgbómìnà dialects of the Yoruba Language. The study is informed by the relatedness of the dialects and the geographical proximity of the areas inhabited by the speakers of the dialects.

Brief History of Yorùbá and Ìgbómìnà

The **Yoruba people** are an ethnic group that inhabits western Africa, mainly the countries of Nigeria, Benin, and Togo.Yoruba is one the three major Nigerian languages spoken in the South-western of Nigeria and in two other West African Countries, which are Republic of Benin and Togo (http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/History of the Yoruba). The language is spoken in the South west and South central parts of Nigeria, covering Òyó, Lagos, Ondo, Òsun, Èkìtì, Ògùn, Kogi and some parts of Kwara states and a small portion of Edo State. Like other native languages, it is a tonal language, having three surface tones – High, Mid and Low tone. Oduduwa was believed to be the first divine king of the Yoruba People.

The Yoruba constitute around 35 million people in Africa. The vast majority of the Yoruba population is from Nigeria, where the Yoruba make up 15.5% of the country's population, making them one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa. Most Yoruba people speak the Yoruba language, which is the Niger-

<u>Congo</u> language with the largest number of native speakers (http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/History of the Yoruba). It is said that the Yoruba people believe that their civilization began at Ile-Ife where the gods descended earth. The Yoruba were invaded by the Fulani in the early 1800 which pushed them to the south. In the late 1800s, they formed a treaty with Fulani people, and were colonized by the British in 1901. The Yoruba people spread themselves into villages, towns and cities, major cities are Ile-Ife, Òyó, Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ìjèbú-Òde and Àkúré. Some towns and cities of the Yoruba people are collectively considered to be clans due to similarities in their origins and cultures. These cities are Warri, Benin city, Okene and Auchi (http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/History of the Yoruba).

The Ìgbómìnàs migrated to their present settlement from various locations and at different times between the 14th and 17th century A.D. (Dada, 1985). Majority of Ìgbómìnà clans claim to have migrated to their present habitation from either Ife or Oyo, the two major origins of the Yoruba. The people migrated to their present settlement from various locations and at different times between the 14th and 17th century A.D. (Dada, 1985). Majority of Ìgbómìnà clans claim to have migrated to their present habitation from either Ife or Oyo, the two major origins of the Yoruba.

Aside those found in Ila area, Ìgbómìnà land is precisely aligned into 16 administrative parts in Kwara State. These areas are: Omu-Aran, Omupo, Sare, Oke-Ode, Igbaja, Ajase, Isin, Oro, Oro-Ago, Ile-ire, Ora, Oko, Ola, Esie, Idofia and Idofin. There are known Ìgbómìnà towns and villages in few other locals of Kwara State, including Apado in Iponrin area, Jeba in Lawna district, Apa-Ola, Joromu, Fufu etc., in Akanbi district and Ogbondoroko in Afon area. The Ìgbómìnàs are often grouped into two: the Ìgbómìnà Mosan and Ìgbómìnà Moye. The Moye group includes, Oke-Ode, Oro-Ago, Ora, Oko-Ola, Idofin and Agunjin districts.The Mosan group comprises such areas as, Omu-Aran, Ajase, Igbaja, Isin, Oro, Share, Esie, Omupo, Idofian and Ila-Orangun. The cord that firmly holds the Ìgbómìnà clan together is reflected in their insuperable dialect, origins, values, culture, institutions and aspirations.

Across Ìgbómìnà land, the people are fond of eating Ewu iyan, Ikasin oka or oka adagbon. These meals are prepared from leftovers of amala and iyan (pounded yam), a delicacy that adds refreshing flavour of delicious tastes and aromas to the meals. The "new" taste is highly cherished, especially in Omu-Aran, where the inhabitants have this popular saying: "ewu iyan d'omu odotun" meaning the re-make is in no way inferior to the fresh one.

Ìgbómìnà people speak a central Yoruba dialect called Ìgbómìnà or Igbonna, a Yoruba language that belongs to the larger Niger-Congo language group. Ìgbómìnà dialect is akin to the adjoining Yagba, Ilesa, Ife, Ekiti, Akure, Efon and Ijebu areas that are classified under Central Yoruba dialects of the large Yoruba languages. (htpps://igbomina.org. History of the Ìgbómìnà)

Figure 1: Map of Ìgbómìnà showing the three Local Government Areas.

Theoretical Model

The discussion of theory in relation to variation of language revolves around approaches and methods. There seems to be no clear-cut theory of language variation as the following discussion will indicate. This work therefore adopts the framework of empirical linguistics known as variation theory, and employs multivariate analysis to model a type of analysis which forms part of the descriptive, interpretive strand of modern linguistic research (Sankoff 1988). Studies employing this method are based on the premise that the features of a given speech community, whether morpho-syntactic, phonological, lexical of discursive may vary in a systematic way, and that this behavior can be quantitatively modeled (Young and Bayley 1996). The model tests on the assumption that whenever a choice exists among two or more alternatives in the course of linguistic performance, and where that choice may have been influenced by any number of factors, then it is appropriate to invoke statistical techniques. (Sankoff 1988).

Thus, notwithstanding, we will want to propose a theoretical model that will guide this study and future investigation in the field of language variation. It is therefore postulated that whenever there is a movement from the community at the center to the periphery of geographical location or geographical

location, outside the center, there is bound to be changes in their cultural values, social disposition, language use which will eventually lead to variants of the language being spoken at the center. This may be as a result of temperature, geographical factor, cultural, social distancing and some other factors that may stand as hurdles to the flow of communication from the center to the periphery.

Methodology

The study derived data from the native speakers of Ìgbómìnà dialect from the Local Government Areas of study; i.e. Ìfélódùn, Ìrépòdùn and Ìsin in Kwara State, and from Yoruba speakers, one from Ilorin and the other from Igbeti, Kwara and Oyo states respectively. Precisely, data were collected from these locations: Òrò-Àg?, Shàáré, Òwù-Ìsin, Òkò, Àrándùn, Òkè-Ode and Òlà-Ìsin.. The researcher clearly needed to have speakers from each of these speech communities, so two competent speakers were selected from each of them. The criterion for their selection was based on their peculiar varieties of Ìgbómìnà, a total of fourteen respondents in all the respondents were willing to be interviewed and the recording was done simultaneously, this took about an hour at agreed places. A comparative approach was adopted. The **comparative method** is a technique for studying the development of languages by performing a feature-by-feature comparison of two or more languages, with common descent from a shared ancestor. Comparative method is used to reconstruct prehistoric phases of languages and also to fill in gaps in the historical record of a language; to discover the development of phonological, morphological and other linguistic systems and to confirm or to refute hypothesized relationships between languages (http://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comparative Method).

Sampling population method was used. The sampling population was of two age ranges. One is between 15-40 years, and the other is between 40 and above. The former is more of a focused group, while the latter is of personal interview. The Ibadan 400 wordlists of Basic Items was also used in collection of the lexicons of each variety. Each word on the list was mentioned to the respondents who gave how it is called or pronounced in their variety. As it is being pronounced, the recording was done. After which the researcher played back, and transcribed for proper elicitation.

In addition to the wordlists, were a carefully written, selected phrases and sentences both in English and Yoruba which served as the frame technique in order to arrive at variations in the Ìgbómìnà dialect as respondents were asked to pronounce in their variety. All these were recorded. This also helped in identifying the intonations of each variety. The researcher made use of respondents who are literate in both English, Yoruba and Ìgbómìnà dialect, and not just respondents who are literate in both Yoruba and Ìgbómìnà dialect only. The recorded variants of each Ìgbómìnà variety, as it is pronounced or rendered, were written phonetically against the words in Standard Yoruba. After the labeling, the variants were manually counted and elicited. However, the instruments used for data collection were edited based on a pre-assessment survey carried out to ascertain the viability of the instrument, and at the same time for clearer and better understanding of the tool by the intended informants.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section presents the data and its analysis. The data collected were presented in tables, and analyzed using descriptive method. This was done by studying the data and using a comparative method, performing a feature by feature comparison in other to bringing out the similarities, differences and peculiarities among each variety presented. The data were presented in tables to be able to describe and

interpret the variants effectively.

A. Table 1: Fruits, Foods and Drugs

Standard Yoruba	Ìfélódùn	Ìrépòdùn	Ìsin	Gloss
1. òrá	òrá	òrá	òrá	fat
2. iyò	iyò	iyò	iyò	salt
3. okà-bàbà	òdòkó	okà-bàbà	okà-bàba	guinea corn
4. sìgá	tábà	ásà	sìgá	tobacco
5. òwú	òwú	òwú -tùtú	òwú	cotton-wool
6. ègé	pákí	láfún	ègé	cassava
7. erèé	eerèé	eerèé/ewa	erèé	beans

In table 1, we found similarities in the lexical items. In Nos 1, 2, 7, ,the words are spelt and pronounced the same way both in standard Yoruba and in all the Ìgbómìnà dialects. Differences are noticed in the word *tobacco*, it is *sìgá[siga]* in Standard Yoruba, *tábà [tábà]* in Ìfélódùn, *ásà[asa]* in Ìrépòdùn variety and *tábà[taba]* in Ìsin variety. Ìsin and Ìrépòdùn have same variety.

Table 2: Parts of the body

Standard Yoruba	Ìfélódùn	Ìrépòdùn	Ìsin	Gloss
1. ìdodo	àwé	ìwé	ìwé	navel
2. èyìn	àyìn	èyìn	èyìn	back
3. orí	erí	erí	erí	head
4. imú	imo(an)	imú	imú	nose
5. irungbõn	arungbòn	irungbòn	àdùngbòn	beard
6. ìgbònwó	ìganapá	ìgbònwó	ìgbònwó	elbow
7. enu	arun	enu	enu	mouth
8. èké	ègbó	èké	ìrèké	cheek
9. omú	omo(an)	omu	oyàn	breast
a. ikùn	ikù	iku	iku	stomach
b. ìdí	ibaradi	ìdí	ìdí	buttocks
10.òbò	ògó	ògó	òbò	vagina
11.esè	esè	osè	esè	eg
12.ahón	awon	aghan	awon	tongue

In table 2, similarities are discovered in Nos 6,8, 9, 10,11,14,. The words, *orùn [?ru], etí[eti],itan[itã], owó[?w?], egungun[egugu], ojú[oju] and irun[iru]* have the same spellings and pronunciation with standard Yoruba, and also in each of the varieties. However, alternations are observed in the words; ahón, òbò, ikun, èké, enu and irungbòn they are at variants with standard Yoruba. The word vagina; *òbò[obo]* is realized as *ògó [?g?]* in the Ìsin, Ìfélódùn and Ìrépòdùn varieties. The word *beared,* is [irugbõ] in standard Yoruba, [arugbõ] in Ìfélódùn, [adugbõ] in Ìrépòdùn and [adugbõ] in Ìsin. Interestingly, all the varieties are at variants. Also, the word *head* [orí] in standard Yoruba is [erí] in all the varieties, substituted by high back unrounded vowel /a/. The word *navel* is [ìdodo] in Standard Yoruba, [àwé] in Ìfélódùn variety, [ìwé] in both Ìsin and Ìrépòdùn varieties. The word *back* is [èyi] in standard Yoruba, Ìsin and Ìrépòdùn variety

but [àyi], which that, the back central unrounded vowel is substituted for low front unrounded vowel at the word initial position in Ìfélódùn variety. The word *tongue* is [ahã] in standard Yoruba, [awõ] in Ìfélódùn and Ìsin varieties but as [a?ã] in Ìrépòdùn variety, the substitutes are, /w/,/h/ and /?/, bilabial approximant, glottal fricative and voiced velar fricative respectively.

Table 3 Animals/Rodents/Insects

Animal nouns are living creatures which are insects, amphibians, birds and four-legged animals.

	Standard Yoruba	Ìfélódùn	Ìrépòdùn	Ìsin	Gloss
1.	erin	erin	erin	erin	elephant
2.	ìjàpá	ìjàpá	alábaun	ìjàpá	tortoise
3.	àmõtékùn	amoteku	àmõtékùn	àmõtékùn	leopard
4.	àlángbá	ètèkeetè	àlángbá	àlángbá	lizard
5.	òbo	òbo	ìnàkí	òbo	monkey
6.	ajá	ajá	ajá	ajá	dog
7.	màlúù	mòlúù	màlúù	mòlúù	cow
8.	eku	òkúté	èkúté	èkúté	rat
9.	pépéye	pépéye	pépéye	pépéye	duck
10.	àkùk?	àkùk?	àkùk?	àkùk?	cock

In Table 3, similarity is observed in the words; *elephant, dog, ,duck, cock, rat,* [erin], [ajá], kpékpéje],[àkùk?], [eku],[respectively. There is an alternation in the word *monkey*. It is [?b?] in Standard Yoruba, Ìfélódùn, and Ìsin varieties but [ìnàkí] in Ìrépòdùn variety. The word rat is [eku] in SY and Ìrépòdùn variety, [òkúté] in Ìfélódùn and [èkúté] in Ìsin variety.

B.   Table 4: Action Verbs

	Standard Yoruba	Ìfélódùn	Ìrépòdùn	Ìsin	Gloss
1.	korin	korin	korin	korin	sing
2.	réèrín	ríìnrín	rérìn	rérìn	laugh
3.	gbàgbé	gbàgbé	gbàgbé	gbàgbé	forget
4.	fò	fò	fò	fò	jump
5.	bèrè	bèrè	bèrè	bèrè	ask
6.	tà	tàá	tà	tà	sell
7.	sòkalè	sòkalè	sòkalè	kìrì	descend

In table 4, the verbs are virtually the same in all the varieties with standard Yoruba with same pronunciation and spellings.

Measurement of Mutual Intelligibility

To test intelligibility, a large number of tests have been developed. By means of such tests, the degree of intelligibility can be expressed in a single number, often the percentage of input that was correctly recognized by the subject Gooskens (2018). In testing and explaining the degree of mutual intelligibility, among the variants of Ìgbómìnà dialect, three factors were considered; High dialect intelligibility - this is used to refer to a situation where a respondent reports complete understanding of the speech dialect, Medium dialect Intelligibility - above average understanding of the speech variant, and Low medium Intelligibility - minimal understanding of the text. Intelligibility among languages can vary between individuals or groups in a language population according to their knowledge of various registers and vocabulary in their own language, their interest in or familiarity with other cultures in the domain of discussion, psycho-cognitive traits, the quantity of language used (written vs oral) and other factors. Many genetically related languages display many similarities with each other in grammar, vocabulary,

and pronunciation and other features, their speakers usually find it relatively easy to achieve some degree of understanding in related languages. According to Parkhurst and Parkhurst (2003), a comparative study could be carried out in the lexicon (vocabulary), phonology, (pronunciation) and grammar (morphosyntax and grammar).

In an attempt to determine the Mutual Intelligibility within the varieties of Ìgbómìnà, the lexicostatistic and lexical similarity measurement were used. It is calculated by dividing the total number of items multiplied by 100 to obtain percentage cognates. Speech communities that have more vocabulary cognates in common are more likely to understand one another than speech communities that have fewer cognates in common.

By linguistic distance, the researcher was able to calculate the distance between the Ìgbómìnà towns in the studied area. And lexico statistics was done by comparing various aspects of the vocabularies of each town in the selected local governments areas.

The lexical similarity field technique helped the researcher to measure the degree of relationship among these Ìgbómìnà speaking communities, through comparing aspects of their vocabularies in the 400 wordlist and the frame technique. This helped in ascertaining how cognately related these varieties are.

i. In order to determine the level of relatedness between Standard Yoruba and Ìrépòdùn dialect, a total number of 954 cognates were counted, and used for calculation. Below is the lexico-statistics analysis.

$$\frac{954}{1000} \times \frac{100}{1} = 95.04\%$$

ii. In order to determine the level of relatedness between standard Yoruba and Ìfélódùn variety, a total number of 774 cognates were counted and used for calculation. Below is the lexicostatistics analysis.

$$\frac{774}{1000} \times \frac{100}{1} = 77.04\%$$

iii. Level of relatedness between Standard Yoruba and Ìsin variety a total number of 959 cognates were counted and used for calculation. Below is the lexicostatistics;

$$\frac{989}{1000} \times \frac{100}{1} = 95.9\%$$

Findings from the lexico-statistics show that there is a higher percentage cognate between Standard Yoruba and the varieties of Ìgbómìnà dialects. Standard Yoruba and Ìrépòdùn is 95.04% cognates, Standard Yoruba with Ìfélódùn 77.04%, and with Ìsin 95.09% cognates. It is also observed that Ìrépòdùn and Ìsin varieties are obviously similar in lexical, verbs, nouns; foods and fruits, parts of the body, verbs and numerals. In fact, the two varieties are closer to the Standard Yoruba. The Ìfélódùn variety is a bit different from Ìrépòdùn and Ìsin variety and also from Standard Yoruba. Although there are phonological variations especially vowel alternations and substitutions among the three variations and standard Yoruba, this does not affect intelligibility. Some words in Ìfélódùn variety are completely different from the standard Yoruba but not significant to affect intelligibility. The most common speech sound among the Ìgbómìnà is the voiced velar fricative/?/, they all share this in common.

Also, the level of relatedness among Ìsin, Ìrépòdùn and Ìfélódùn variants was determined. The total of each variety was summed, divided by the total and then multiplied by 100.

Number of variants x 100
   Total of the variants.

	Ìrépòdùn	Ìfélódùn	Ìsin	Total
Number of Variants	954	774	989	2,177
	95.4%	77.4%	98.9%	

Findings

The data were analyzed and discussed at phonological and lexical levels. Our data revealed that certain words are peculiar to some regions. This implies that there is lexical variation between Yoruba and Ìgbómìnà. The study revealed that some words differ in respect to their phonological component. Such variation is termed phonological variation. While some words have extremely different forms, we discovered such words are common in Ìfélódùn LGA which occurred as a result of geographical location, e.g. òdòkó, ìganapá, àwé, ègbò etc. The study therefore revealed that there is lexical variation within the Ìgbómìnà varieties examined. It is observed that Ìrépòdùn and Ìsin varieties are obviously similar in lexical categories, verbs, nouns; foods and fruits and parts of the body.

Their level of relatedness is 98.9%, 77.4%, and 95.4% that is, Ìsin, Ìfélódùn and Ìrépòdùn respectively. So, it is concluded that the tree varieties are of High dialect intelligibility, i.e. they are mutually intelligible.

The study discovered two basic factors responsible for variation in Ìgbómìnà, these include; geographical location and language contact. When speakers of a language reside in different parts of a continuous territory, it is common that variation occurs as one move from one locality to another. Similarly, when languages come in contact, the aftermath of such contact is language levelling which results in variation.

Conclusion

This research examined a comparative study of the lexicons of Standard Yoruba and Variants of Ìgbómìnà dialects spoken in Kwara State on one hand, and on the other, the variants of Ìgbómìnà dialects . The objectives were to examine differences and similarities between standard Yoruba and variants of Ìgbómìnà dialects. This was done through a comparative approach and a descriptive analysis. The study also revealed that there is a high level of mutual intelligibility between standard Yoruba and variants of Ìgbómìnà. It is discovered that Ìfélódùn variety has more of different varieties to Ìsin and Ìrépòdùn. The study was able to establish that Ìgbómìnà exhibits variation, the variation however is not significant enough to affect mutual intelligibility among the speakers.

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