

Linguistic Variation and Change in Nawfija Speech Community

Nwagalaku Chineze

Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Obiora Harriet Chinyere

Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Christopher Chinedu Nwike¹

Department of Linguistics, Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka, Nigeria

Abstract—The focus of this study is on linguistic change and variation in the Nawfija speech community. It distinguished dialect from other similar words and contrasted the traditional Igbo dialect with the Nawfija dialect of the Igbo language on an equal footing. The types of dialectal variations found in the Igbo Nawfija dialect were investigated in this study, as well as the question of dialect supremacy. For the creation of standard Igbo, some suggestions have been made.

Index Terms—language, linguistic variation, standard variety of Igbo and Nawfija variety of Igbo language

I. INTRODUCTION

The empirical study of language is referred to as linguistics. In other words, it is concerned with the systematic study of languages, as languages vary in terms of their origins, varieties, and status. From this vantage point, it's easy to see how language is constantly changing. Language dynamism refers to both language transition and language loss, not just variation that leads to dialect. According to (<http://en.citizendium.org/wiki/linguisticvariation>), linguistic variation is the degree of discrepancies between various languages around the world, and this field of study can be considered a branch of linguistics research. The linguistic difference between speakers of a language is what one might claim occurs mainly in pronunciation/accent in relation to the study of language and culture. It can also be related to word/lexicon selection and, ultimately, a preference for a certain grammatical pattern.

The Concept of Speech Community

Speech is a key discourse of sociolinguistic phenomena. A speech culture, according to Olaoye (2007), is a group of people who share the same values, norms, attitudes, and other aspects of language use and structure. They both have similar perspectives on speech laws and perception. Speech is a major sociolinguistic discourse. Olaoye (2007) defines a speech culture as a community of people who have similar beliefs, norms, attitudes, and other aspects of language use and structure. They have a common outlook on speech laws and interpretation. Given the foregoing context, the focus of this research is on linguistic variation and shift in the Nawfija speech culture, which can be viewed as a dialect variation of the Igbo language. The Nawfija dialect, a variant of the Igbo language, is the subject of this research. Nawfija is a town in Anambra State's Orumba South Local Government Area. The aim of this study is to achieve the following objectives.

1. Identification of the linguistic variations in the Nawfija speech community
2. To show that this variation is not substandard Igbo Language but rather a variant of Igbo Language due to regional factors.
3. To identify and analyze the types of variation in Nawfija dialect of Igbo Language.

The scope of this study is as follows:

1. Comparison of Nawfija dialect and the Standard Igbo
2. The differences in meaning in these two dialects of Igbo Language
3. The different types of dialect variation

The significance of this study shall be of much relevance in the following ways:

1. Serve as enlightenment not only to the native speakers of Nawfija dialect but also to the users of Igbo Language in general.
2. It will serve as a reference material to other researchers in related fields
3. It will also bring to light features that are peculiar to the dialect which may contribute to the development of Igbo language and perhaps to general linguistics theory.

¹ Corresponding email: nwikechristopher1@gmail.com

The data for this research work was gathered through an oral interview and informal conversation. Information on the town's history was gathered using these methods, and some differences in the narration of words in the Nawfija dialect were noticed. A hundred-word compilation was also used to see whether there were any differences in the names of these words in the Nawfija dialect.

II. DEFINITION OF SOME IMPORTANT TERMS AND TERMINOLOGIES

A. *Language*

Human language is a means of human communication that allows people to share their opinions, emotions, and ideas. Language is a means of communication used by humans that includes speech and writing, according to Anagbogu, Eme, and Mbah (2001). They went on to say that language is a type of communication in which people use writing systems, signs, or symbols to communicate their thoughts, feelings, emotions, and desires.

B. *Dialect*

Dialect refers to a group of people's unique way of speaking a language that differs from the standard. The literal sense of the word "dialect" and its linguistic meaning, according to Akmajian, Demers, and Harnish (2004), are in stark contrast. According to him, a dialect is a substandard use of a language, or, in other words, an incomplete, corrupt, or pure form of a standard language. It refers to a distinct type of a language in linguistics and does not carry any such judgment.

C. *Variation*

Variation is a change especially in the amount or level of something. It can also be said to be a thing that is different from other things in the same group. So, variation in dialects can be said to be different in the dialects of the same language.

D. *Idiolect*

An idiolect is the variety of language that is spoken by each individual speaker of a language. Idiolect means the form of a language spoken by a single individual. Synonymously, it can be said that the way there is one form of language use in a particular language, so there is with language variation as it involves levels of possible divergences, shifts or differences between how words are used by a particular set group in a speech community. From the foregoing, it can be said that there cannot be two same speaker of a particular language who speaks alike. This is to say that in a speech community, individuals speak or use language in their different ways, still, they communicate and pass across information from one person to another with meaning loses. Dialects themselves are collections of idiolects and thus so are languages.

III. EMPIRICAL FRAMEWORK AND OVER VIEW

The study of linguistics variation is always evident in language study because, variance in there is human the human languages sin an individual may decide to use a language in his or her own way in different instances and occasions while another individual from same speech community will still express that same message in another way. On the part of the language use of different speakers in a particular speech community according to (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/variation_linguistic), it can be said that the act of the language use is systemic in nature, in terms of one's pattern of pronunciations; word formation/morphology, grammar and word choices depending on the possible non-linguistic factors. However, these factors maybe as a result of the speaker's intension or purpose in which he or she is communicating. It can also be as a result of the relationship that exist between the speaker and hearer, as well as the possible structure of the population that the speaker have and finally, the production circumstances at the point the speaking is using utterances. Based on the foregoing, all these discussed factors are in turn, raise the consciousness of scholars in area of language study on the relationship and effect of language and the society, thus given rise to sociolinguistics.

In consonance with the above information, it can be said that dialect is a form of language variance that occurs in grammar and vocabulary. It can also involve variation in sound pattern. An instance a situation by which one says 'coming', and one ended up say I am coming (k[^]mi]), and another says 'I am coming (k mi]), one can actually understand that the difference lies on the accent. Another instance can be in a case of father (fæder) and father (fahada). In other words, when one says 'I got to go and another says that I gat to go', it can be said that it I a change that occurred due to the presence of dialect reflection of the language. In Igbo language, an instance can be drawn, where one says 'Ihe nke a Qbu osikapa, and another says, ife nke a, Qwu osikapa (is this thing rice?), it can be discovered that it is the dialectal influence that manipulates the statement where the former is in standard Igbo while the later is in the dialect of Igbo language.

A. *Dialect Variation*

Yule (2004) defines dialectal variation as differences in dialects of a language in pronunciation, vocabulary and a different grammatical form. In line with the foregoing, Akmajian et al (2004) came up with some dialectal examples in both the American and British English. According to Akmajian et al (2004), they are:

British (Terms/phrases)	American (Terms/phrases)
Car park	Parking lot
Coach	bus
Garage	service station
Lay by	rest area
Lift	elevator
Lorry	truck
Petrol	gasoline
Undergraduate (or tube)	subway
Call box	telephone booth
Telephonist	switch board operator
Gin and French	dry martini
Minerals	soft drinks

According to Nwoga (1975), because there is no central place for a town to meet for their various interests, it then makes them lack communication with one another. This is to say that a community is therefore isolated from the others in a town for meetings of various kinds, because there is no rallying point. When this happens each community holds its meeting separately. This encourages dialect variation. Variations therefore occur in both vowels, consonants and in many cases in actual word use. As they keep meeting individually, it is only natural that new sounds will be introduced within the community bringing out variations. In his words he said that "Dialect variations are mainly pronunciation". That means that most variations in dialect are mainly because of the way they are pronounced and a slight difference in their spellings. Essien (1990) is of the view that dialect variation results from the complete diffusion of linguistic changes. Each point of difference stems ultimately from the failure of innovation to be adopted by all speakers of the language when two or more languages become sufficiently divergent, they are said to be genetically related language". Human dialect is derived from classes and is dependent on a number of factors, the most important of which seem to be social status, faith, and ethnicity," writes Wardhaugh (1993).

The discovery that variance is far from being a "defect" in language simply shows its true existence as a result of the preceding. Human language is a rule-governed structure that allows for a great deal of versatility and innovation. There is no evidence that 'non standard' dialects are less effective as a means of communication than the so-called standard language. To put it another way, linguistic diversity does not imply linguistic inferiority. Instead, the issue is the language community's attitude toward speakers of these dialects. Differentiation within a language would ultimately lead to the formation of different languages due to the force of variation and shift in a language.

1. Kinds of Dialectal Variation

On aspects of language variations, focus is on grammar and society. This simply means that identifying a dialect necessitates knowledge of the dialect's phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics, as well as knowledge of who speaks it.

2. Phonetic Variation

A phonetic variation is described as a change in pronunciation that does not affect the phonemic level of the grammar, according to the book Language Files. There are two examples given. The following is an example of New York alveolar consonants. The alveolar consonants in some New York City dialects are routinely developed with contact between the tongue tip and the upper teeth (i.e. they are dento-alveolar), while the alveolar consonants in so-called regular dialects are not dental. The (t) in the word "two" in New York English (NYE) is formed by making contact between the tongue tip and the teeth. This is not the case in so-called Standard English. Dentals are not always recognized as alveolar consonants. Since there is no distinction between New York English and Standard English at the phonemic stage, this is a phonetic variation. Both have the same phonemics for alveolar consonants. Thus, between the two dialects, the position of articulation of (t) differs slightly. Standard English speakers only produce alveolar consonants with contact between the tongue tip and upper front teeth on rare occasions, such as in words like (tenth). In fact, the distinction is found at the allophone level rather than at the phoneme level.

3. Phonological Variation

Variation in pronunciation can be found at the phoneme level or at the level of phonotactic restrictions on syllable form, for example. The sequences Cr and Cl (c stands for consonant) are forbidden in unstressed syllables in some African American English (AAE) or dialects. As a result, "professor" is "professor." This is a case of phonological variation since the word professor has a /r/ as the second phoneme in standard American English (SAE), but in AAE, /r/ is simply not permitted to appear in this position. Since we can distinguish a specific difference in phonotactics between AAE and SAE, this is a case of phonological variation.

Cl and Cr clusters are not permitted in AAE, but they are permitted in SAE. This simply means that the phonological rules of the two dialects vary significantly; specifically the inventory of possible forms varies from one to the other.

4. Morphology Variation

According to 'language archives,' examples of morphological variation can be found in the speech of Northern England and Southern Wales, where the *-s/suffix* is used as a general present tense maker. In many other English dialects, */-s/* is only used to form the present tense in third person singular forms.

Example:

1. I likes him
2. We walks all the time

Another example comes from Appalachian English, which has a variety of non-standard past tense forms, such as 'Et' for "ate" and "her" for "heated."

5. Syntactic Variation

Syntactic variation, as the name implies, refers to variations in syntactic structure between dialects. The word "gone" is often used as an auxiliary in many southern dialects, as in "she done already told you" or "I done finished a while ago." This is also not the case in SAE. The use of the double modal 'I may be able to do it'. Another example is the use of so-called double negatives, such as in the phrase "I didn't see anyone."

6. Semantic Variation

When we speak about semantic variation, we also talk about how different dialects have different meanings for the same words, or how different words are used for the same thing in different dialects. This is more precisely known as the analysis of lexical semantic variation. That's a fancy way of saying that we're looking at word sense variation. The compound word "knocked up" is an example of a single word with several meanings. It means 'to rouse from sleep' in England and 'to make pregnant' in the United States. What one takes to the store is an example of various terms being used for the same thing. In some dialects, it is referred to as a bag, while in others, it is referred to as a sack.

B. Dialects and the Interplay of Regional and Social Factors

A New York City // Regional variation is only one of several forms of linguistic variation that can exist between speakers of the same language. (See <http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/linguisticvariationterm.htm> for more information.). As previously mentioned, the regional dialect is a classic example of a dialect, with the idea that speakers of the dialect form a cohesive speech group that lives in relative isolation from speakers outside the community. Such geographical isolation is becoming increasingly uncommon, and the population of the United States as a whole is so geographically and socially mobile that speaking of regional dialects in any pure sense is becoming increasingly difficult. A particular linguistic feature of a regional dialect can be influenced by social factors, particularly in large urban areas. The pronunciation of // in New York city speech is a fascinating example of the influence of "social status" on a regional dialect. The so-called r-less dialect of New York City is so well-known that it is often mocked, particularly by New Yorkers who speak it themselves. It is a common misconception that speakers of the dialect lack // in words like car, card, four, fourth, and so on, but this is not the case, as revealed by an intriguing study by sociolinguist William Labov (1972). Labov's theory was that the pronunciation of // in New York City varies depending on one's social class. Finally, he observed a change between casual and emphatic pronunciation, but it is minor, and the distinction between casual and cautious language styles is important in syntactic variation as well.

Mutual Intelligibility

Knowing that idiolectal and dialectal variation exist, how do we know if two language varieties or two dialects are dialects of different language altogether? Akamajian et al (2004) answers this question based on the notion of *mutual intelligibility*. Even if native speakers of a language, such as English, use the language differently, their languages are similar enough in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar to enable mutual understanding. A New Yorker, a Texan, and a Californian may notice variations in each other's languages, but they can understand and recognize each other as speaking the same language (despite all the jokes to the contrary). As a result, speaking the "same language" does not require two speakers to speak identical languages, but rather languages that are very similar. It's worth noting instances of one-way intelligibility between speakers of distinct but traditionally related languages. Even if one group of speakers understands another, they cannot be assumed to speak the same language unless the second group understands the first; hence, reciprocal intelligibility is critical in determining if two languages are the "same." In fact, language variation is so widespread that each language is essentially a continuum of languages that varies from speaker to speaker and from group to group, with no clear distinction between them

IV. WORD/DATA PRESENTATION

In this section we make a presentation of the 100 word list collected during the field work. This list will form the data used for analysis.

TABLE ONE

S/N	English Language	Standard Igbo Language	Phonetic Transcription	Nwafija Dialect	Phoetic Transcription
1.	No	Mbà	/mbà/	È è èd è	èè/èd è
2.	Night	Àbàlì	/àbàlì/	ány àsù	/á àsù/
3.	Leg	Úkwú	/úkwú/	ǎkpà	/ǎkpà/
4.	What	Ginì	/ginì/	òónnù	/òònnù/
5.	One	Ótù	/ótù/	Mvú/nnà	/múvùnnà/
6.	Cloth	Àkwà	/àkwà/	àkwá	/àkwá/
7.	Come	B íá	/bíá/	b íá	/B íá/
8.	Now	Úgburà	/úgburà/	ùdùú	/ùdùú/
9.	Thank you	D áà ù	/d áà ù/	ìn égwó	/Imegwó/
10.	Cup	ǎkó	/k ó/	k ó	/k ó/
11.	Water	Mmiri	/mmiri/	mmiri	/mmiri/
12.	Key	Nwá ígódó	/Dwá ígódó/	òtúgwó	/òtúgwó/
13.	Door	úzó	/úzó/	úzó	/úzó/
14.	Hair	Nùù	/nùù/	nùù	/Dùù/
15.	Wrapper	Úkwùàkwá	/úkwùàkwá/	ògòdò	/ògòdò/
16.	Plate	Ef é é	/é é é/	é é é	/Éf é é/
17.	Bye bye	N áà gb áóó	/n áà gb áóó/	N áà gb áóó	/n áà gb áóó/
18.	Head tie	Èh áfù	/èh áfù/	èh áfù	/èh áfù/
19.	Garden egg	An à à	/An à à/	An à á	/An à á/
20.	Stone	òkwútè	/òkwútè/	mkp úm é	/mkp úm é/
21.	Box	ǎb é	/ǎb é/	ǎkp à ì	/ǎkp à ì/
22.	Matches	Mkpá okù	/mkp ákù/	Mkpá okù	/mkp ákù/
23.	Mirro	Ènyò	/ènyò/	ènyò	/ènyò/
24.	Surrounding	Mb á á	/mb á á/	mb á á	/mb á á/
25.	Malice	Èsèmókú	/èsèmókú/	èsèmókú	/Èsèmókú/
26.	Now	Úgburà	/úgburà/	ùdùú	/ùdùú/
27.	Here	Èb éà	/èb éà/	k à	/k à/
28.	Welcome	Nnòò	/nnòò/	ndèèwó	/ndèèwó/
29.	Old person	òk ènyè	/òk ènyè/	òkènyè	/òkènyè/
30.	Plantain	Óg à ù	/òg à ù/	ùn èàk ànk ú à	/ùn èàk ànk ú à/
31.	Bitter kola	Àkítinù	/àkítinù/	ùgórò	/ùgórò/
32.	Comb	Mbó	/mbó/	mvó	/mvó/
33.	Bottle	K á á á	/k á á á/	róm	/róm/
34.	Bed	Àkwà	/àkwà/	àkwà	/Àkwà/
35.	Tree	Ósisi	/ósisi/	óshishi	/óshishi/
36.	Spoon	Ng àzì	/ng àzì/	nkòbò ngàdzì	/ngkòbò ngàdzì/
37.	Hand fan	Àkùpè	/àkùpè/	àkùpè	/àkùpè/
38.	Toe	Mkpísí úkwù	/mkpísí úkwù/	múpuúrú úkwù	/mkpúúrú úkwù/
39.	Friend	Ènyì	/ènyì/	ényì	/ènyì/
40.	Old	Óchì é	/óchì é/	ákà	/ákà/
41.	Shoe	Ákpúkpú úkwù	/ákpúkpú úkwù/	ákpúkpú úkwù	/ákpúkpú úkwù/
42.	Outside	Èz í	/èz í/	èz í f ó	/Èz í f ó/
43.	Village square	Ám á	/ám á/	ám á	/ám á/
44.	Ring	Ólāáka	/ólāáka/	Ólāáka	/ólāáka/
45.	Mother	Nné	/nné/	Nné	/nné/
46.	Father	Nnà	/nnà/	Nnà	/nnà/
47.	Rope	Ùdò	/ùdò/	ùdò/é f í	/ùdò/é f í/
48.	That place	Èb é àhù	/èb é àhù/	b é àhù	/b é àhù/
49.	That time	Óg é àhù	/óg é àhù/	mgb é àhù	/mgb é àhù/
50.	Small	Óbéré	/óbéré/	Óbéré	/Óbéré/
51.	Fence	Óg è	/óg è/	Óg è	/Óg è/
52.	Lie	Às í	/às í/	às í	/às í/
53.	Farm	Úgbò	/úgbò/	Úb ì	/Úb ì/
54.	Thread	Ér í í	/ér í í/	Ér í í	/ér í í/
55.	Knife	Mm à	/mm à/	mm à	/mm à/
56.	Back	Àzú	/ázú/	Àzú	/Azú/
57.	Again	Òzò	/òzò/	Òdó	/òdó/
58.	Swallow	Òl ùl ó	/òl ùl ó/	Òl ùl ó	/Òl ùl ó/
59.	Carry it	Bùrú yā	/bùrú yā/	vùrú yā	/Vùrú yā/
60.	Head	ǎí	/s íf/	ǎí	/ǎí/
61.	Bee	Anù	/ánù/	Ánù	/Ánù/
62.	Nail	Ntú	/ntú/	ntú	/ntú/
63.	Day	Úbòch ì	/úbòch ì/	úbòch ì	/úbòch ì/
64.	Show	G òs í	/g òs í/	G òs í	/g òs í/
65.	Sickness	Or à	/or à/	Ór à	/or à/
66.	Load	ǎú	/ǎú/	ǎú	/ǎú/
67.	Stealing	Óhí	/óhí/	Óshí	/óhí/
68.	Read	G ùó	/gùó/	G ùó	/gùó/
69.	Odour	ǎí	/ǎí/	ǎí	/ǎí/

70.	Stick	Ós é í	/ós é í/	Ósh éh ímkp á á	/óʃ éʃ ímkp á á/
71.	Leadership	Óch éh í	/óʃ éʃ í/	óch éh í òdú ú	/óʃ éʃ í òdú ú/
72.	Laugh	Óch ì	/óʃ í/	Óch ì	/óʃ í/
73.	Get out	Pùó	/pùó/	Fùó	/fùó/
74.	Hand	Ák á	/ák á/	Ák á	/ák á/
75.	High	Èù	/èù/	Èù	/èù/
76.	Greeting	Èk é é	/ék é é/	Èk é é	/ék é é/
77.	Cook	s íé	/s íé/	Sh íé	/ʃ íé/
78.	Sit down	Nòd í àn ì	/nòd í àn ì/	n òr ó àn à	/nòr ó àn à/
79.	There	Èb é àh ù	/éb é àh ù/	Èb é àh ù	/éb é àh ù/
80.	Said	S ì ì	/s ì ì/	Sh ì ì	/ʃ ì ì/
81.	Year	Áf ò	/áf ò/	Áwh ò	/áwh ò/
82.	Tall	Óg é óg ó	/óg é óg ó/	Óg é óg ó	/óg é óg ó/
83.	Blood	Òb à à	/òb à à/	Òb à à mm èè	/òb à à mm èè/
84.	Market	Áh íá	/áh íá/	Áh íá	/áh íá/
85.	Sleep	Úr á	/úr á/	Úr á	/úr á/
86.	Madness	Ár á	/ár á/	Ár á	/ár á/
87.	Drink	N ù ó	/nù ó/	n ù ó	/nù ó/
88.	Oil	Mmánū	/mmanū/	Mánū	/mánū/
89.	Face	Ĥ ú	/h ú/	Ĥ ú	/h ú/
90.	Yes	Éé	/éé/	Ééyī	/ééyī/
91.	Enter	B à á	/b à á/	B à á	/b à á/
92.	Suffering	Áh íh ú	/áh íh ú/	áwh íwh ú	/áwh íwh ú/
93.	Blindness	Í ì	/í ì/	Íh ì	/íh ì/
94.	Houses	Úl ò	/úl ò/	Úl ò	/úl ò/
95.	Two	Àb ù ó	/áb ù ó/	Ĥ ù ó	/ĥ ù ó/
96.	Name	Áh à	/áh à/	Áh ó	/áh ó/
97.	Stomach	Áf ó	/áf ó/	Áwh ó	/áwh ó/
98.	Tongue	Í é	/í é/	Í é	/í é/
99.	Come down	Gb à à á	/gb à à á/	Gb à à á	/gb à à á/
100.	Children	Úmúákā	/ómúákā/	Úm ù áj ì	/ómùájì/

A. Data Analysis

A cursory look at the list shows a number of variations between standard and Nawfija. These variations will constitute the basis of our analysis.

1. The Variation Observed in Nawfija Dialect of Igbo Language

2. Lexical Variation

From the above data the researcher observes that there are some lexical variations between the Standard Igbo and the Nawfija dialect. This has to do with the vocabulary of the language. Lexical variation in this context brings to light things that are called by different names in Nawfija dialect other than what they are called in the standard form of Igbo language. This means, things or items that are not called by their standard form names in Nawfija dialect. Below is a tabular representation of some of these instances.

TABLE TWO

S/N	English	Standard Igbo	Nwafija dialect
1.	No	Mb à	Éè é è
2.	Night	Áb à í	ányùù
3.	Leg	Úkwú	Ókp à
4.	What	Ginī	òónnū
5.	One	Ót ù	mv ú nn àà
6.	Now	Úgbúà	Úd ùú
7.	Thank you	D àá ù	ín égwó
8.	Key	Nw áig óó	áúgwó
9.	Stone	Òkwú è	mkp úm è
10.	Here	ò éà	K án
11.	Box	ġb é	ákp à ì
12.	Welcome	Nn óò	nd éèw ó
13.	Plantain	òg èd è	ùn èák ánk út à
14.	Bitter kola	Ákíínū	Úg é ò
15.	Comb	Mb ó	Mv ó
16.	Bottle	K á án á	Úr óm
17.	Spoon	Ng àz ì	nk óò ng àdz ì
18.	Farm	Úgbò	Úb ì
19.	Sit down	Nòd í àn ì	n òr ó àn à
20.	Yes	Éé	Ééyī
21.	Children	Úmúákā	Úm ù áj ì

These are some of the lexical variation in the Nawfija dialect of Igbo language.

3. Phonological variation

This is a form of pronunciation variation that has an impact on the phonemic level of grammar, which includes things like syllable shape. Before we go any further, let's take a look at some of the phonological differences found in this Igbo dialect.

TABLE THREE

S/N	English	Standard Igbo	Nwafija dialect
1.	Comb	Mb ó	Mv ó
2.	Tree	Òs í	Òsh sh í
3.	That place	Èb é àh ù	h é àh ù
4.	That time	Òg è àh ù	mgb è àh ù
5.	Lie	Às í	Àsh í
6.	Again	Òz ó	Òd ó
7.	Carry it	Bùrú yā	vùrú yē
8.	Head	é ì	h ì
9.	Show	G òs í	G òsh í
10.	Load	Ìbú	h ú
11.	Stealing	Òrì	Òshì
12.	Odour	é ì	h ì
13.	Get out	P ùó	F ùó
14.	Greeting	Ék ð è	Ék ð è
15.	Cook	S íé	Sh íé
16.	There	Èb é àh ù	h é àh ù
17.	Said	S ò ò	Sh ò ò
18.	Year	Àf ò	Àwh ò
19.	Two	Àb ùó	h ùó
20.	Stomach	Àf ó	Àwh ó
21.	Suffering	Àh ùh ú	Àwh ùwh ú

In the diagram above, the phonological differences between the Nawfija dialect of Igbo language and the standard form of Igbo language are shown. The sound /v/ is used in most places in the Nawfija dialect where the sound /b/ is used in standard Igbo. This means that the Nawfija dialect uses voiced labio dental fricative /v/ in most instances where regular Igbo uses voiced bilabial plosives /b/.

TABLE FOUR

S/N	English	Standard Igbo	Nwafija dialect
1.	Comb	Mb ó	Mv ó
2.	Carry it	Bùrú yā	vùrú yē
3.	Load	Ìbú	h ú

Another instances is the use of the sound /ʃ/ which is orthographically written as “Sh” that is palate alveolar fricative in Nawfija dialect as against the sound /s/ which is orthographically written as ‘S’ that is voiceless alveolar fricative which is in use in standard Igbo.

Some examples are below:

TABLE FIVE

S/N	English	Standard Igbo	Nwafija dialect
1.	Tree	Òs é í	Òsh sh í
2.	Lie	Às í	Àsh í
3.	Head	é í	h í
4.	Show	G òs í	G òsh í
5.	Odour	Ìsì	h ì
6.	Cook	S íé	Sh íé
7.	Said	S ò ò	Sh ò ò

Lastly on the dominant phonological variation observed in this dialect is the introduction of a new sound to the sound system of Igbo language. We can observe the use of the sound /ʃ/ voiceless bilabial fricative orthographically written as “wh” which has not been included in the sound system of the standard Igbo and also the sound /ʒ/ voices palate alveolar fricative, orthographically written as “Zj” which has not also been included in the sound system of the standard Igbo. Examples are below:

TABLE SIX

S/N	English	Standard Igbo	Nwafija dialect
1.	Year	Àf ò	Àf ò
2.	Stomach	Àf ó	Àwh ó
3.	Suffering	Àh ùh ú	Àwh ùwh ú
4.	Children	Úmùákā	Úmùájì

This shows that Nwafija dialect makes use of an additional sound /ʃ/ that is not represented in the sound system of the standard Igbo language.

4. The syllable structure of Igbo Language

A syllable is often a sequence of vowels and consonants and sometimes a syllabic consonant in a language uttered in a single vocal impulse. The Igbo syllable structure is such that the last speech sounds of most words are vowels. But in Nwafija dialect the consonant /n/ which can equally be called a syllabic nasal in Igbo language is used to end some words. The difference is the use of this sound in the two dialects. In Nwafija dialect some common words use this sound to end its word while the standard form does not use it in them.

TABLE SEVEN

S/N	English	Standard Igbo	Nwafija dialect
1.	Now	Úgbúà	Údún
2.	Here	Ébèà	Kán

5. Determination of relationship between Nawfija dialect and the standard variety of Igbo language

This has to do with comparison between these two speech forms that are regarded as dialects of the same language to determine whether they are actually dialects of the same language or whether they are related languages. This can be determined by checking the cognate sets that is the relatedness and no relatedness between the two variants through the use of wordlist. One can calculate the percentage of corresponding items, percentage of lexical differences and percentage of phonological differences. The corresponding items are items that are exactly the same, phonologically different items are words that differ with one sound segment, while the divergent items are items that are lexically different.

6. How to calculate cognate set

The argument is that if you have 80% of Phonological Differences (PD) and corresponding item (CI) then you are dealing with a related languages and possibly dialects of the same language. This is to say that for these two speech forms to be referred to as dialects of the same language, they should have 80% level of cognacy.

7. Formula

From our data out of the 100 word list 80 are cognate, that it both corresponding items and phonologically different items. Thus the calculation is as follows:

This is to say that these two speech forms are dialects of the same language. Another factor is that of mutual intelligibility. This means the ability of speakers of different speech forms or different dialects to understand themselves. When there is mutual intelligibility; it indicates that the speech forms involved are dialects of the same language.

B. Is Nawfija Dialect Inferior of the Standard Variety of Igbo Language?

The above question is indeed an important one to be answered. The fact that there is a variety of a language referred to as the standard variety does not mean that every other dialect of that language is inferior. Rather the two variants are both means of communication in that language. Being that the choice of the standard form is not based on the best dialect but on political reasons, popularity of the dialect or that a particular man brought major development to his people in the olden days, like is the case with Yoruba standard variety, then we have to understand that even before such developments, that such communities were communicating well with their various dialects.

Furthermore, since there is mutual intelligibility among the speaker of Nawfija dialect and those of the standard variety, then none of the varieties is superior to the other. Moreover in some towns the elderly ones do not understand the Standard Igbo and for effective communication to be achieved, their dialect is used when communicating with them. Thus this explains that no dialect is inferior to the other, as far as the dialect has speakers, is mutually intelligible and there is achievement of effective communication.

V. SUMMARY

In summarizing the linguistic variation and change in Nawfija speech commonly the researcher observed that there are lexical and phonological variation between standard variety of Igbo language and the Nawfija dialect of Igbo. This was shown in the variations in section above. The researcher equally observed that these two speech forms are dialects of the same language. This was confirmed by the use of lexicostatistics. From a close observation of the data, the researcher observed that there are some sounds in Nawfija dialect which are absent in the sound system of Standard Igbo. These sounds are /ʒ/ (voiced palate alveolar fricative) and the sound /ɸ/ (voiceless bilabial fricative).

A. Recommendation

In the light of the findings of this research work, the study hereby presents some suggestions and recommendations for the development of the Igbo language, they are:

1. The two additional sounds used in Nawfija dialect /ʒ/ and /ɸ/ that is the voiced palate alveolar fricative and the voiceless bilabial fricative should be accommodate in the orthography of standard Igbo.
2. A general understanding should be established among users of Igbo language that no variety of Igbo language is superior to the other.
3. To retain the existence of these dialects in future, users of the various dialects of Igbo language should be allowed to use them in writing for the preservation of cultural terms or concepts peculiar to these dialects.

B. Conclusion

This research work is a contribution to the study of linguistic variation and dialectal variation in Igbo language. Through this work, it is observed that there is great percentage of cognates between standard Igbo and Nawfija dialect of Igbo. Hence the two dialects are mutually intelligible.

Due to the high level of mutual intelligibility between the two speech forms, we conclude that both are dialects of the same language and none is superior to the other.

Finally, it is also understood from this work that the sound system of standard Igbo can be enhanced by the addition of the two extra sounds used in Nawfija dialect of Igbo. The sounds are /ʒ/ and /ɟ/. Since Igbo language is one of the major Nigeria languages which still need development, we suggest that other dialects of the language be investigated. The findings of these investigations will help to enhance both the lexicon and orthography of the standard variety.

REFERENCES

- [1] Akmajian, A., Demers, R.A. and Harnish, R.M. (2004). *Linguistics: An Introduction to Language and Communication* 5th Edition, India: Prentice Hall of India.
- [2] Anabogu, P.N., Mbah, M.B. and Eme, C.A. (2001). *Introduction to Linguistics*. Awka: JFC LTD
- [3] Essien, E.O. (1990). *A grammar of the Ibibio Language*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press:
- [4] <http://en.citizendium.org/wiki/linguisticvariation>.
- [5] [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/variation\(linguistic\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/variation(linguistic)).
- [6] <http://grammar.about.com/od/il/g/linguisticvariationterm.htm>. (Online Sources All retrieved on 19/4/2021).
- [7] Labov, W. (1972). The social stratification of (r) in *New York City department stores: in sociolinguistics patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [8] Nwoga (1975). *Junior Igbo Course*. Onitsha: University Press Co.
- [9] Olaoye, A.A. (2007). *Introduction to sociolinguistics* Abuja: Ogunleye publishing and printing press.
- [10] Wardlaugh, R. (1993). *An Introduction to sociolinguistics*. London: Blackwell.
- [11] Yule, G. (2004). *The study of language* 2nd Edition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Chineze Nwagalaku was born in Nawfija, Anambra state. She got BA and MA degrees in Linguistics, igbo and other Nigerian languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Chineze is a member of Pragmatic Association of Nigeria.

Harriet Chinyere Obiora bagged BA in Linguistics from Ebonyi State University and MA in Linguistics from the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Harriet specialises in Discourse Analysis and Pragmatic. She has published in *Journal of language Teaching and Research*, Vol 12, No.3, pp.494-500, May 2021. Mrs. obiora is a member of the Linguistics Association of Nigeria. She is also a PhD student in the Department of linguistics, igbo and other Nigerian languages, University of Nigeria Nsukka.



Christopher C. Nwike is a native of Onitsha, Onitsha North Local Government Area of Anambra State. He was born in Ogidi, Anambra State on the 3rd of May. Christopher C. Nwike is a trained translator. Mr. Nwike belongs to the Association of Translation Studies in Nigeria. He also obtained an academic Merit Award in Honour of Aknu-ibiam As the Best Graduating Student Who Produced the Best Long Essay in Igbo Language in Linguistics Department, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. His areas of specialisation are Translation, Interpreting, Semantics and Studies in Igbo language.