

Lexical Variation in Igbo Language: A Comparative Study of Standard Igbo Language and Opi Dialect in Nsukka Local Government Area of Enugu State

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Abstract

Whenever we talk of language, we talk of varieties. Varieties bring about dialects. Many have attempted to group Igbo dialects and in this attempt mopped up non related dialects into a particular group focusing mainly on geographical location. Opi is in Nsukka Local government Area of Enugu state of Nigeria. Opi dialect has some distinctive features. Vowel elision is common in Opi dialect that we even have many words without a vowel. This is strange to the standard Igbo language although some other dialects in Nsukka Local Government like Ohodo, Ekwegbe have such examples but this is more prominent in Opi dialect. We also discovered variation in conjunction, negation and aspects.

Key Words: Variation, Dialect, Language, Lexis and Linguistics.

1.0 Introduction

One of the fundamental units of linguistic structure is the word. In the human ability to use language creatively, words play an important role. In fact, there is no language without words. According to Adrian et al (2012), “far from being a static repository of memorized information, a human vocabulary is a dynamic system”p. 13. They further stated that we can use words at will. We can even expand their meanings into new domains.

According to Adrian and his group, “our vocabulary has an open endedness that contributes to our creative use of language”. According to Pinker (1999), “Children just entering school command 13,000 words..... A typical high school graduate knows about 60,000 words; a literate adult, perhaps twice that number p.3

According to Winkler (2012:260-261), “language change is so slow, it is almost not noticeable, except in the lexicon. New slangs words are commonly acquired and lost as each generation makes its contribution to a language.” According to him, some of the changes are

permanent, like the addition of the decades-old slang word cool, word ‘cool’ which dates back at least to the 1920s.

Collins and Mees (2013:157) stated that lexical variation is where the phoneme chosen for a word or a specific set of words is different in one accent as compared with another. This can affect either a very large group of words or a very small group. Lexicons are referred to as the list of words in any language.

Language changes and as a result of changes, we have dialects and different language or languages. Elugbe (1990) states thus:

Language changes in patterned way overtimes and spaces. One language begets dialects in space and then time makes then divergent that they become separate languages. In this way, one original language can become hundreds.p.12

He goes further to say that the fact that language changes in systematic manner means that given a number of related languages, their ancestral form can be reconstructed with varying degrees of accuracy, depending on the availability of in-depth synchronic studies of the modern descendants (daughter-language) of that ancestor.

When we talk of language change, we talk of lexical variation.

As we mentioned earlier, words are so important in any language that no language can exist without words. According to Rothfuss (2014:2), “words are pale shadows of forgotten names. As names have power, words have power. Words can light fire in the minds of men. Words can bring tears from the hardest hearts”.

Background of the Study

Igbo the mother tongue of the Igbo people is one of the three major national languages in Nigeria. The other two are Hausa and Yoruba; hence Nigeria is operating three national languages. Azuonye (2002) as cited in Egwuonwu (2016:79) states that Igbo as the native language of the Igbo people has over 20million speakers around the world. Igbo is one of the

eight major languages in the Benue Congo group of African languages and has been classified as a member of the 'Kwa' subgroup of the Niger-Congo family.

Igbo has several dialects and it is spoken in all the states in Igbo land. They are Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Abia, Ebonyi and some parts of Delta and Rivers states. According to Egwuonwu (2016:79), it is also recognised as a minority language of Equatorial Guinea. It is also written in the Latin script which was introduced by the British colonialist. As we have stated earlier, Igbo has many dialects. Some put it to be up to thirty dialects, some of which are not mutually intelligible. Nwaozuzu (2008:10) grouped these dialects into eight. These are 1. West Niger Group of dialects, 2. East Niger Group of Dialects, 3. East Central group of dialects, 4. Cross River Group of Dialects, 5. South Western Group of Dialects, 6. North Eastern Group of Dialects, 7. South Eastern Group of Dialect and 8. Northern Group of Dialects.

As a result of these many dialects, there are various ways to spell and pronounce the same word in different dialects. It is noted that there are different grammar rules and letters in Igbo dialects (<http://ezinaulo.com>). Some Igbo dialects include Nsukka, Onitsha, Owerri, Abakaliki, Ụmụahịa and so on. It is pertinent to note that within these major dialects mentioned and some not mentioned, there are sub dialects, for example in Nsukka there are many sub dialects as there are towns. The way an Opi person speaks is not the way Edeoballa person speaks and the same applies to other towns in Nsukka senatorial zone. For this, this research concentrates on Opi dialect and how it deviates from the standardized Igbo language both phonologically and lexically. It will go further to identify the rules leading to the phonological deviations.

This standardized Igbo dialect is not taken from one dialect of Igbo. According to Ezikeojiaku (1989), the standardized Igbo are taken from dialects like Owerri, Ụmụahịa and other Igbo dialects. In spite of the numerous dialects, the standardized Igbo language is understood by virtually every Igbo native speaker not minding the native dialect.

According to Egwuonwu (2016),

Igbo displays considerable dialects variation yet without ever seriously hampering immediate mutual intelligibility. 'Igbo niile na-asụ n'olu n'olu otu"p.79

According to Achebe and Nga'ang'a (2007), "Linguists recognize up to five major dialect clusters and more than fifteen main Igbo dialects in existence". They accepted that studies on Igbo dialectology are ongoing and asserted that the final number is likely to be higher. Many Igbo linguists have devoted their time to the study of their own dialects or some other popular dialects resulting in the fact that some dialects have remained largely unstudied. One of such dialects is the Opi dialect of a sub – dialect of Nsukka in Enugu state.

Nwozuzu (2008) grouped Igbo language into eight major groups. She states that "the study does not make any pretentious claim of being perfect or final (Nwozuzu 2008:132). Upon all the numerous studies going on in Igbo dialects, little or none has been done in Opi dialect.

The scientific interest in the study of Igbo language began quite early in the nineteenth century in missionary circle in Sierra Leone where knowledge of African languages were seen as a necessary tool in the bid to evangelise the continent (Afigbo 1981:355). According to Afigbo, this interest had come to take deep root by the middle of the century. Between 1852 and 1900, over ten works had been published in Igbo language mainly by missionaries and their aides. Most of these were grammar books, word lists and collection of proverbs, while the rest were translation of the bible into various dialects of the language.

The study of Igbo language and grammar in particular started many years ago. The early writers of the Igbo grammar books were foreigners. In 1861, Shaw published Grammatical Elements of the Igbo Language. In 1882, Crowder produced Vocabulary of the Igbo language. In 1892, Spenser produced A Small Ibo Grammar and in 1901, A first Grammar of Ibo Language. Three years later, Crowder's Original primer was enlarged into two volumes reader, Ibo Reader I and II (Emenyonu 1978:23). In spite of the early beginning in the writing of Igbo grammar, studies in Igbo grammar had a slow growth.

Among the reasons for the slow growth could be attributed to the orthography controversy which existed between the missionaries and the inability of the Igbo mother-tongue speakers to accept a particular dialect as a standard Igbo. Another reason was lack of interest by the Igbo native speakers to research into their language. Igbo native speakers especially the elites embraced English language so much that they preferred speaking it to Igbo. In fact an educated Igbo man was a man who could speak English fluently, a situation which obtained among other Nigerians as Fafunwa (1990) attests:

Throughout most of the colonial period 1842-1959, Nigerian formal education was patterned after the English system. The accent was in English and an educated Nigerian was one who was only African in colour but English in thought and culture. The ability to speak English fluently and if possible with Oxford accent was the hallmark of excellence, even if the speaker was empty of thought and ideas. Indeed an illiterate who could speak English was considered educated even though he could not read or write where was a well cultured Yoruba, Hausa, Edo or Ibo who could read and write in his mother-tongue was considered illiterate Fafunwa p.9.

It was very strange some years ago to see a graduate of Igbo. Even now some still wonder why someone should go to the University to study Igbo not to talk of researching in a particular Igbo dialect.

Thanks to the national policy on Education (NPE 2004) that made the study of Igbo and other major Nigerian languages compulsory in secondary school, (NPE 1989). This policy has made the graduates of Igbo language highly marketable. More people are now showing interest in Igbo language study, though much of the interest is in the field of literature rather than the study of grammar. It is hoped that interest in language will match that of literature. In the field of language, little attention has been paid to the area of dialects of Igbo. This has moved the researcher to work on the Opi dialect a sub-dialect of Nsukka.

Language Language and variation go together. It is said that variety is the beauty of life. This can be seen in language just like every other aspect of human life. The only thing that is constant is change yet the pattern of occurrence is still not static. All human activities experience change in one way or the other. Language is mainly oral for this change is inevitable. Language being a means of communication inherently changes from place to place, person to person, community to community and even time to time.

In this research, attention will be focused on the pattern of language variation in Opi dialect community and expose how the dialect varies from the standard Igbo language. Attention is on the comparative approach. Linguistics is the scientific study of language which

comprises very many field of investigation. This research is based on sociolinguistics which we know as the study of the relationship between language use and the structure of the society. The focus here is on the standard Igbo and Opi dialect of Igbo.

Location of Opi Town

Before we go further, it is pertinent that we give insight into the location of Opi. Opi is a town in Nsukka local government area of Enugu State. Presently is made up of four autonomous communities which are Idi Opi, Ibeku Opi, Ogbozara Opi and Opi Agụ communities. Opi has over eleven thousand inhabitants.

According to Eze (1985:1), Opi has a large land area and is the most extensive area in Igbo Ishi which is made up of Opi, Ede Oballa, Ekwegbe, Legja, Ozalla and Ohodo. According to him, it comes next in population after Akụ and Enugu Ezike in the present Nsukka zone. Opi is made up of three major quarters each which consists of several villages. The three quarters are Idi, Ibeku and Ogbozara.

Opi is located some sixty two kilometres North of Enugu, twenty two kilometres North of Enugu, twenty one kilometres south of Obollo-Afor and about eleven kilometres south of the University town o Nsukka. Opi is bounded at the North-east by Eha Alumona, on the North by Ede-oballa, on the East by Mbu and the North West by Lejja, on the west part of Opi by Ohodo and on the South is Ekwegbe, a historical friend neighbour. At the far North-east is Leke while Ugwogo in the present Nkanu local government area shares boundary with Opi on the South-east. It is at the junction of two important road networks, the ninth mile Makurdi express road and the smaller east west Ugwogo road which partially divides the town into two equal halves and as it moves further west it moves along the Idi-Ogbozara borderland.

Eze (1985:2) states, in describing this part of the Northern Igbo land, ethnographers have traditionally described the fourteen communities of Nsukka zone as Elugwu sub-cultural group of the Northern Igbo which Opi is one, may be regarded as forming the arrow head of the Igbo drive Northwards into the wooded Savana of the middle belt.

The population of Opi as of 1930s was 8,928 people by 1963 the population rose to 18,000. By 1979, Opi had a population of 20,000 and by 2006 the population has gone down to 11,000. The reduction in population may be as a result of migration of many young people to

the urban areas like Enugu, Onitsha and other states in Nigeria and outside in search of juicy jobs.

Opi and the rest of Nsukka communities occupy the south-eastern scarp lands. Opi has many hills, valleys and rivers. The highest of the hills is Ugwurogo in Ibeku Opi. The two major rivers are Uwhere Ogbozara and Apị Opi in Idi Opi that is worshiped by people from all parts of Opi. Uwhere is also a river which the Ogbozara people make sacrifice to it's goddess and a source of the best sharp sand in the whole of Nsukka senatorial zone. It is a powerful source of income to the Ogbozara Opi people. The deepest valley in Opi is the Okpooro Ọkwachị.

The Uwhere River and Apị Opi are located half way between Opị Ụlọ and Opi Agụ at Opi Agụ, there is a network of streams and rivers. Prior to the coming of pipe borne water in some parts of Opi, the people depended on these streams, rivers, and rainfall for water supply.

The opi na atọ Emelegenyi Ogwuguwu as is referred to, is made up of three quarters Idi Ibeku and Ogbozara. Opi Agụ is made up of people from these quarters, Idi Ibeku and Ogbozara. Opi Agụ is made up of people from these quarters. Of recent, Ogbozara, Ibeku, Idi and Opi-Agụ are now autonomous communities recognised and approved by the Enugu state government.

It is important to note that these four autonomous communities that now make up Opi natọ Emelegenyi Ogwugwu speak the same dialect that are distinct from standard Igbo and also from other sub-Nsukka dialects as we will see in this research,

In this paper, lexical variation will be treated. Here we will focus on the alternation involving lexical items. This implies that while the standard Igbo speakers use a particular linguistic item, the Opi dialect speakers record a completely different lexical item. It also means that the items used by the Opi dialect speakers are not cognate (of the same origin) with those used by the Standard Igbo users. Below are examples in Data 1.1.0

Data 1.1.0

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1.	Onyenye	Nwaanyi	Woman

2.	Paa aka	Jarua	Too much
3.	Ùsebe	ajọ ihe	Bad thing/evil
4.	Ùkpara	Ogbenye	Poverty
5.	nwo ^u a	Ugbua	Now
6.	oyi	Mma	Good
7.	Gbàlià	Kulie	Get up
8.	egara	Mbem	Poem
9.	Kaa	Ndo/biko	Please/sorry
10.	Iyeosu	Ofe	
11.	Ote	Mgba	Wrestling
12.	Meyi	Tinye	Put (as in put soup)
13.	Awha	Afo	Year
14.	echuchụ	utari	Cane
15.	ḷua	Hja	Twist
16.	Mperete	Okpu achara	Hat
17.	Njila	Eju	Snail
18.	nkehuru	Akupe	Hand fan
19.	ekprihe	Egwusi	Melon seed
20.	abja	Igba	Drum
21.	Ivom	Ogele	Metal gong
22.	Opioro	Ime ime ulo	Inner room

23.	n:	Nye	Give
24.	Ịda	Akpa	Bag
25.	Kàá	Kwuo	Say
26.	emeɾeme	Mma	Beauty
27.	ji	Ga	Will
28.	Wawa	Mba	No
29.	Nwajaa	Obere	Small
30.	Enyekwu	Usekwu	Kitchen
31.	Òkwú	Obi	Sitting room
32.	ehọ	afọ	Stomach
33.	Akpata	-	Ceiling
34.	Oba	Iko	Cup
35.	εwhurụ	Okwute	Stone
36.	εketε	otọ/urọ mme	Mud
37.	Gbalia	Kulie	Rise
38.	n	Nye	Give
39.	ji	Ga	Wil
40.	Ka	Biko	Please
41.	Nwajaa	Obere	Small
42.	Kaa	Kwuo	Say
43.	εchuchụ	utari	Cane

44.	ụkpara	Ogbenye	Poverty
45.	omego	agugo	Argument
46.	Jaara	Ogede	Plantain
47.	Nohu	Ebe ahụ	There
48.	Nonwa	Ebe a	Here
49.	Gbalia	Kulie	Get up
50	Abia	Igba	Drum
51	eshi	ahụ	Pig
52	ekprihe	Egwusi	Melon seed
53	Njila	Eju	Snail
54	Ize	Eze	Teeth
55	uma	Mma	Knife
56	Mperete	Okpu achara	Hat
57	fee	Hea	Fly
58	fonye	Whanye	sequence
59	afọ	Awha	Year
60	funyuo	whunyua	blow off
61	fotuo ite n'oku	hotuo ite n'ok	remove pot from fire
62	afọ	ahọ	afọ market
63	ufufu	uhuhu	Foam
64	ofe	Iyeosu	Soup

65	tufuo	Tuwaa	Lose
66	pụọ	f:a	go out
67	pụta	Fta	come out
68	kaa	Biko	please

Conjunction Variation

The following co-ordinators have been recognized in standard Igbo:

Na (and), mana (but/yet), ka/si (or), ma (including) ma...ma (including...including) (both...and), nke (nor/not to talk of). Uba-Mgbemena (1993), Emenanjo (1978) recognized only the following coordinators: na (and), ka...ka (both...and), kwa...kwa (both...and), ma...ma (as...so).

However, in Opi dialect, we have another variety that differs from some of the coordinators listed above as we can see below:

Data 2.1.1

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1.	Nε	Na	And
2.	Mεε	Mana	But/yet
3.	Ji	Ga	Will
4.	Mε	Ma	Or
5.	Mεεε	-	Even though
5.	mε...mε	ma...ma	Including..including
6.	Gε	Ga	Will
7	Ge	Ga	Will

The alternation here is the alternation of /a/ sound with that of /ε/ and the alternation of /a/ sound with that of /e/. Whether to use /ε/ or /e/ is determined by vowel harmony rule.

Variation in Numbering

Variation in numbering in standard Igbo and Opi dialect is also observed in the samples demonstrated below.

Data 2.1.2

S/N	Dialect	Standard	Gloss
1	mbọ	mbụ	1
2	εbọ	abụọ	2
3	εtọ	atọ	3
4	εnọ	anọ	4
5	Ise	Ise	5
6	εsaa	Asaa	6
7	Iteгна	Iteeolu	7
8	Iri	Iri	8
9	Iri nε na	Iri na out	9
10	Iri nε εbọ	Iri na abụọ	10
11	Iri nε εtọ	Iri na atọ	11
12	Iri nε εnọ	Iri na anọ	12
13	Iri na bọ	Iri abụọ	13
14	iri na bọ nε na	Iri abụọ na otu	14
15	Iri nabo na εto	Iri abụọ na atọ	15
16	Iri nabọ nεεnọ	Iri abụọ na anọ	16

Negative Morphemes Variation

Negative word formation is simple and easy to apply. For the negative – g, dg are used. In which one to be used is determined by the choice of speaker as in the following:

Data 3. 1.0

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	mag	magħi	Doesn't know
2	jedg	Jegħi	Did not go
3	bjadg	bjadħi	Did not come
4	hug/hudg	hughī	Did not see
5	nweg	Nwegħi	Don't have
6	rig/ridg	Righi	Did not eat
7	kwug/kwudg	Kwughī	Did not speak
8	lag/ladg	lagħi	Did not go home
9	mug/mudg	mughī	Did not give birth or did not learn
10	madg	magħi	Did not know
11	hudg	hughī	Did not see

In standard Igbo, the negative is realized by suffixing the morpheme ħi to the verb. There is however, different realization of this morpheme in Opi dialect.

Opi dialect uses g: or dg: to denote negative.

In Opi dialect, we would have such forms as:

Data 3.2.2

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	o ladg	o laghi	He/She did not go.
2	O ridg nri	O righi nri	He/She did not eat food
3	o mag ihe	o maghi ihe	He/She doesn't know something
4	o bg	O bughu	It is not
5	O mag	o maghi	He/She does not know
6	O kwudg	O kwughi	He/She did not say.
7	O vudg ivu nwu	O bughu ibu ahụ	He/She did not carry that load.
8	O mụg nwa	O mughu nwa	He did not born baby.

Whether to use 'g' or 'dg' tends to be determined by the rhythm.

'le' is also used for negation in Opi dialect as against 'la' in standard Igbo. This is well pronounced in imperatives. For example:

Data 3.3.3

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	Abiale nonwa	Abiala ebe a	Don't come here
2	anwule mnyi	añula mmiri	Don't drink water
3	Ekwule okwu	Ekwula okwu	Don't talk
4	erile	Erila	Don't eat
5	achole	achola	Don't find

6	ahụle	ahụla	Don't find
7	akwale	Akwala	Don't cry
8	agle	agụla	Don't sing
9	Agbale ọsọ	Agbala ọsọ	Don't run
10	Ejele afūa	Ejela ahia	Don't go to market
11	Atale an:	Atala anụ	Don't eat meat
12	Azle afūa	azụla ahia	Don't trade

A close examination to the above list reveals that where to apply 'le' or 'le' is determined by vowel harmony rule. Hence 'ε' in Opi dialect are often used in place of 'a' which is one of the four light vowels, /ε/ harmonizes with light vowels while 'e' being a heavy vowel harmonizes with heavy vowels. We then see from the above examples: for 'ε' abjalε, (don't come) anwuleε(don't die), agbaleε don't run), ataleε (don't chew).All these in the case of azleε (don't trade) where no vowel is between 'z' and l, it is assumed that vowel 'i' is silent. For le instead of 'le' comes in.

'ε' harmonizes with light vowels 'a' and 'u'. On the other hand, 'e' in 'le' harmonizes with heavy vowel 'u', and 'e'.

Perfect Aspect Variation

The standard Igbo morpheme for the perfective is 'la'. The perfective in Opi dialect is realized by the suffixation of the morpheme –go/go 'ma; or 'dema' as in data below.

Data 4.1.1

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	O r̄iama nri	O riela nri	He has eaten food.
2	Anyi abiago	Anyi abiala	We have come.
3	Uche ejego afua	Uche ejeela ahia	Uche has gon market.
4	Obi ejedema uka	Obi ejeela uka	Obi has gone to church.
5	Obi erigo nri	Obi erielā nri.	Obi has eaten food
6	O jedema uka	O jeela uka	He has gone to church
7	Ọ nwuama	O nwuola	He has died.
8	O r̄iama	O riela	He has eaten.
9	Ọ laama	Ọ laala	He has gone.
10	Ọ biama	Ọ b̄iala	He has come

At times, suffix, ‘ma’ can be fixed to ‘ma’ or ‘go’ to indicate perfect aspect as in the data below.

Data 4.1.2

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	English
1	ọ b̄iamama	ọ b̄iala	He has come.
2	O rimama nri	Orie ala nri	He has eaten food.
3	ọ r:mama ọrụ	O ruola ọrụ	He has done work.
4	O rigoma nri	O riela nri	He has eaten food.
5	ọ gbamama oso	ọ gbaala ọso	He has ran
6	O mechago	O mesiala	He has finished the work

7	O mechagoma	O mesiala	He has finished the work.
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Comparing Opi Dialect with Other Nsukka Dialects

Comparing Opi dialect with other Nsukka dialect where Opi put ‘dg’ the other Nsukka dialect would put ‘ng’ as in:

Data 4.1.3

S/N	Opi Dialect	Other Nsukka	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	Ọ biadg	Ọ biang	Ọ biāghi	He did not come.
2	Ọ jedg	Ọ jng	Ọ jeghi	He did not go.
3	Ọ ladg	Ọ lang	Ọ laghi	He did not go home.

A study of the other Nsukka dialects will show that this suffix ‘ma’ is specific to only Opi. Other Nsukka dialects like Ahaalumona, Ede Oballa, Nru, Nsukka Ohodo, Obollo and Enugu Ezike will put ‘me’ instead of ‘ma’. However, all both Opi and other dialects of Nsukka use ‘go’ as against ‘la’ in standardized Igbo for perfect aspect. In other Nsukka dialects, we can see the following:

Data 4.1.4

S	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Other Nsukka Dialects	Gloss
SS/N				

1	Ọ bɪama	Ọ bɪala	Ọ bɪago	He has come
2	Ọ riama	Ọ riela	Ọ rieme	He has eaten.
3	Ọ teama	Ọ teela	Ọ teeme	He has woken.

However, the Opi still share ‘ma’ with other Nsukka in some constructions as in (Data 4.6.4):

Data 4.1.5

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Other Nsukka Dialects	English
1	ọ bɪala	ọ bɪala	ọ bɪama	He has come.
2	Ọ nwụọla	Ọ nwụọla	Ọ nwuama	He has died.

A close observation will discover that the other Nsukka dialect use ‘e’ in some verbs where Opi uses ‘a’ and that brought the slight difference as in:

Data 5.1.1

Standard Igbo	Opi Dialect	Other Nsukka Dialect	English
Rie	Ria	rie	Eat
Mee	Mea	mee	Do
Wete	Weta	wete	bring
wetere m	wetar m	wetere m	bring for me
Jee	Jea	jee/jeme	Go
Lee	Lèá	lee	Look

Bee	bèá	beenge	Cut
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We know that the target of this research is not to compare Opi dialect with other Nsukka dialect but we just decide to touch few of the differences to show how Opi dialect is distinct from other Nsukka dialects. However, every Nsukka person understands one another. An average Nsukka native dialect speaker will be able to identify Opi native speakers from their speech.

Variation in Imperatives

In the above, we observe that in the standard Igbo, whereas verbs whose roots end in open vowels simply duplicate the vowel of the root, those verbs whose roots end in closed vowels chose a harmonizing open vowel suffix construction. This is the pattern of standard Igbo construct imperative. In the case of Opi dialect, the vowel 'a' is suffixed without considering the vowel harmony rule as in the following:

Data 5.1.1

Standard Igbo	Opi Dialect	English
Lee	lèá	Look
Mee	mèá	Look
Bia	bíá	Come
nụọ	nwua	Drink
pụọ	f:a	go out
Buo	v:a	Carry
choo	choo/choa	Find
mụọ	m:a	Learn
Nwee	nwea	Have
Laa	laa	go home
funyụọ	whụnyụa	Quench
gbanyụọ	gbanyụa	put off

Pronoun Variation

Opi dialect and standard Igbo differ in some pronouns. Opi dialect unlike the standard Igbo uses ‘a’ , ‘nya’, or ‘anya’ meaning ‘him/her/it’ in place of ‘ya’ of the standard Igbo. At the same time, Opi dialect uses ‘hε’ meaning ‘they’ instead of ‘ha’ of the standard Igbo. Also ‘g:’ meaning ‘you’ is used by Opi dialect speakers in place of ‘gì’ of the standard Igbo as we can see in diagram below.

Data 6.1.1

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	hε	Ha	They
2	ònu	ónò	You(plural)
3	g:	gì	You(singular)
4	a/anya	Ya	Him/her/it
5	a/e	a/e	Impersonal pronoun
6	i/ì	i/ì	You
7	M	m/mụ	I
8	anyì	anyì	We
9	Ọ/O	Ọ/O	He/she/it
10	Onwe m	Onwe m	Myself

Phonological Variation

There is no case of words spelt the same with that of standard Igbo but pronounced differently.

Data 6.1.2

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	Aféré	éféré	Plate

2	εchuchụ	utaari	Cane
3	εkwukwọ	ákwukwọ	Book
4	Maa	mmụọ	Spirit
5	manụ	Mmadu	Oil
6	Mbacha	Abacha	Igbo salad
7	εchara	Achara	Bamboo
8	Manya	Mmanya	Drink
9	Ns:ka	Nsukka	Nsukka town
10	ji	Ga	Will
11	Edziokwu	Eziokwu	Truth
12	nkehuru/ak :pe	akupe	Hand fan or local fan
13	εkwukwụ	akwukwụ	Epilepsy
14	iberibe	Iberibe	Misbehaviour
15	εchíchá	achicha	Biscuit
16	εchicha	achicha	Dry cocoyam porridge
17	madu	Mmadu	Person
18	manu	mmanu	Oil

4.2.9 Segmental Deviation

By segmental deviation here, we mean the segments differ in one way or the other. Without careful attention, one may think that some of these words sound exactly the same even though they differ in some cha characters but they don't. As they differ in character so also

they differ in pronunciation. It is believed that all Igbo words are pronounced as spelt and Opi dialect is not an exception.

Data 4. 5.10

S/N	Opi Dialect	Standard Igbo	Gloss
1	ɛb:ba	Abụba	Feather
2	ọba	Iko	Cup
3	eketɛ	urọ mmee	urọ oji
4	Nwajaa	Obere	Small
5	ekɛkɛ	otọ	Mud
6	Ote	Mgba	Wrestling
7	mbede	mmeghari	Misbehaving
8	ejụ	Iberibe	Misbehaviour
9	Wawa	Mba	No
10	ne	Na	And
11	Ji	Ga	will
13	ge	Etu	how
14	Nde	Kedu	how
15	egal	ikorobịa	young man
16	Onyeke	Nwoke	man
17	Onyenye	nwaanyị	woman
18	Ndtomu	Ụmụ nwaanyị	women

Conclusion