



Contrastive Study of Question Markers in Standard Yorùbá and Òhòrí Dialect

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Abstract

This paper identified the question markers in Òhòrí dialect and the standard Yorùbá language. It also compared the syntactic structures of the question markers in interrogative sentences in Òhòrí dialect and standard Yorùbá. This was done with a view to bringing to the fore the syntactic similarities and differences between the dialect and standard Yorùbá. The data were collected from the speakers of the Òhòrí dialect from Yewain the following villages: Òhúnbẹ́, Ìgbémẹ́, Mòru, Òbẹ̀lẹ̀, Ìláràá, ìdí ẹ̀mi etc and Republic of Benin in following towns: Ìpóbẹ́ (Pòbẹ́), Ìṣágbà, Ìṣẹ̀dẹ́, Ìṣòwú. The data collected were analysed using Government and Binding theory. The study found that although the two dialects of the language are of the same origin, Òhòrí dialect is lexically distinct from the standard Yorùbá in its question marking because it deploys different grammatical words. It concluded that markers of interrogative sentences in Òhòrí dialects were different from those of the standard Yorùbá language in terms of its form and structure. However, these markers occupy the same syntactic position.

Keywords: Standard Yorùbá, Òhòrí, dialect, question markers.

Introduction

There is no language that does not | which is an indication that
operate questions in its repertoire | interrogatives is part of universal

grammar features (Akanbi 2016) It has also been shown that there are markers present in every language which are used to turn a positive statement to an interrogative one. It is so because interrogative sentences are formed from simple sentence with the addition of the question marker. All other sentences are derived from the simple sentence.

Dialect is a variant of a language. All the languages in the world have dialects. Scholars worked on dialects and put down their opinion. Greenberg (1963:1) stated that: Mutually intelligible languages usually are of close geographic origin to the other and display very similar grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

He grouped the languages in the world into four. Aforó Asiatie, Niger-Kordofania, Nilo-Sharan and Khoisan. Yorùbá is under Niger-kordofania which has six branches Adamawa-Eastern, Benue-Congo, Kwa, Mande, West Atlantic and Gur. Awóbùlúyì (1998:1) jé ká mò pé:

Èdè kòòkan ni ó máa n ní àwọn èka-èdè tirè,
kò sì sí iye èka]èdè ti èdè kòòkangbódò ní.

“That every language has its own dialect and there is no limitation to the dialect of any language.”

On this notion Awóbùlúyì believes that it seems that each town has its own dialect. He came out with this group Èkó, Àwòrì, Ègbádò, Ìjẹ̀bù, Oádó, Ìkálẹ̀, Ìlàjẹ̀, Òyó-Ìbàdàn, Òwò, Obá-Ìkárẹ̀, Owé, Ijùmú, Ìyàgbà, Ifẹ̀, Ìjẹ̀sà, Èkìtì, Mòbààti Ònkò. He also added that there are some dialects outside Nigeria Sábẹ̀-ékétu in Dahomey (now Benin Republic) and Ifẹ̀ in Togo.

Délànò (1958: XII) works on dialect which he groups as follows:

- a. Èkó - Àwòrì - Ègbádò
- b. Ègbá - Ìjẹ̀bù Rẹ̀mọ̀
- c. Ìjẹ̀bù òde – Ìjẹ̀bù Rẹ̀mọ̀ - Ìjẹ̀bù Igbó, Ìkálẹ̀ (òkìtì pupa)
- d. Òyó-Ìbàdàn
- e. Ifẹ̀ -Ìjẹ̀sà
- f. Ìjẹ̀sà - Èkìtì

- g. Oâdó – Òkìtì pupa
- h. Òwò
- i. Ishekírì
- j. Bàdágìrì - Àjàṣé

Délànò's classification just mentioned the towns and not the dialects parse.

The two scholars, Delano and Awobuluyi never mentioned Òhòrí and Anago which are being spoken in the Yewa region along the border with the Republic of Benin. This paper reveals that Òhòrí people who are speakers of Òhòrí dialect are from Òyó in Nigeria. Yorùbá language and culture were also exported to the Western world through slave trade in the past in countries like Brazil, Cuba, Haiti, and South America.

Francis (1983:1) observed that dialects are varieties of a language used by groups smaller than the total community of speakers of the language. Fabunmi (2012:48) ní tirè ṣàlàyé pé ohun tó bí ẹka èdè kan láti ara èdè tí àwùjọ n lò ni àyípadà. Àyípadà yíí gan-an ló jé ijelógún kókó iwádíí àwọn onímò lórí ẹka èdè. That what brings about dialect from a language is differences. Differences of the dialect from the language happens to be the main aim of researchers on dialects. Òhòrí dialect is a dialect of Yoruba language likewise standard Yoruba. But there are similarities and differences in the two dialect as observed by Fabunmi (2012). It is this differences that this paper bring forth.

Objectives of the study

A lot of work abounds in Yoruba syntax and even a lot on interrogative sentences in standard Yoruba. But most people do not know that Òhòrí is a dialect of Yoruba language, being spoken in Nigeria. This paper will portray Òhòrí dialect as a dialect of Yoruba language that originated from Òyó before the migration to Republic of Benin of today which was formerly under Old Oyo empire where their origin are traced to. The objectives to be achieved are:

- i. To identify the question markers in Òhòrí dialect and their syntactic position.
- ii. Examination of question types in the dialect of those that have markers and those that do not have markers.

- iii. The similarities on question markers, their structure and their syntactic position.

Methodology

The data for this work are audio-recording of interviews of Ọhòrì speaking people in Yewa and Ìpòbẹ́ (Pobè) environments in the Republic of Benin. The town visited in Yewa North Local Government were Ọhúnbẹ́, Ọbẹ̀lẹ̀, Ìgbémẹ̀ and Ìpòbẹ́ (Pobè), Ìsàgbà, Ìṣẹ̀dẹ̀ in Republic of Benin.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this work is \bar{S} -bar theory propounded by Noam Chomsky in 1953. \bar{S} -bar theory states various ways to derive different sentences in any language in the world. It states that transformational rule can be used to derive unlimited sentences. We can derive so many sentences from a simple sentence which is the genesis of all other sentences in a language. Transformation takes different forms like adding and markers it can be in form of changing position of a lexical item or marker in a syntactic structure. Structure of words to form sentences is the basis of this theory. It also directs on how to derive surface structure from deep structure. Haegeman (1991:95) opines that the part of grammar regulating the structure phrases has come to be known as \bar{S} -bar theory. \bar{S} -bar theory brings out what is common in the structure of phrases. According to \bar{S} -bar theory all phrases are headed by a lexical head. Cook (1988:94) observes that in the \bar{S} -bar theory the phrases is a comparatively simple system derived from a few principles of the setting of certain parameters, Baiyere (2004:31) opines that \bar{S} -bar theory is part of grammar that regulates and brings out what is common in the structure of phrases. The rules in \bar{S} -bar theory transform kernel sentence to interrogative sentence.

Literature Review

The paper is on contrastive studies of question marker of standard Yoruba and Ọhòrì dialect of Yoruba language. Works abound in standard Yoruba where scholars stated their opinion on syntax. There are a lot of sentences in Yoruba, which can be categorized in terms of structure and semantics (meaning), it can also be categorized in terms of usage. Sentences can be broken down into noun

phrase and verb phrase in a broad sense. Chomsky believes in innate tendencies that human beings possess which gives them ability to produce sentences in any language without being taught, which he calls universal grammar.

Ògúnbòwálé (1970:100) defines a sentence as a unit of speech; its grammatical structure conforms to the law of the language and it serves as the chief means of conveying a thought. A sentence is not only a means of communicating something about reality but also a way of showing the speaker's attitude to it. Adéèboyèjé (1987:14) 'sọ pé gbólóhùn ni fọnrán ihun tí àwọn èròjà m̀eta p̀at̀ak̀i t̀el̀e ara wọn. Àwọn èròjà náàni àp̀ól̀a orúkọ gégé bí olùwà, ọ̀rò ìsẹ gégé bí kókó gbólóhùn àti àp̀ól̀a ọ̀rò orúkọ m̀ìrà̀n gégé bí àbò fún ọ̀rò ìsẹ'. (sentence is an expression that has three main nutrients. The particles are noun phrase as subject, verb as the most important element and another noun phrase as object of the verb.)

Bámgbósé (1990:78) says 'gbólóhùn ni olórí ìsọ'. Sentence is the main statement). He proves it further that it is the only and main statement unless we have some that are not up to it, this is in terms of clause and phrase.

Awóyalé (1991:18) 'ní gbólóhùn ni ẹhun ipèdè kan tí ó jẹ pé ó ní àp̀ól̀a, kókó gbólóhùn léréfèè sùgbón tí ó sì tún gbòdò ní olùwà léréfèè tàbí ní m̀ọ̀nù. Gb – Olùwà - àp̀ól̀a kókó gbl'. Sentence is a structure that has a phrase, main verb but must have a subject. He propounded this frame – S – Subj- VP.

Categorization of Sentences

Sentences are not limited in any language. There are various ones ranging from underived and derived sentences. The underived sentence is a kernel sentence which is otherwise known as simple sentence while the derived sentences are the one from kernel sentence with the addition and subtraction of constituents or movement of constituents from one syntactic position to another.

Interrogative sentence is a derived sentence from the kernel sentence with the addition of question markers which is the main topic of this paper. These interrogative sentences in English begin with 'wh' from which the markers derived their name wh-questions. The scholars say that we have two ways of forming questions i.e polar and content.

Yusuf (1997) observes that content word/wh questions are called wh-questions especially in English because most of the content words start with a 'wh'-who,

what, when, why, where and how. Using the name content word for languages that do not have the 'wh' forms because they use similar formats to derive the sentence. He explains further that the s-type simply echos the unknown information sentence initially, 'who' for a person, 'what' for a thing, 'when' for time 'why' for some reason, 'how' for manner.

Omachonu (2007) observes that question formation is a transformational process. It is quite obvious that in question formation, there exists a transformational relationship between a statement and the corresponding question be it yes/no or why-question. In many Nigerian languages, especially the three majors, tone and intonation, apart from movement may have parts to play in the derivation of Yes/No questions.

Akanbi (2016) opines that:

Just like any other language, Yoruba has a way of forming questions be it polar or content. The markers or phrases used for each of these types of question formations are different.

While polar questions use about four different markers listed in (i) content questions have various markers listed in (è)

1. Polar question markers (i) àjé (ii)ṣe (iii)ha]bi (iv) ṣèbí/ṣebí
2. Content question markers (i) Ta 'who' (ii) kí 'what' (iii)níbo 'where' (iv)Èlò 'how much' (v) mélòó 'how many' (vi)báwo 'how'(vii) kílóde 'why' (viii) –wo when/which.

It is on the basis of the submission of the above scholars that the research work is base die the two speech forms, standard Yoruba and Ọhòrí dialects of a Yoruba language. The question markers of Yoruba language follow the same pattern like that of English language, maybe because they are being governed by the same rule.

Ògúnbòwálé (3970: 301-106) categorizes interrogative sentences into three broad categories. The interrogative sentence asks a question which can be formed by:

- (i) A single word
- (ii) A sentence
- (iii) The use of particles for asking questions.

The question marker of each dialect will be presented on different tables before the analysis of the syntactic structure of the question markers. The local Ọ̀hòrì speech is known as ‘Ede Ije’ which is mutually intelligible to speakers of other dialectal forms of Yoruba. According to Ethnologue, èdè ijè has 6% lexical similarity with Èdè Nàgò. Yoruba is being referred to as Nago by the Benoise. The above excerpt shows that Ọ̀hòrì is a dialect of Yoruba because of the larger percentage of lexical similarity it has with standard Yoruba.

Table I
Polar Question Markers

Standard Yoruba	Ọ̀hòrì	English
Njé	Njé	do
Şe	Şe	do
Bí	Bí	do
Dan	Dan	do
Şèbí/şebí		do

Table II
Content Question Markers

Standard Yoruba	Ọ̀hòrì	English
Ta	Le	Who
Kí/kín	Bé, ko, kẹ	What
Níbo/ibo	Ibi sí/ bi sí	where
Èlò	Elo	How much
Mélò	Mélo	How many
Báwo	Básí	How
Èwo/wo	Ye	Which
Dà	Dà	Where
Nkọ	Fe	Where

Table III

Standard Yoruba	Ọ̀hòrì	English
Nígbà wo	Lígbà ísí	When
Ní sàáwo	Lí sàà ísí	which period

Nítorí ta ni	Lítorí lèé	because of whom
Nítorí kín ni	Lítorí kée	because of what
Nípa ta ni	Lípa lèè nẹ	About whom

Another way of forming an interrogative sentence in Yoruba is by using tone which is observed in different ways by scholars.

Arómólàrà̀nà̀tì Mustapha (1975:130) ‘şà̀làyé pé a tún n bèèrè ọ̀rò nípa gbígbe ohùn wa sí òkè’. That we ask question through raising of our voice. Ògúnwálé (1970:102) also supports this assertion when he says the question is expressed by raising the voice slightly at the end of the sentence.

In Yoruba language, Yusuf argue that it would appear that a lengthening of the last vowel in the sentence among other strategies would offer the transformation. Changing a declarative to a statement into a Yes/No question. He gave the following examples:

ó n bọ,	ò n bọ ọ
You ASP come	you ASP come-e
You are coming	‘Are you coming?’
ó máa wá	ó má a wà]á?
ésg will come	ésg will come-e
He will come	will he come?

Table IV

Standard Yoruba	Ọ̀họ̀rí	English
Òjọ̀ tọ̀ lọ̀?	Ojó tino?	has Ojó gone?
Ó ti kàwé?	Ó ti kàwé	has she read
Ó ti kú?	Ó ti kú	has he died?
Bàbá ti jẹun	Ògbóni ti jẹun	has father eat?

Analysis of the syntactic position of question markers in the two speech forms. i.e standard Yoruba and Ọ̀họ̀rí dialect. The question markers identified above in the two dialects of Yoruba language has a function it performs and has position that should be existed in a sentence.

Table V

Polar question markers in sentences

Standard Yoruba	Òhòrí	English
<u>Njé</u> bàbáwá?	Njé Ògbóniwá?	did father come?
<u>Sé</u> olùkò sùn?	Şé olìkò sù?	Did teacher sleep?
<u>O</u> lóbí?	O nọ bí?	Do/did you go?
<u>Şadé</u> jẹun <u>dan</u> ?	Şadé jẹu dan?	Do/did Şade eat?
<u>Şebí</u> ẹ ta?	Şe bí ẹ ta?	Do/did you sell?

Table VI

Content question markers

Standard Yoruba	Òhòrí	English
<u>Ta ni</u> olùkò pè?	Lèé nẹ olìkò pè?	Who did the teacher called?
<u>Kínni</u> ẹ n tà?	Kòpò àtà?	What are you selling?
<u>Níbo/ibo</u> lẹ n lọ?	Ibi sí/Bí siọ nọ?	Where are you going?
<u>Mélódò</u> oḃẹ ló wà?	Mélolákú ó wà?	How many knives are there?
<u>Èlóláşọ</u> yìi?	Èlóláşọ yè í?	How much is the cloth?
<u>Báwo?</u>	Básí?	How?
<u>Iwọwo</u> nìyẹn?	Ìwẹ ẹ sí nẹ?	Who are you?
<u>Kóládà?</u>	Kólá da?	Where is kólá?
<u>Ọmọdé</u> nkó?	Ọmudéfe?	How are children?

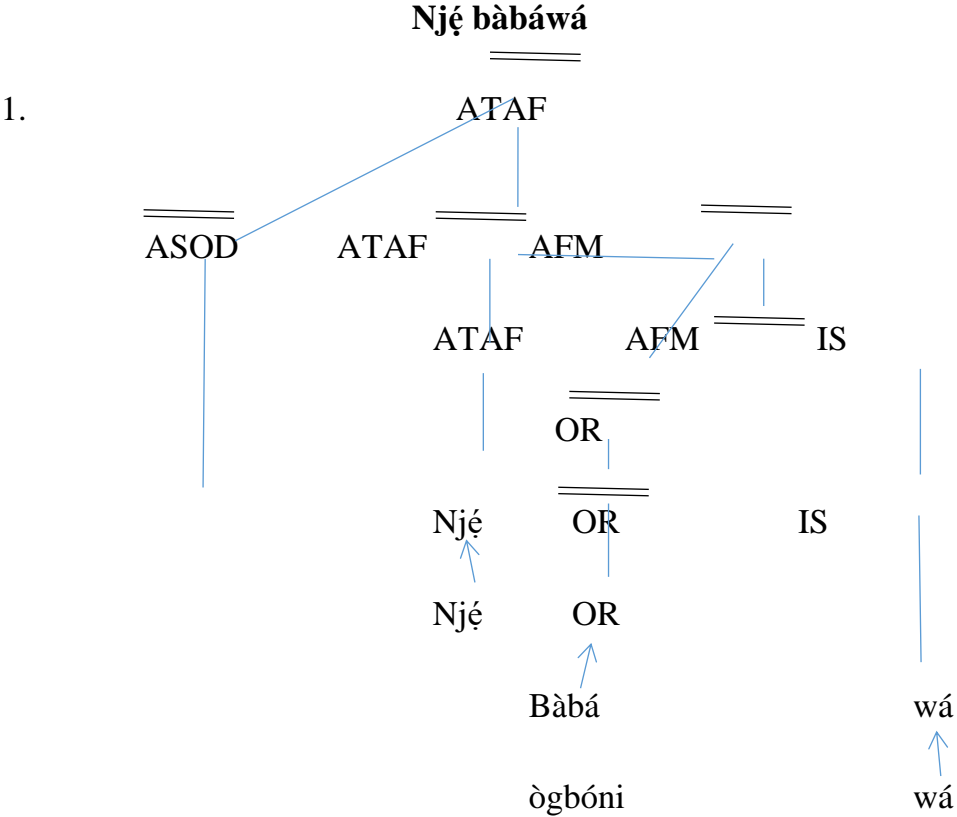
Table VI

Question markers with prepositional phrase

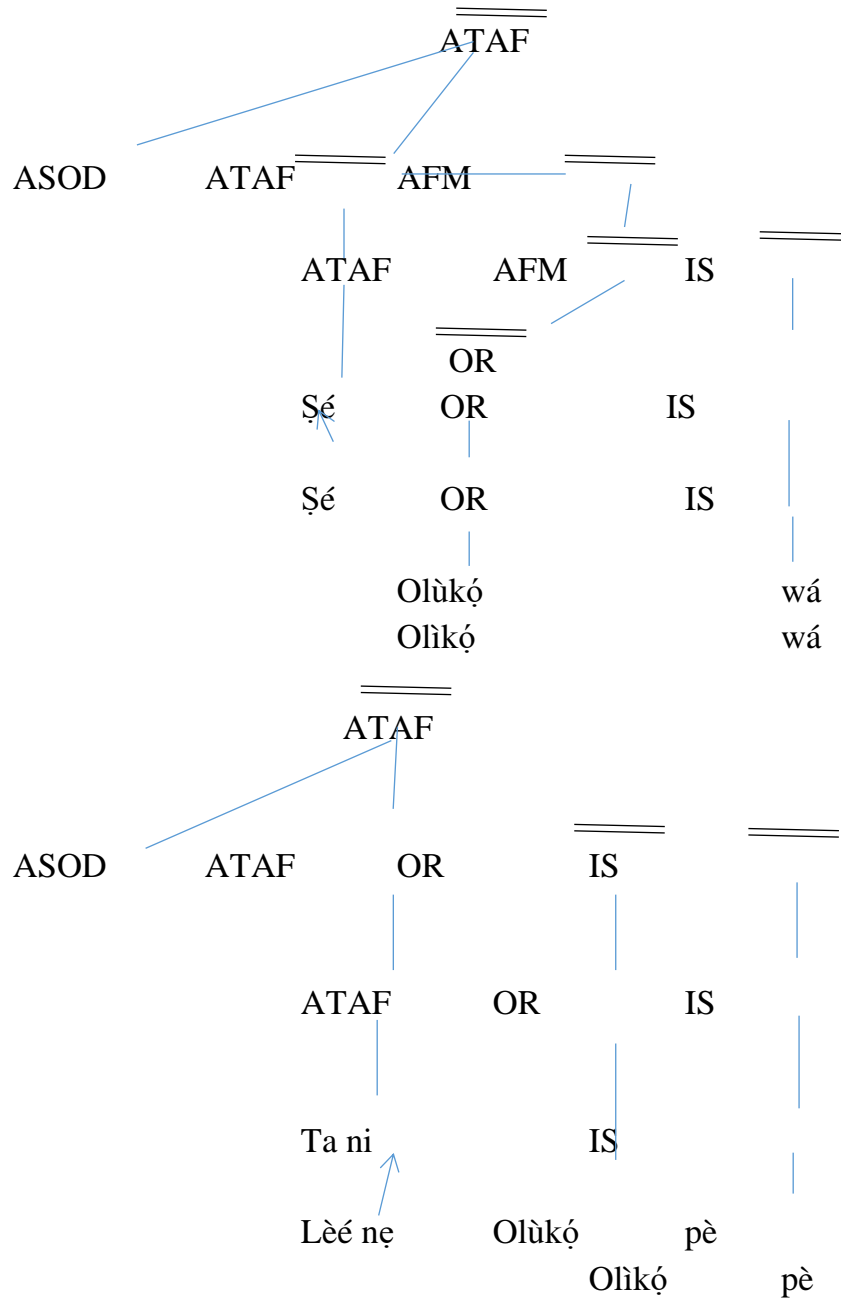
Standard Yoruba	Òhòrí	English
<u>Nígbà</u> woni iyá wá?	Lígbà ísí dadáwá?	When exactly did mother come?
<u>Ní sààwoni</u> oníwèé wá?	Lí sàà ísí olíwe wá?	Which exact period did the book owner core
<u>Nítorí</u> ta ni ẹ şe pẹ lóhùn-ún	Lítorí lèé nẹleşe pẹ lóhùn]ú?	because of whom did you stay late?
<u>Nítorí</u> kín leşe mú èyí	Lítorí ké ẹ şe mú yèí?	Why did you take this?
<u>Nítorí</u> ta ni wón n sòrò	Lípa lèé nẹ ọn sòrò?	Because of whom are they talking?

The above tables show the syntactic position of the question markers in the two speech forms. From the look of things, the markers appear in the same position mostly at the beginning of each sentence. Some of the sentences will be represented in a tree diagram according to S-bar theory that is being used for the research work. The theory stated that a phrase has head and that the head of each phrase is lexical, S-bar theory is a part of grammar that regulates and brings about what is common in the structure of phrases.

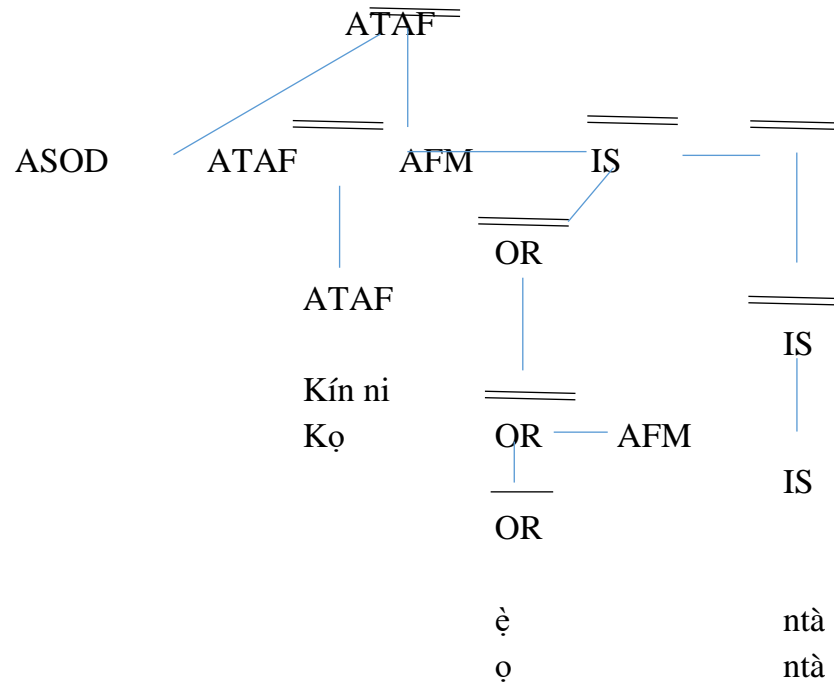
Haegeman (1991) says we might be able to replace the four phrase structure rules by a single schema. It is all these that are harvested to produce this tree diagram.



2.



3.



- ATAF - Atóka Àfikún - Complementiqer phrase
- ASOD - Àsọdòtò - Specifier
- AFM - Àfòmó - Afiş
- IS -Ìşe - verb
- OR - ọ̀ròorúkọ - noun

This is the interpretation of the tree diagram. Only one tree diagram is being drawn for all the lexical head instead of one by one. The branching is on the middle with one bar. The first branching will carry two bars and the branching will not be done from it.

Discussion of Findings

What this entails is to draw out the similarities and differences in the two dialects. As observed by the scholar, that mutually intelligible languages usually are of geographic origin to other dialects display very grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary. Research has also shown that differences in the languages form the dialect in terms of phonology, grammatical words, lexical words, semantics, syntax etc Fabunmi (2012:49). From the point of the scholars the two dialects have some things in common and differences.

The two languages have question markers at the subject position of their interrogative sentences as shown in the table. Both dialects also have question marker at the sentential ending position i.e syntactic position of the markers were the same. Some of the markers are the same while some are lexically different.

Conclusion

The work is carried out to show that Ọ̀hòrí is a dialect of Yorùbá despite that the headquarter is in Republic of Benin. That this interrogative sentences is part of syntax, different sentences were touched briefly. The scholarly view shave been reviewed. S-bar theory was used for the research work where data collected were analysed with the theory propounded by Chomsky. Data were collected in Nigeria and Republic of Benin. After the analysis the comparison were done in all the two speech forms.

Recommendations

The research work should give people much insight that Ọ̀hòrí dialect is one of the dialects of Yorùbá. That Ọ̀hòrí should be popularized like other dialects namely; Ìjẹ̀sà, Ìjẹ̀bú, Ègbá, ete while teaching the dialects of Yorùbá language. Yorùbá scholars should develop interest in the study of dialects; the more you have interest in the study, the more you are exposed to the culture and lifestyle of other people and environments.

Government needs to gives out funds to those who have interest in carrying out research work on indigenous languages this will help in speeding up the policy of teaching in their mother tongue, if many other mother tongues are reduced to writing.

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