

# PAPERS IN ENGLISH AND LINGUISTICS (PEL)

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Jare Oluwadoro

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## Olukumi: A Dialect of Yoruba in Diaspora

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### Abstract

Much research attention has been devoted to Yoruba dialectology. Even some varieties of Yoruba spoken outside Nigeria have been included in the classifications of Yoruba dialects. However, 'Olukumi', spoken in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, has been left out. This paper aims at investigating whether this speech form is actually a dialect of Yoruba language through the use of proven linguistic methods via lexicostatistics, mutual intelligibility and ethno-historical perception. The revised Swadesh list of 200 lexical items was used to obtain data from four native speakers of Olukumi. Two of these informants are traditional rulers who could be regarded as custodians of the history of the people. Mutual intelligibility reveals that this speech variety is intelligible to an average speaker of Yoruba. Lexicostatic calculations gave us 68.5% when Olukumi is compared with the Standard Yoruba. However, when compared with Ilaje, the figure is higher. Oral accounts from our informants assert that the people migrated from the Ondo-Owo axis; had a stop-over in Benin and then migrated to their present location. From the foregoing, it can be concluded that the Olukumi people are Yoruba, however, their speech has been adulterated with borrowings from Igbo and Edo languages.

**Key words:** Yoruba Dialects, Olukumi, Lexicostatistics, Mutual Intelligibility, Migration Patterns.

### Introduction

The researchers first learnt about the Olukumi people in the newspaper early 2011. The report was brought to LIN 353 (Dialectology) class by students who read about it in the newspaper. Initially, the name Olukumi was not strange to them since some Yoruba dialects, especially Ondo and Ilaje dialects refer to 'my friend' as 'olukumi'. So, the researchers felt it must be a dialect of Yoruba language. As a result, he decided to carry out a lexicostatic analysis of the speech form to determine whether Olukumi is actually a dialect of Yoruba or not. Incidentally, one of the students in that class, Mr Abdur-Rafiu Misbau Abiola, then a final year student decided to carry out a research that would

culminate in his final year project on the speech form. The lead researcher then took it upon himself to supervise the work. That was in 2011. The 2011 research was successfully, carried out and completed on the 26th of August, 2011. After this, there was no motivation to report the findings of the research. However, on Wednesday, 4th of November, 2015, a paper titled 'Safeguarding Olukumi from Endangerment' was jointly presented by Maria, J. Obadan (Department of Languages and Linguistics, Delta State University, Abraka) and Bosco, C. Okolo-Obi (Department of Linguistics and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka) at the 2015 Conference of the Linguistics Association of Nigeria (CLAN) in Nnamdi Azikwe University, Awka in Anambra State. From the presentation, the researchers asserted that 'there is relatively little (Arokoyo, 2012; Okolo-Obi, 2014) in literature about the Olukumi speakers in Delta State'. It then occurred to the researcher that if the findings of the 2011 project are published, it would be an additional publication that would boost knowledge of researchers about the speech form.

### **The Problem**

Works on Yoruba dialects became popular when in 1967 a Yoruba scholar, Abiodun Adetugbo (who later became a Professor) carried out a research on the dialects of Yoruba. This work culminated in a Ph.D thesis titled: "The Yoruba Language in Western Nigeria: Its Major Dialect Areas" in the University of Columbia. Since then much research attention has been devoted to Yoruba Dialectology. Prominent among them are: Akinkugbe (1978), Awobuluyi (1998), Adetugbo (1982), Adeniyi (2005) and Fadoṛo (2013), etc. However none of these scholars made mention of Olukumi in their classifications. This is an obvious lacuna which this research work attempts to fill. In 1990, there was a presentation at an M.Phil/Ph.D conversion examination by Oyelowo. The scholar referred to Olukumi as belonging to the same group with Yoruba. In fact, she emphasised that Olukumi could be regarded as a dialect of Yoruba if presented side by side with other dialects of Yoruba, especially Ikale. Our major preoccupation in this paper is to find out how valid this assertion is.

## Historical Accounts

Olukumi speech form is spoken mainly in the Odiani group of communities in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria. The Odiani group of communities is now known as Odiani clan. Odiani clan is one of the three clans that constitute Aniocha North Local Government Area. Under Odiani clan, there are seven towns, namely: Ukwu-Nzu, Ugbodu, Idumuogo, Ugboba, Ubulubu, Aniocha and Ogodor. Olukumi is spoken in both Ukwu-Nzu and Ugbodu.

Obadan and Okolo (2015) traced the migration of the Olukumi speakers to the Benin Empire in the 11<sup>th</sup> century when the Oba of Benin, in his ambition to extend his kingdom to the areas occupied by the Igbos, went with soldiers to fight against the occupants of the areas. However, he was met with stiff resistance. So, he decided to go back to Benin with the soldiers. Some soldiers now refused to follow him back to Benin. Instead, they decided to settle in Ukwu-Nzu.

According to history, the place was originally named 'Eko-Efun', derived from Eko (the Edo word for 'camp' and 'Efun', the Yoruba word for 'white chalk'. The problem with this historical account is that it does not tell us how the 'Olukumi' who are more closely related to Yoruba than Edo, got to Benin. However, our own oral account given by His Royal Highness Obi Christopher Ogoh I (71), reveals that the founder of the Olukumi speakers in Ukwu-Nzu was one 'Ogbe' who migrated from Ile-Ife around 1100. Along the way, he and his followers stopped in Benin. However, within the first quarter of the 12<sup>th</sup> century Ogbe and his group of adventurers settled in Ukwu-Nzu town. The inhabitant of Ukwu-Nzu since then are called Ndi Olukumi (meaning people of Olukumi).

As for the Olukumi group in Ugbodu, oral tradition, as narrated by His Royal Highness Ayo Isinyemeze Oloza, the Obi of Ugbodu (45), the Olukumi people in Ugbodu migrated from Owo/Idanre axis in the present Ondo State between 9<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D to settle in Benin kingdom, during the reign of King Ogiso of Benin. As a result of some strange happenings in Benin, the prince, named Ekaladewa was ordered to be killed so that peace would reign in Benin kingdom. However, the prince



escaped. Notwithstanding, the news of his death was widespread. So, the Olukumi group who regarded themselves as strangers reasoned that if a whole prince could be killed like that, they were not safe. So, they migrated and settled down in the present Ugbodu, under the leadership of Odu. Pockets of Olukumi speakers are found in Ubulubu, Idumuogu, Ugboba, Anioma and Ogodor towns. The unanimous report is that these speakers migrated from either Ugbodu or Ukwu-Nzu, the two towns where Olukumi is primarily spoken.

### Methodology

Armed with the Revised Swadesh 200 wordlist, a tape-recorder and stationeries, the research assistant, Mr Misbau Abiola embarked on a field trip to Ugbodu and Ukwu-Nzu in Aniocha North Local Government Area of Delta State, Nigeria, where he collected the data for this research. Four informants were selected to supply the equivalents of the 200 wordlist used. The data were transcribed phonetically for analysis. The informants selected were:

- (i) His Royal Majesty Ayo Isinyemeze Oloza (Obi) Ugbodu. He was 45 years old at the time of data collection, a native of Ugbodu and he has been living there since birth. Olukumi is his mother tongue, he also speaks English, Igbo and Edo languages fluently.
- (ii) His Royal Highness Christopher Ogoh I, Obi of Ukwu-Nzu. He was 71 years old at the time of data collection. He is a native of Ukwu-Nzu and a native speaker of Olukumi. He also speaks Igbo and English languages fluently.
- (iii) Professor Godwin C. Nduka, a Professor at the NUVENA University, Delta State. He is an indigene of Ugbodu and has been living there since birth. He was 65 years old as at the time of data collection.
- (iv) Dr Anene, a village medical doctor, who is a native of Ukwu-Nzu is a native speaker of Olukumi. He was 65 years old as at the time of data collection. He also speaks English and Edo fluently.

The data supplied by these informants was transcribed and analysed through the use of lexicostatistics to calculate the cognates in the two speech forms alongside with Standard Yoruba and Ilaje dialect of Yoruba. The standard Yoruba data was supplied by the researchers.

### **Mutual Intelligibility**

Obadan and Okolo (2015) assert on page 3 of their paper as follows:

It is important to note here that the Olukumi spoken in this area (Nkwu-Nzu) is not mutually intelligible with Yoruba. This is probably due to their history of migration, which has led to a lot of 'cultural and linguistic diffusion' in the language. This is evident in the language which has a mixture of Igbo, Yoruba and Bini (Edo).

However, Abiola (2011) asserted that Olukumi could be regarded as a dialect of Yoruba because, to some extent, there is mutual intelligibility between the two speech forms. However, according to him, 'there have been different kinds of borrowings from Igbo and Edo into the language (page 3). From the three witnesses above, one thing that is clear is that Olukumi is still very similar to Yoruba. However, it is loaded with borrowed words from the Igbo and Edo languages.

### **Lexicostatistics**

Lexicostatistics is a method of comparing the rates of change in sets of words in hypothetically related languages. It is an approach used in language history in which statistical technique is used to quantify how far languages have diverged from a common source. This method was developed by the American linguists, Morris Swadesh (1909 – 1967) and Robert Lees (1922 - ) in the late 1940s, which determines the rate at which a language has changed, over the centuries. It has the ultimate aim of working out the length of time which has elapsed since two related languages (or more languages thought to be related began to diverge). Glottochronology is the name of the subject; lexicostatistics is the name of the technique it uses. However, some linguists treat them as synonyms.

According to Trask (1996), lexicostatistics is in fact, a very general label for any kind of statistical analysis of vocabularies, but it is most particularly applied to a simple procedure of estimating the degree of linguistic distance between genetically related languages. Thus, if we have several languages (or dialects) which we know are related, then we can choose a representative sample of the vocabularies of all of them and calculate the percentage of shared 'vocabulary' items. Languages which share a larger proportion of their vocabularies are presumably closely related than those sharing a smaller portion.

Thus, if among three related languages A, B and C, we find that A and B share 62% of their vocabulary, A and C share 54% and B and C share 83%, we might conclude that B and C are more closely related to each other than either is to A. Lexicostatistics, if properly used yields results of interest. It is an approach to comparative linguistics, which involves quantitative comparison of lexical cognates in the study of dialects (dialectology). The speech forms of interest for this work are the standard Yoruba and Olukumi as spoken in Ukwu-Nzu and Ugboodu in Delta State, Nigeria and Ikale dialect spoken in Ondo State, Nigeria.

### **Previous Works on Olukumi**

To the best of our knowledge, Olukumi has not really featured in published materials. The records we have are from unpublished projects. Prominent among them is Oyelowo (1990) in an unpublished paper titled: "The Place of Ebira in Relation to Nupoid and the Place of Olukumi in Relation to Yoruboid". After Oyelowo (1990), comes Okolo-Obi (2014) titled: "'Aspects of Olukumi Phonology'", an M.A dissertation, in the Department of Linguistics and Other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. After this, the latest we have is Obadan and Okolo-Obi (2015), which is the motivation behind the present attempt.

Oyelowo (1990) did a comparative work on Olukumi, Yoruboid (comprising Standard Yoruba, Ijebu, Ondo, Ikale), Isekiri and Igala in which she showed a close linguistic affinity among them. Yoruba, Isekiri and Igala have been proved to be genetically related. See Williamson (1973), Hoffman (1974), Omamor (1976), Akinkugbe (1973), etc. Oyelowo's work aimed at demonstrating

the relationship between Olukumi and the Yoruboid languages on one hand and Olukumi and Nupoid/Ebiroid/Edoid, on the other hand. The researcher used the lexicostatistics method. According to her, the cognate count percentages between Olukumi, Nupoid, Ebiroid, Yoruboid and Edoid is summarised in the table below:

	N u p e	Gw- ari	Ebi- ra	Stan- dard Yoruba	Ije- bu	On- do	Ika- le	Iset- kiri	Iga- la	Ibi- lo	Edo Bini	Iso- ko	Dege - ma
Olukumi	12	10	23	70	71	75	90	70	68	21	28	23	23

According to her, the average cognate count percentage between Olukumi and the different groups is as follows:

- Olukumi/Nupoid = 11.5%
- Olukumi/Ebiroid = 25%
- Olukumi/Yoruboid = 74%
- Olukumi/Edoid = 23.5%

This clearly shows that Olukumi belongs to Yoruboid. Within Yoruboid, Olukumi shares the following cognate count percentages with the different languages.

- (i) Olukumi/Yoruba = 76.5%  
i.e. Standard Yoruba/Olukumi = 70%  
Ijebu/Olukumi = 71%  
Ondo/Olukumi = 75%  
Ikale/Olukumi = 90%
- (ii) Olukumi/Isekiri = 70%
- (iii) Olukumi/Igala = 68%

From the foregoing, Oyelowo (1990) concludes as follows:

The differences between the three percentages are small, implying that the relationship between the different speech forms is more or less the same. From this, we may say that Olukumi is also a Yoruboid language. Olukumi has the same kind of relationship Isekiri and Igala have with Yoruba, therefore, they are sister languages... Olukumi may pass for a language, if we look at it in relation to Yoruba

language as a unit and at the same time pass for a dialect of Yoruba. This is because, at the dialect level, Olukumi is closest to Ikalé with 90% cognation. (p. 15)

How valid is Oyelowo's conclusion? Oyelowo's conclusion is very valid. The only challenge we have is that she based her research only on Olukumi spoken in Ugboodu. In this present endeavour, we compare Olukumi as spoken in Ukwu-Nzu with that spoken in Ugboodu with the Standard Yoruba. We present our data as follows:

### Data Presentation and Analysis

	English	Ugboodu	Standard Yoruba	Ukwu-Nzu	Ikalé
1	All	gede	ḡbogḡbo / dede	gedé	dede
2	and	ati	Àti	àti/múma	ati
3	animal	erā	erā	erā	erā
4	ashes	eruru	Érú	eruru	erírú
5	At	ní	ní	ní	ní
6	back	èjì	èjì/èhì	èjì	èjì
7	bad	buku/burú	Burú	éhá	burú
8	bark	ḡbó	ḡbó	ḡbó	ḡbó
9	because	túru	Nitorí	túru/kójā	torí
10	belly	inú	íkù/inú	ino	uku
11	Big	lílá	níla/tóbi	ólála	lílá
12	bird	eje	eje	eje	eje
13	bite	arirā	bùdʒe/gédʒe	arirā	gédʒe
14	black	dúdú	Dúdú	dúdú	dídú
15	blood	èzè	èdʒè	èzè	èdʒè
16	blow	fé	fé	fé	fé
17	bone	ugugū	egūgū	ogūgū	egigū
18	breathe	mí	mí	mí	mí
19	burn	zò	dʒó/sù	zò	dʒó
20	child	oma	omò	oma	oma
21	cloud	òkè	ìkùkù/òjú-òrú	orùkù	òfùrufù
22	cold	tutù/ojì	tutù/amodì	òjì	Tutù

23	come	wá	Wá	wá	Wá
24	count	ka	Ká	ka	Ká
25	cut (v.)	bú	Ge	bú	Ge
26	day	izó	odzò	izó	odzò
27	Die	ku	Kú	kú	kú
28	Dig	sò	wá/gbɛ	sò	gwò
29	dirty	kpíkpu	Léeri/légbi	ókpo	ɔ
30	dog	aza	adza	aza	kita
31	drink	mū	mū	mɔ	mɔ
32	dry	gbɛ	gbɛ	gbɛ	gbɛ
33	dull (blunt)	gbī	Kú	gbī	gbō
34	dust	ebùɛ	Eruku	ebùɛ	eruku
35	ear	etí	Eti	efi	Eti
36	earth	alè	ajé/ilè	ajé/ilè	ilè
37	Eat	zɛ	dʒɛ	zɛ	dʒɛ
38	egg	ɛjɛ̃	ɛjɪ	ɛjɛ̃	ɛjɛ̃
39	eye	ozu	odʒu	ozu	odʒu
40	fall(v.)	sú	subu/wò	sú	subu
41	Far	ʃí	dʒinà	ʃí	dʒinà
42	fat/grease	orà	òrà	òrà	ekpo
43	father	bá	Bá	ba	iba
44	fear(v)	èrú	èrú	èrú	bèrú
45	feather	èjɛ̃	ijè	èjɛ̃	ijé
46	few	káikpáì	díè	èjɛ̃jɛ̃	díè
47	fight	za	dʒa	za	dʒa
48	Fire	uná	iná	uná	una
49	Fish	ɛza	edʒa	ɛza	edʒa
50	five	èrú	àrú	èrú	mèrú
51	float	sé	Léfó	sé	fó
52	flow	gbó	ʃà	gbó	ʃà
53	flower	ifuru	Ódódó	obóbó	òdódó
54	fly(v)	fó	Fó	fó	fó
55	fog	eriri	lkuku	eriri	kuru/ kuru

56	foot	òhè/òtáloh è	àtélése	òhè/òtálohè	ehè
57	four	éré	èrī	éřé	mérī
58	freeze	òk̀puk̀pū	Dì	óni	dì
59	fruit	eho	Èso	eho	èho
60	give	wú	fú	wú	mú
61	good	àdžè/òhā	Dāra	òhā	hā
62	grass	erùmù	Koriko	irùmù	koriko
63	green	dídūewé	àwòewé	oruku/èeri	
64	guts	ifū	ifū	ifū	ifū
65	hair	irā	irū	iro	irō
66	hand	ówó	owó	owó	owó
67	He	omokùrī	òū	okùre	òū
68	head	orí	Orí	ori	oriyo
69	hear	gbó	gbíó	gbó	gbó
70	heart	èdò	okā	èdò	oka
71	heavy	wiwó	Wúwo	iwó	wiwó
72	here	iwe	lbi	iwe	ibé
73	Hit	nā	gba/lu	lú	gba
74	hold/take	mú	mú	mú	dóni
75	how	kotí	Báwo	kotirí	kimotirí
76	hunt	okòé	de/dòde	ilagbó	de
77	husband	oko	oko	oko	oko
78	I	emi	Èmi	èmi	èmi
79	knee	orókú	orúkú	oroku	oroku
80	If	ida	Bí	ída	boja
81	In	inu	ní/nínú	inu	nínó
82	Kill	kpa	kpa	kpa	kpa
83	know	mā	mò	mā	mā
84	lake	omi ùkpabò	adágú	agbuzo	eri
85	laugh	rírí	rérí	rí	ré
86	leaf	ewé	Ewé	ewé	ewé
87	left (side)	òsì	Òsì	òsì	ohì

88	Leg	ohè	esè	ohè	ehè
89	lie (recline)	didú	Dùbú	dùbú	hù
90	live	dó	gbé	dó	gbé
91	liver	ùdù	èdò-ki	akúru	èdò
92	long	gbá	gù	gbá	go
93	louse	enà orí	inà-orí	inà	inà
94	man/ma le	okùrè	okùrì	okùrè	okòrì
95	many	jeje	kpukpò	jeje	yeje
96	meat/fle sh	erā	erā	erā	erā
97	mother	je	ljà	ije	ije
98	Mountai n	okè	okè giga	èdokè	okè
99	mouth	erū	enū	erū	erū
100	name	orúko	orúko	orúko	orúko
101	narrow	firi/ firí	Tóoro	ewè	firi
102	near	wé	súmò	wé	hómó
103	neck	òrò	òrū	orò	orò
104	new	titū	tūtū	titò	titò
105	night	okukū	alé	òrū	òrū
106	nose	imú	imú	imo	imó
107	not	ee	ko/ki	fiefie/e	ee
108	Old	gbo	gbó	gbó	gbó
109	one	okā	okā	okā	okā
110	other	wobò	òmírà	òmurè	iné
112	play	iré	Ere	iré	iré
113	pull	fa	Fa	fa	fa
114	push	fi	ti/bl	ti	ti
115	rain	ezi/ozo	òdzò	ezi	òdzò
116	Red	kpi/kpá	kpu/ka/ka	kpi/ka	kpi/ka
117	right (correct)	ja	tó/dara	sú/si	tó
118	right (side)	òtò	òtū	òtò	òtò



119	river	omi ègbò	Odo	omi	
120	road	ònà	ònà	ònà	ònà
121	root	irì	gb̀òngb̀ò	irì	egb̀ògb̀ò
122	rope	uri	okù	irì	ùri
123	rotten	kè	badzè/ra	kè	
124	rub	gb̀ò	ra/k̀pa	gb̀ò	kpa
125	salt	owū	ijò	owū	ou
126	sand	erùk̀pè	ijèk̀pè/jāri	erùk̀pè	ijèk̀pè/
127	Say	fò	so/wí	fò	fò
128	scratch	kà	ho	já	já
129	Sea	omilokū	òkū	o/imi	òkū
130	See	rí	Rí	rí	rí
131	seed	ihoro	irugbì	ihoro	ehó
132	sew	sé	rá	sé	
133	sharp	mú	mú	mú	mú
134	short	kéré	Kúkuru	k̀púdè	kúru
135	sing	koñ	koñ	koñ	ko
136	Sit	zuka	d̀zókò	zòka	d̀zókò
137	skin	ara	awo ara/ekpo	èk̀pik̀para	
138	Sky	òkè	odzuòrù/òrù	òkè	òfurufu
139	sleep	orū	orū	orū	hù
140	small	kéré	kékeré	kéré	kéré
141	smell(v)	rù	rù	rù	rù
142	smoke	exivò	èfí	èxò	èfífí
143	smooth	ririja	d̀á/tédzú	oriè	d̀zòlò
144	snake	ezò	edzò	ezò	edzò
145	moon	ojifè	òsùk̀pá	ojifè	òsùk̀pá
146	some	ibibò	díè	ibibò	ibòbò
147	spit	itó	tutó	itó	itó
148	split	k̀pí/ja	k̀pí	k̀pí/ja	k̀pè
149	squeeze	mari	fúk̀pò	mari	
150	stab/pierce	gú	gú	gú	gú

151	stand	díró	dúró/nàró	díró	díró
152	star	kpákpáñdu	irawò	kpákpáñduu	irawò
153	stick	édó	lgi	èsíkpè	
154	stone	ókuta/òkò	Òkuta	ókuta	ókuta
155	straight	oja	gbóoro	oja	titó
156	suck	jǎ/fǎ	mū	jǎ	jǎ
157	Sun	orūrū	orū	orū	irū
158	swell	fífuhè	Wíwú	wú	wú
159	swim	gwu	lúwè/wè	gwú	gwè
160	tail	úrú	lru	úrú	irú
161	that	ɛɲè	ijē	ɛɲè	ijē
162	there	iwè	ibèjē	òwú	ibè
163	they	awò	awò	awò	añò
164	thick	rírò	nīkpò/ki	lala	
165	thin	rú	fírí/rú	téré/rú	fírí
166	think	rò	ronú/ro	rò	ronú
167	this	ejí	Éjí	ejí	èjí
168	thou	iwò	iwò/o	úwò	úwò
169	three	èta	èta	èta	èta
170	throw	hò	dzù/so	hò	dzù
171	Tie	dí	dí	dí	dí
172	tongue	úwǎ	ahó/awó	uwó	úwǎ
173	tooth	ejí	ejí/ehí	ejí	ejí
174	tree	idzǐ	lgi	idzǐ	édzǐ
175	turn	jí	Jí	jí	bí
176	two	èzǐ	édzǐ	èzǐ	édzǐ
177	vomit	bí	Bí	bí	bí
178	walk	rè	rí	rè	rè
179	warm	gbónǎ	lóworo/gbónǎ	gbónǎ	ló
180	wash	fò	fò	fò	fò
181	water	omi	Omi	omi	omi
182	We	awa	Áwa	awa	awa
183	wet	tutú	Tutú	re	tutú
184	what	kéne/kò	kíní	kò	kiè
185	when	ukò	níg̃bawo/níg̃ba	kògo	kiugbo

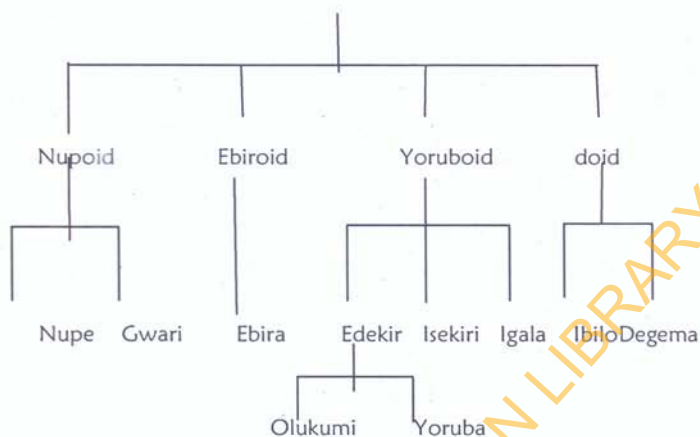
			ti		
186	where	ijà	lbo	kijorè	kúbo
187	white	fífū	fūfū	fufu	fífū
188	who	ho	tanī	joore	nĕ
189	wide	wiwe	Gbooro	owe	fè
190	wife	aja	aja/ijawó	aja	aja
191	wind	ɛfuurù	afefɛ	èfuru	afefɛ
192	wing	aka	ijéakpá	akā	ijé
193	wipe	gbò	nù	fitʃa	nò
194	with	owū	kpèlú/òhū	hū	kpèlú
195	window	opó	Opó	opo	opó
196	woods	idzī	lgi	idzi	igi
197	worn	òkpò	arà	òkpò	gbo
198	Ye	iwo	iwo/é	uwo	àna
199	year	odú	odú	odú	odó
200	breast	ojà	ojà	ojà	εjà

## 2.1 Findings

From the data presented above, if we take into consideration items that could be regarded as virtual cognates, we have the following analysis:

- (i.) Between Olukumi spoken in Ukwu-Nzu and that of Ugbodu, there is 89% cognation percentage. This established the two as dialects of the same language.
- (ii.) However, between the two varieties and the Standard Yoruba, there is 68.5 cognation percentage. This establishes Olukumi and Yoruba as sister languages. So, Olukumi could be classified as a member of the Yoruboid family along with Isekiri and Igala. If we now look at Oyelowo's work, we would say that Olukumi is closer to Yoruba than it is to either Isekiri or Igala. This will give us something like the table below:

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Now to Obadan and Okolo-Obi (2015) whose account states that the Olukumi people migrated from Benin, our response to this is that if they truly migrated from Bini, they must have initially migrated from Yoruba land. This will support the Owo/Idanre axis account as given in the introductory part of this paper. Going by Oyelowo's 18.6% cognate, Olukumi has nothing to do with Edoid, except for the few borrowings here and there. However, we cannot say the same thing about Olukumi and Yoruboid. Both Oyelowo (1990) and Abiola (2011) have proved that Olukumi and Yoruba are closely related to the point that they can at least be classified as sister languages. As for the speakers' opinion, they unanimously agreed that their language is a form (dialect) of Yoruba.

### Conclusion

Going by mutual intelligibility, lexicostatistic analysis and ethno-historical accounts from the speakers, it would not be out of place to conclude that Olukumi is a dialect of Yoruba in the diaspora. Up coming scholars should carry out further researches on Olukumi, especially in the area of Historical Linguistics and Dialectology with the aim of putting it where it belongs among other dialects of

Yoruba. At least the latest classification was done in 2005 by Adeniyi and he did not make any reference to Olukumi at all.

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