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A Contrastive Study of Two Varieties of Onicha and the Central Igbo Language

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Abstract

The crux of this paper is to compare the Onicha and the Central Igbo varieties of the Igbo language. Igbo is a language spoken in south eastern Nigeria, precisely in the present Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo states. It is the sole language of the Igbo ethnic group of the south east states. Igbo is also a minority language of the people of Delta, Rivers, and Edo states in the present south-south geopolitical zone. It is fraught with numerous dialects which can be arranged in clusters. Some Igbo linguists recognize merely two major dialect areas, namely Onicha (Onitsha) and Owerri (Owerri) on which this study is based. The objective of the paper is to present the morphosyntactic and phonological analyses of the two lects (by comparing them) in order to highlight their similarities and differences. It is observed that there are variations in the speech forms of the Central and the Onicha Igbo varieties. These variations are attested both in the lexical and the morphosyntactic domains.

Introduction

This paper compares the speech forms of the Central Igbo dialect with the specialized and the generalized form of the Onicha variety. Igbo is one of the three

main Nigerian languages, and it is fraught with multi- dialects which can be grouped in clusters.

The Igbo Varieties

The Igbo varieties include the following:

1. The Central Igbo

The Central Igbo covers roughly speaking the Owerri and Umuahia areas including Ohuhu (in Umuahia district). It gradually established itself as the accepted form by writers, publishers and education authorities for use in schools and for many years has been used as the medium of written Igbo.

The Central Igbo does not represent any particular dialect of Igbo. It appears to be a compromise between the extremely nasalized Owerre group of dialects and totally denasalized Ọnịcha group. One can even infer that the Central Igbo and Ọnịcha Igbo are similar to some extent since both are written and spoken with neither nasalization nor aspiration.

2. The Ọnịcha Igbo Variety

The Ọnịcha Igbo variety comprises two varieties: the one spoken by the sons of the soil (Onitsha indigenes) referred to as specialized form or original Ọnịcha Igbo and the widely understood and used version spoken by traders and non-indigenes of Onitsha known as the generalized form or Ọnịcha Igbo. This variety is spoken by mixed population in the major trading areas of Onitsha. The Ọnịcha dialect in its spoken form is more widely used than the Central Igbo because it is the form of Igbo most often learnt for the purposes of trade by non-Igbos. Having lost its nasalization and aspiration which are phonologically distinctive in some Southern Igbo varieties, it has the advantage of simplification thereby facilitating the learning process by both Igbos and non-Igbos. The generalized form of Ọnịcha Igbo can therefore be taken as 'a compromise Igbo' because it is a mixture of other dialects of Igbo which speakers from all parts of Igboland use in business communication.

Statement of the Problem

The dialects of Igbo are numerous and among them are the prominent Ọnịcha and the Owerre varieties. The Ọnịcha variety comprises the speech forms of the indigenous Onitsha people who live at Enu Onitsha (Onitsha Inland town) which is regarded as the specialized Ọnịcha dialect and the dialect spoken by non-indigenes made up of traders and other non-indigenes of Onitsha. This variety is known as the generalized Ọnịcha dialect. Both the specialized and the generalized form of the Ọnịcha Igbo lect are erroneously called Ọnịcha Igbo dialect. This paper therefore draws a distinction between these two varieties and compares them with the Central Igbo variety.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this paper is to compare the speech forms of the two varieties of Ọnịcha Igbo with that of Central Igbo. Specifically, the objectives include:

- Comparison of the sound system of the dialects
- Comparison of the phonological variations of lexical items in the two dialects
- Comparison of inflections in the two dialects

Scope of the Study

The paper is limited in scope to the comparison of the phonological variations of lexical items and the inflections in the varieties. The study also covers any Ọnịcha Igbo variety and the Central Igbo.

Methodology

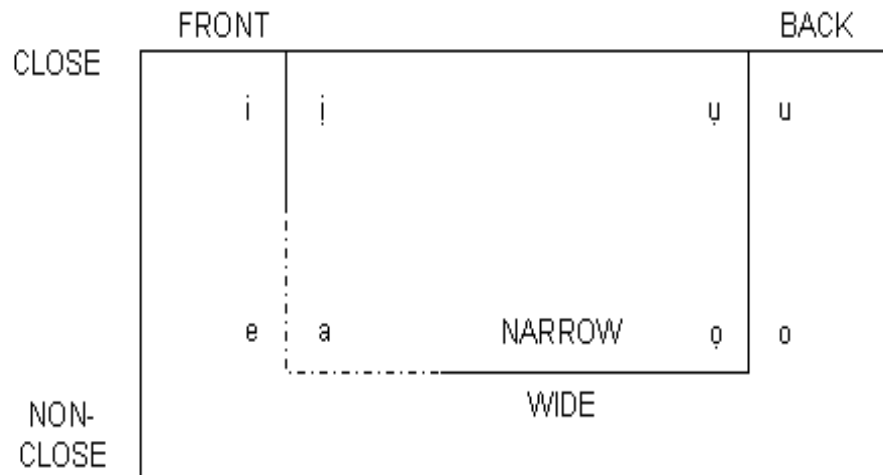
The data for the study are collected mainly from native speakers of Onitsha and the Central Igbo. Direct oral interview was also adopted. The data collected were descriptively analyzed. Secondary data used for this study included textbooks, journals and past projects.

The Sound System of the Central Igbo Language

The vowel System

The Central Igbo dialect has eight (8) phonemic vowels that divide fairly neatly into harmony groups in such a way that within any one simple word, only vowels of one group may co-occur. The position of the Advanced Tongue Root system (ATR) was recognized by Ladefoged (1975) and Mona Lindaou (1975) as recorded by Emenanjo (1978) as the mechanism responsible for the patterning of the vowels into two harmony sets. The vowels in the wide sets are produced with an expanded pharynx, while those in the narrow set are produced with an unexpanded or retracted pharynx. The following is the vocalic chart, according to Emenanjo (1978, p. 6):

Fig 1: The Central Igbo Vowel Chart



cf. Emenanjo 1978:6

The broken lines show that the retracted vowel ‘a’ co-occurs with wide vowels in some words. The Central Igbo vowel chart seems to be a compromise presentation of all the different dialects in Central Igbo.

The Consonant System of the Central Igbo Dialect

There are 25 phonemic consonants in the Central Igbo dialect, according to the classifications of Emenanjo (1978, p. 8). A careful study of the consonant chart presented by Emenanjo (1978, p.m8) shows that there is not much difference between the Central Igbo consonant chart and that of the Ọnịcha Igbo. The difference observed is the presence in the Central Igbo dialect of the phonemes ‘h’ (a voiceless glottal fricative) and ‘v’ (a voiced labio-dental fricative) which are not attested in the Ọnịcha Igbo. ‘v’, however, is attested in the specialized Ọnịcha dialect.

The features – nasalization and aspiration – are not indicated in both vocalic and consonantal charts of the Central Igbo dialect.

Below is the consonant chart of the Central Igbo dialect as presented by Emenanjo (1978, p. 8):

Fig 2: The Consonant Chart of Central Igbo

Mode of Articulation	Bilabial		Labio-Dental		Alveolar		Palatal	Velar		Labialized		Glottal
Stops-plosives	P	b			t	d		k	g	kw	gw	
Implosives	kp	gb										
Fricatives			f	v	s	z			gh			h
Nasals		m				n	y		ñ		nw	
Roll						r						
Lateral						l						
Approximants (Semi-Vowels)							Y				w	

The difference between the above Central Igbo and Onicha Igbo consonant charts is the presence of the glottal sound 'h' in the Central Igbo which does not exist in Onicha. The presence of the voiced fricative labio-dental 'v' which is attested in Central Igbo is also attested in the specialized form of Onicha dialect, but absent in the Onicha generalized form.

The Onicha Dialect Sound System

The Vowel System

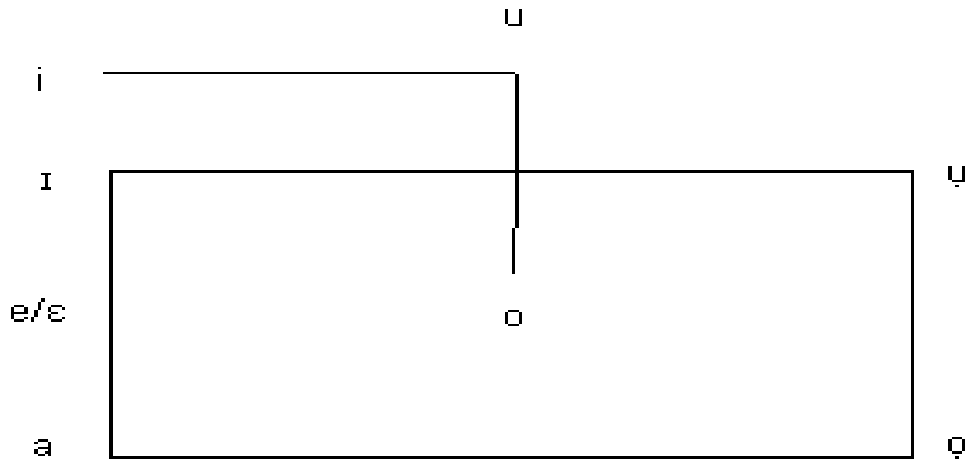
The Onicha dialect of Igbo has nine (9) phonetic vowels (eight phonemic vowels) which fall into two mutually exclusive sets in accordance with their tendency to co-occur. They are:

Set A [ɪ, ɛ, ɔ, a⁺, ʊ]

Set B [i, e, o, a[>], u]

Observation reveals that [ɛ] has wider application than [e] in the Onicha dialect, and should therefore be regarded ipso facto as the phonemic vowel. We can thus schematically represent the Onicha vocalic chart as:

Fig 3: The Onicha Igbo Vowel Chart



The Consonant System of Onicha

There are 26 consonants in the Onicha dialect of Igbo. They are almost the same as the consonants in the Central Igbo dialect. Below is the consonant chart of Onicha Igbo.

Fig 4: The Onicha Igbo Consonant Chart

Mode of Articulation	Labial		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Labialized Velar	
Plosive	p	b	t	d	ch	j	k	g	kw	Gw
Implosive	kp	gb								
Nasals		m		n		ny		ñ		Nw
Fricative	f		s	(z)	(sh)			gh		
Tap/Roll				r						
Lateral				l						
Approximants (Semi-Vowels)						y				W

(cf. Williamson 1972: LXIV)

Evidence from the above chart shows that the phoneme ‘h’ which is very prominent in the Central Igbo dialect is not attested in the Ọnịcha dialect, except perhaps in exclamation. The phoneme ‘v’ (voiced labio-dental fricative) which is attested in both the Central Igbo dialect and highly specialized form of Ọnịcha dialect, is not attested in the generalized form. It is the phoneme ‘f’ (voiceless labio-dental fricative) that does the job in the Ọnịcha variety.

The Review of Literature

Bennette and Sterk (1979) in Bendor-Samuel (1989 Pg.261) classify Igbo language as one of the groups of languages of the Benue-Congo, one of the sub-families of the Niger-Congo. Nwadike (1981 Pg.22) groups the dialects of the Igbo language into clusters as follows: Ika, Ukwuani and Enuani clusters (in Delta State). Ọnịcha, Ọlụ, Owere, Oguta Nsukka, Ụmụahịa, Abakaliki clusters (in Anambra, Imo, Enugu, Ebonyi and Abia States), and Ikwerre-Etche cluster (in Rivers State).

Ward (1939) as recorded by Nwadike (1981Pg.91) describes Central Igbo dialect as the type of Igbo which can carry foreigners to almost all over the Igbo country. Okeke (1984Pg.24) asserts that the most prominent of the dialects are the Ọnịcha and the Owere dialects groupings. Williamson (1972 Pg. xii) refers to the Igbo spoken by the Onitsha indigenes as the highly specialized form and the one spoken by non-indigenes as the generalized form while Emenanjo (1976) refers to them as the original Ọnịcha dialect and the Ọnịcha Igbo respectively.

Emenanjo (1976, p. 2) states that there are ten phonetic vowels which fall into two mutually exclusive sets in accordance with their tendency to co-occur in the Ọnịcha dialect of Igbo. Following his phonological analysis to determine the status of the ten phonetic vowels, Emenanjo concludes that Ọnịcha Igbo has eight phonemic vowels which he outlines thus:

/i, ɪ, e, a, o, ɔ, u, ʊ/.

Creissels (1989, p. 84) differs slightly with Emenanjo on the composition of the Ọnịcha vocalic system. According to Creissels (1984), Ọnịcha dialect has nine phonetic vowels (i, ɪ, e, ɛ, ɔ, o, ʊ, u) of which eight are phonemic, namely /i, ɪ, e, a, u, ʊ, o, ɔ/. Like Emenanjo (1976), Creissels (1989) maintains that [e] and [ɛ] are allophones of the same phoneme. But whereas Creissels symbolizes these allophones as the phoneme /ɛ/, based on its greater distribution, Emenanjo (1976 Pg.22-23) symbolizes them as /e/, although it has lesser distribution, as already noted.

Creissels (1989) presents his summary of the Ọnịcha phonemic vowels thus: /i, ɪ, e, a, u, ʊ, o, ɔ/ with derivation rule /ɛ/ → e when followed by either *i*, *u*, or *o* within the same word. However, from Creissels’ (1989) and Emenanjo’s (1976)

separate studies (in French and English respectively), we make the following observations with respect to the phonological status of [ɛ] and [e] in Ōnicha dialect.

- [ɛ] can co-occur with all the non-expanded vowels and with itself, e.g. òkɛ, ‘rat’, ófɛ, ‘soup’, ífɛ, ‘thing’, ɛdɛ, ‘cocoyam’, etc.
- [ɛ] can occur as the unique vowel of monosyllabic lexemes in which the non-expanded vowels are in harmony e.g. jɛ ‘go’, mɛ ‘do’, àfɛ ‘dress’, ɛbɛlɛ ‘mercy’, ɛzɛ ‘teeth’, etc.
- [ɛ] co-occurs profusely with nominals, verbals, and nomino-verbals e.g. ósɛ ‘pepper’, ífɛ ‘to worship’, ífɛ ‘thing’, ɛmɛ ‘doing’, etc.
- [e] cannot occur as the unique vowel in monosyllabic verbal lexemes.
- [e] can co-occur with nominals with the other expanded vowels but not with itself, e.g. itè ‘pot’, iké ‘strength’, etc.
- [e] can co-occur with a nomino-verbal such as participial prefix but cannot co-occur with itself e.g. èlí ‘eating’, èkwú ‘speaking’ égwú ‘playing’, etc.

A close observation of the analyses of the distribution of [ɛ] and [e], reveals that [ɛ] has wider application than [e] in the Ōnicha dialect, and should therefore be regarded ipso facto as the phonemic vowel as recommended by Creissels (1989). Save for this slight difference, Emenanjo and Creissels seem to be in agreement on a range of related issues. However, we shall adopt Creissels’ vocalic presentation for Ōnicha.

Presentation and Analysis of Data

This section compares the phonological variation of lexical items in Central and Ōnicha Igbo dialects.

There are some phonological differences which distinguish the Ōnicha dialect from the Central Igbo dialect. These phonological features mark out the speech form each time the speaker makes an utterance. The following are some of the outstanding phonological differences within the dialects in question.

1.

‘h’ realized as ‘f’ Central Igbo/Ōnicha Igbo

‘f’ realized as ‘v’ generalized form/highly specialized form

Here, ‘h’ in Central Igbo is realized as ‘f’ in Ōnicha generalized form and as ‘v’ in Ōnicha highly specialized form as shown in the examples below.

	Central Igbo	Ọnicha Igbo (generalized form)	Ọnicha Igbo (highly specialized form)
1	áhà 'name'	áfà 'name'	ávà 'name'
2	áhíá 'market'	áfíá 'market'	ávíá 'market'
3	áhúhú 'suffering'	áfúfú 'suffering'	ávúvú 'suffering'
4	áhíhíá 'grass'	áfífiá 'grass'	ávívíá 'grass'
5	ihé 'thing'	ife 'thing'	ive 'thing'
6	óhíá 'bush'	ófíá 'bush'	óvíá 'bush'
7	éhí 'cow'	éfi 'cow'	éví cow

2.

'h' realized as 'r'

Here, the 'h' of Central Igbo is realized as 'r' in both the specialized and generalized forms of Ọnicha Igbo as in the examples below:

	Central Igbo 'h'	Ọnicha generalized form (r)	Ọnicha highly specialized form (r)
1	àhú 'body'	àrú 'body'	àrú 'body'
2	áhù 'fart'	árù 'fart'	árù 'fart'
3	áhúhú 'ant'	árúró 'ant'	árúró 'ant'
4	óhù 'slave'	órù 'slave'	órù 'slave'
5	óhú 'twenty'	órú 'twenty'	órú 'twenty'
6	ihú 'face'	írú 'face'	írú 'face'

3.

'r' realized as 'l'

The 'r' in Central Igbo is realized as 'l' in certain lexical items in the Ọnicha dialect as seen in the examples below:

	Central Igbo	Ọnicha generalized form	Ọnicha highly specialized form
1	ára 'breast, madness'	ála 'breast, madness'	ála 'breast, madness'
2	áru 'abomination'	álu 'abomination'	álu 'abomination'
3	éró 'mushroom'	éló 'mushroom'	éló 'mushroom'
4	iré 'tongue'	ilé 'tongue'	ilé 'tongue'
5	irí 'ten'	ilí 'ten'	ilí 'ten'
6	iró 'enemy'	iló 'enemy'	iló 'enemy'
7	áró 'heavy'	áló 'heavy'	áló 'heavy'
8	úra 'sleep'	úlá 'sleep'	úlá 'sleep'
9	ùrá 'slap'	ùlá 'slap'	ùlá 'slap'

4.

‘l’ realized as ‘n’

The ‘l’ in Central Igbo dialect is realized as ‘n’ in certain lexical items in both the specialized and generalized forms of the Ọnịcha dialect as shown in the examples below:

	Central Igbo	Ọnịcha generalized form	Ọnịcha highly specialized form
1	úlò ‘house’	únò ‘house’	únò ‘house’
2	àlà ‘land’	ànì ‘land’	ànì ‘land’
3	élú ‘sky, high’	énú ‘sky, high’	énú ‘sky, high’
4	élé ‘giraffe’	ene ‘giraffe’	ene ‘giraffe’
5	ólú ‘neck’	ónú ‘neck’	ónú ‘neck’
6	ílú ‘bitterness’	ínú ‘bitterness’	ínú ‘bitterness’

It is important to note that the phonemic differences in lexical items do not inhibit mutual intelligibility.

The Comparison of Inflectional Markings in the Two Dialects

The aim of this section is to compare the inflections in the two dialects. Nouns in Igbo are not generally inflected for either gender, number, or tense. Inflection markings affect only verbs. In the Ọnịcha dialect, however, a few nouns are inflected for number and they include:

- ◇ Nwunye ‘wife’ – inyom (inyeme) ‘wives’
- ◇ ọkenye ‘elder’ – ikenye ‘elders’
- ◇ okolobia ‘young man’ – ikolobia ‘young men’
- ◇ okporo ‘woman’ – ikporo ‘women’

We shall consider inflections in the dialects under the following headings:

- I. Inflections in indicative constructions – affirmative
- II. Inflections in indicative constructions – negative
- III. Inflections in imperative constructions – affirmative
- IV. Inflections in imperative constructions – negative
- V. Inflections in perfective constructions - affirmative
- VI. Inflections in perfective constructions - negative
- VII. Inflections in unfulfilled constructions

Inflections in Affirmative Indicative Constructions

The indicative refers to verb forms, sentence or clause types used in the expression of statements and questions. The important inflectional affix in the

indicative construction in Igbo is realized –rV in the Central Igbo dialect and –IV in the Ọnịcha variety. The vowel of the –rV is the repetition of the vowel of the root in the Central Igbo, while in Ọnịcha, it is the harmonizing vowel of the root. Henceforth, we shall use for Ọnịcha, the –IV. The –rV and –IV suffix mark both present and past time meanings in the two dialects depending on verb types and construction. Igwe and Green (1963) use the term –rVtime and –rVnon-time suffix for past and present time meaning respectively.

Some Igbo linguists including Igwe and Green (1963), Emenanjo (1978), Nwachukwu (1983) state that the –IV suffix expresses past time meaning when it co-occurs with active verbs but expresses present time meaning when it co-occurs with stative verbs. We shall, in what follows, give examples of indicative constructions in both Central Igbo and Ọnịcha Igbo dialects.

5. Inflections in Affirmative Indicative Constructions

	Central Igbo		Ọnịcha Igbo
1a	<p>Àda sìrì nní</p> <p>vb-past</p> <p>Ada cook-FT food</p> <p>Ada cooked food</p>	1b	<p>Àdá sìlì nní</p> <p>vb-past</p> <p>Ada cook-FT food</p> <p>Ada cooked food</p>
2a	<p>Ugo toro ogologo</p> <p>vb-pres</p> <p>Ugo be tall-ST tallness</p> <p>Ugo is tall</p>	2b	<p>Ugo tolu ogonogo</p> <p>vb-pres</p> <p>Ugo be tall-ST tallness</p> <p>Ugo is tall</p>

In the two systems, the –rV/-IV as well as their verb roots carry low tones and the –rV/-IV harmonize with the vowel of the verb roots. 1a and 1b above express past time meaning in the two dialects while 2a and 2b express present time meanings.

Inflections in Negative Indicative Constructions

The general inflectional affix for negative indicative constructions is -ghị for the Central Igbo dialect and -rọ for Ọnịcha Igbo. The following sentences explicate the negative indicative constructions in both Central Igbo and Ọnịcha Igbo varieties:

6. Inflections in Negative Indicative Constructions

	Central Igbo	Onicha Igbo
i.	Úchè ázàghị úlò vb-neg Uche pref.sweep-suff. house Uche did not sweep the house	Úchè ázàrò únò vb-neg Uche pref.sweep-suff. house Uche did not sweep the house
ii.	Ò kwúghị ókwú vb-RT-neg He/she speak-suff. speech He/she did not speak	Ò kwúrò ókwú vb-RT-neg He/she speak-suff. speech He/she did not speak
iii.	Ànyí élíghí nní vb-neg We pref. eat-suff. food We did not eat food	Ànyí élírò nní vb-neg We pref. eat-suff. food We did not food

In the two systems, the verb takes the prefix when the subject is a noun or a plural pronoun. There is however no prefix when the subject is a singular pronoun. The negative suffix is invariable in the two dialects.

Inflections in Affirmative Imperative Constructions

The general inflectional affix in affirmative imperative constructions in the Igbo language is the open vowel suffix realized as = a / = ε / = e / = o / = ɔ. The following are examples of affirmative imperative sentences in both dialects:

7. Inflections in Affirmative Imperative Constructions

	Central Igbo	Onicha Igbo
i	tàá ánú 'chew meat'	tàá ánú 'chew meat'
ii	lòó ógwù 'swallow medicine'	nòó ógwù 'swallow medicine'
iii	rìé nrí 'eat food'	lìé nní 'eat food'
iv	gàá áhiá 'go to market'	jεε áfiá 'go to market'

Evidence before us shows that the affirmative imperative constructions in the two dialects are the same except in the few cases of phonological variation of lexical items, as shown above.

Inflections in Negative Imperative Constructions

The general inflectional affix for the negative imperative construction is realized as -la in the Central Igbo dialect and as -na in the Onicha Igbo variety. The following are some examples:

8. Inflections in Negative Imperative Constructions

	Central Igbo	Onicha Igbo
i	ázàlà úlò 'don't sweep house'	ázàrà únò 'don't sweep house'
b	ázàlà 'don't sweep'	ázàrà 'don't sweep'
ii	érlá nrí 'don't eat food'	érlná nní 'don't eat food'
b	érlá 'don't eat'	érlná 'don't eat'
iii	ágálá áhíá 'don't go to market'	ejená áfíá 'don't go to market'
b	ágàlà 'don't go'	ejená 'don't go'

Our observations in the foregoing negative imperative constructions are as follow:

1. The high tone harmonizing prefix is affixed to the verb root which is immediately followed by the negative suffix -la and -na in the Central Igbo and Onicha Igbo respectively.
2. The presence of the falling tone on the negative imperative morpheme -na with high tone verbs where the verb complement is absent. This phenomenon is attested in the Onicha Igbo dialect and does not exist in the Central Igbo dialect. The falling tone is the compensatory morpheme for the NP that is absent. With low tone verb roots, the derivative is low.

Inflections in Affirmative Perfective Constructions

The inflectional affix in the affirmative perfective construction is realized as -la in the Central Igbo dialect and -go in the Onicha Igbo. Here are some examples of perfective constructions in the Central Igbo dialect and Onicha Igbo.

9. Inflections in Affirmative Perfective Constructions

	Central Igbo	Onicha Igbo
I	Ádá èríelá nrí 'Ada has eaten'	Ádá èlígó nní 'Ada has eaten'
Ii	Há ázáálá úlò 'They have swept house'	Fá ázágó únò 'They have swept house'
iii	Ó gáálá áhíá 'He/she has gone to market'	Ó jegó áfíá 'He/she has gone to market'
iv	Úchè àzúólá jí 'Uche has bought yam'	Úchè ègógó jí 'Uche has bought yam'
V	Ó záálá ájùjú áhù 'He/she has answered that question'	Ó zágó ájùjú áfù 'He/she has answered that question'

From the foregoing, we observe that:

1. The Central Igbo dialect and the Ọnịcha Igbo dialect take verbal vowel prefix with noun subjects and plural pronouns and do not take it with singular pronouns as shown in the examples above.
2. There is systematically, in the Central Igbo dialect, the presence of the open vowel suffix immediately after the verb root before the perfective suffix –la; the open vowel suffix is absent in the Ọnịcha Igbo dialect.

Inflections in Negative Perfective Constructions

The negative perfective construction and the unfulfilled perfective construction are realized in the same way in both the Ọnịcha and Central Igbo dialects though with different morphemes. In the Central Igbo dialect, the negative perfective and the unfulfilled perfective are realized with the morpheme -beghì and in the Ọnịcha dialect, they are realized with the unfulfilled marker –ka which is followed by a participle to which is affixed the negative suffix -rọ. The following are some examples:

10. Inflections in Negative Perfective Constructions

	Central Igbo	Ọnịcha Igbo
I	Ígwé ákwúbèghì úgwó 'Igwe has not paid'	Ígwé áká àkwúró úgwó 'Igwe has not paid'
Ii	Úchè élibèghì nrí 'Uche has not eaten'	Úchè áká èlíró nní 'Uche has not eaten'
iii	Àdá échúbèghì mmírí 'Ada has not fetched water'	Àdá áká èchúró mmílí 'Ada has not fetched water'
iv	Fà ázábèghì úló 'They have not swept the house'	Fà áká ázàró únò 'They have not swept the house'
V	Ò bíábèghì ébé à 'He/she has not come here'	Ò ká àbíáró ẹbe à 'He/she has not come here'

From the foregoing examples, we observe that in the Central Igbo dialect, the unfulfilled perfective marker –be follows the verb and precedes the negative marker but in the Ọnịcha dialect, the unfulfilled perfective marker –ka precedes the verbs to which the negative marker is suffixed.

In both dialects, the subject nouns and the plural subject pronouns take the verbal vowel prefix while the singular subject pronouns do not take the verbal vowel prefix as the evidence above shows.

Summary and Conclusion

By way of summary and conclusion, we shall recapitulate the variations in the speech forms of the Central Igbo and the Ọnịcha dialects. This will be considered from the phonological, lexical, and morpho-syntactic points of view.

From the phonological point of view, we have:

11.

	Central Igbo	Ọnịcha Igbo
i	/h/	/f/
ii	/h/	/r/
iii	/r/	/l/
iv	/l/	/n/

From the lexical point of view, we have:

12.

	Central Igbo	Ọnịcha Igbo
i	ófè 'soup'	ófè 'soup'
ii	òké 'rat'	òkè 'rat'
iii	óché 'chair'	óche 'chair'
iv	ósè 'pepper'	óse 'pepper'

From the morpho-syntactic point of view, the following observations are made:

13.

	Central Igbo	Ọnịcha Igbo
I	-rV	-IV
Ii	-ghị	-rọ
Iii	Ágàlà	Ejèná
Iv	-lá	-gó
va	-beghị	-ka + vb + rọ
vb	-beghị	-ka.....rọ

Abbreviations

FT = factative; neg = negative; pref = prefix; pres = present; ST = stative; suff = suffix; vb-RT = verb root

Tonal Marking Convention Used

Integral tonal notation.

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