

# A Comparative Study of the Phonology of Mòbà and Adó Ekiti Dialects of Yorùbá Language

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## ABSTRACT

This study presents a comparative analysis of the phonological systems of Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá with the aim of comparing and finding their similarities and differences regardless of their distance and classification as Central Yorùbá. The study area is located in southwestern part of Nigeria, where Yorùbá language and its dialects are predominantly spoken by the indigenes. A comparative approach was adopted for this study. Data were collected from 100 native speakers of 60 years and above from the study areas, 50 from each of the dialects, using adapted instrument of 1700 wordlist of the Summer Institutes of Linguistics (SIL) Dallas, Texas. The selection of elderly native speaker was based on the need to avoid code-mixing is common among younger generation. Common lexemes in the dialects are used for the classification of the dialects' sound systems and syllables to assess the differences and similarities. The study reveals that with the exception of [ɲ], all other consonants can occur at the word initial of the two dialects, and that no consonant is permitted in the word final because the dialects operate open syllables like that of Standard Yorùbá. However, it was revealed that Mòbà dialect attests palata alveolar fricative [ʃ] which does not reflect in Adó Èkìtì dialect. It is concluded that even the two dialects are mutually intelligible, there are differences in the way the native speakers articulate some words. However, the identified differences did not constitute problem of misunderstanding during communication process among speakers of the dialects. It is therefore established that despite the fact that Mòbà people share borders with Òṣun and Kwara states and some other local governments within Ekiti state, this has not influenced the phonological structures of speakers of Mòbà dialect. The study established that there exists a very strong affinity between the dialects as the researcher discovered some common lexemes.

**Keywords:** Phonology, Phonological Processes, Mòbà Dialect, Adó Dialect, Yorùbá Language

## INTRODUCTION

Language is a unique feature of mankind with variations. It is the system of communication in speech and writing that is used by people of a particular country or area. It is widely spread across the human race and by this, has differences in terms of phonetics, semantics, syntactic and phonological constructions, among others. Abíòdún and Atúramú (2020) remarked that scholars in the field of dialectology have shown with illustrations from different languages that dialects of a language invariably reflect differences or variations at all levels of grammar (lexis, phonology, morphology, and syntax). This explains why a dialect is regarded as a geographical variety of a language that is different in some linguistic elements from other geographical varieties of the same language, (Chambers and Trudgill (1980), Boberg, Nerborne and Watt, (2006) and McGregor, (2009). For instance, English Language has many variations which include British English, Australian English, South-African English, American English, to mention a few.

The speech of American English is noticeably different from that of British or Australian English. When speakers of a particular language speak different versions of the language, they are said to be speaking different dialects of the language, (Ayéṣomóni, 2011). Yorùbá Language is one of the major languages in Nigeria spoken in the western part and some other countries in the sub-region of West Africa such as Togo, Republic of Benin and Cuba. Táíwò (2005) noted that Yorùbá Language is classified into five (5) dialect groups. They are North Western Yorùbá (NWY), North Eastern Yorùbá (NEY), Central Yorùbá (CY), South Eastern Yorùbá (SEY) and South Western Yorùbá (SWY). In addition, Olúmúyíwá (2009) listed Adó (Èkìtì), Ilẹ̀ṣà (Ìjẹ̀ṣà), Ilẹ̀-Ifẹ̀ (Ifẹ̀) and

Òtùn (Mòbà) as dialects of Central Yorùbá group. Despite this classification, the research observed that there seems to be variations in the way and manner of articulation of words among these towns.

## Yorùbá Language and Its Speakers

Oshòdì (2016) remarked that Yoruba is a Niger Congo language and that it is spoken in south-western Nigeria and some neighboring West African countries like Republic of Benin and Tógò. Yorùbá Language is majorly spoken in six states of the federation, covering Òndó, Èkìtì, Òyó, Lagos, Òṣun, and Ògùn while some parts of Èdó, Kogí and Kwara states speak the language. Ayéṣomoni (2011) reported that in Nigeria alone, the native speakers of the language are over 15 million and that another 5 million speak it in addition to their mother tongue.

The language has different dialects like any other languages. The dialects include Òndó, Ìkálè, Ifè, Ìjèsà, Ìgbómìnà, Ọwò, Èkìtì, Ọbà, Ọkìtì-pupa, Ìlàjẹ, Ègbá, among others. These dialects, according to Oshòdì (2016), were classified based on phonological, morphological, and syntactic similarities which they share and are peculiar to them. One important criterion advanced for the identification and eventual classification of dialects apart from mutual intelligibility in the areas of lexicon, sounds, morphology and syntax, at least for Yorùbá, Awóbùlúyì (1988) noted that each of these dialects contributed one or two features to the emergence of the standard form. Oshòdì (2016) noted that this claim is true to a large extent, since a number of knotty issues in standard Yorùbá have been resolved with evidence from some of these established dialects. All these dialects slightly varied from one another. For instance, a study conducted by Fresco (1970) revealed that some Yorùbá words are pronounced differently while some are similar across the different dialects of Yorùbá as shown in table one below:

### (1) Yorùbá and Its few Dialects

Yorùbá	Òndó	Àkúré	Ìfàkì	Gloss
èékán	ìkíkáná	ọọ	èkíkáná	finger nail
ọwọ	ọwọ	ọọ	ọọ	hand
egungun	ogungun	egigun	egigun	bone
ìròlẹ	ùwòlẹ	ìròlẹ	ọjú rò	evening
ewúré	èkéègbè	ìdéègbè	ẹọré	goat
ìlù	ùlù	ùlù	ùlù	drum
ilé	ulí	ulé	ulé	house

It can be observed from the examples above that the words used in most of the dialects are not only similar but are closely related to the ones used in common Yorùbá. This accounts for mutual intelligibility of all the dialects of Yorùbá among the speakers.

## Dialect and Dialectology

A dialect is an integral part of a language. It is a form of language that is spoken in one area with grammar, words and pronunciation that may be different from other forms of the same language (Hornby, 2015). It is a regional variety of language distinguished by features of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation from other regional varieties and constituting together with them a single language. According to David (2005), dialectology is the study of the way sounds, words and grammatical forms varying within a language. The term is usually used to describe the study of both accents (the varying sound used within a language) and dialect (the different grammatical structures and word used). Dialectology is aimed at examination and documentation of the variance

in sounds (phonetic and phonology) grammar (morphology and syntax) and lexicon within a given geographical area (dialect geography) or social group (social dialectology).

The study of linguistic variation is getting prominence in language study because of the variance in human language. Chineze, et al identified different kinds of dialectal variations, which include phonetic, phonological, morphological and syntactic variations, among others. Dialectology is becoming more important in the contemporary linguistic world because people of different countries and nations are trying to preserve their heritage and share it with other representatives of various cultures. Other linguistics scholars who have worked on the field of dialectology and Yorùbá phonology include Atúramú (2020), Adébáyò (2023), Oláníyí (2024) and Arówòşęgbé (2025), among others.

### **Èkìtì People and Its Dialects**

The towns and villages in Èkìtì are 152, (ekitistate.gov.ng). The towns include Adó, Èfòn-Alaaye, Arámọkọ, Ìkòlẹ̀, Ìkẹrẹ̀, Ìjerò, Ìsẹ̀, Ìdó, Emùré, Ìyìn, Ìgèdè, Òdè, Oyé, Òmùò, Òtùn, Ìlúpéju, Igógo, Iyè, Osùn-ún, Ayédùn, Erinmòpé Ìkùn, Òkẹ̀mẹ̀sí, Ìgbàrà-Odò, among others. Oral narrations revealed that the ancestors of the Ekitis migrated from Ilé-Ifẹ̀ as a people. Ekitis are culturally homogeneous and they speak a dialect of Yorùbá language known as Èkìtì. Slight differences are noticeable in the dialect of the Yorùbá language spoken by the people. This might be as a result of their spatial locations, especially the border communities to other states. For example, the people of Adó local government area do not speak exactly the same dialect with the people of Ìrepodun-Ifelodun local government area, while the people of Mòbà people speak a dialect that is different from that of the people of Ìdó-òsì area.

The communities which may be influenced by their locations include Mòbà land that speak a dialect close to the one spoken by the Igbominas in Kwara and Òşun states. The people of Òkẹ̀àkò, Ìrẹ̀lẹ̀, Òmùò-òkẹ̀ speak a dialect similar to that of Ìjumu in Kwara and Kogi states. The people of Èkìtì West and Èfòn-Alaaye local government areas, that is, the Èfòn-Alaaye and Òkẹ̀mẹ̀sí communities speak a similar dialect to that of Ìjesas of Òşun State which may be as a result of their closeness. Despite the foregoing, the indigenes of Ekiti do understand themselves when they communicate with one another because all the dialects have affinity Standard Yoruba. However, slight variations do exist in pronunciation and phrasing.

### **Mòbà and Adó Dialect of Yorùbá Language**

This research focused on the comparative phonology of Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language. The dialects are classified as Central Yoruba group. Mòbà dialect is spoken by groups of communities in Mòbà Local Government Area of Èkìtì State and Òkẹ̀ Èrò Local Government Area of Kwara State. Bámişilẹ̀ (1986) reported that the variety of speech in these areas has been put under Èkìtì dialect while Ajíbóyè (1991) further revealed that the variety constitutes a distinct dialect which is highly mutually intelligible with Èkìtì dialect. The towns and villages in Èkìtì State where Mòbà dialect is spoken are Òtùn-Èkìtì, Igógo-Èkìtì, Osùn-ún Èkìtì, Ìró-Èkìtì, Irà-Èkìtì, Èpẹ̀-Èkìtì, Òsàn-Èkìtì, Ìsàòyè-Èkìtì, Ìràré-Èkìtì, Erinmòpé-Èkìtì, Aayè-Ojà Èkìtì, Ikòsú- Èkìtì and Ìkùn-Èkìtì. In Kwara State, Mòbà dialect is spoken in Èkàn, Ìlọfà, Odò-Owá, Ìlálẹ̀, Ìmòdẹ̀, Kájọlà, Ayédùn, Èrinmòpé and Egòsì. In all, there are twenty two (22) communities that speak Mòbà dialect across the two local government areas in Kwara and Èkìtì States.

Ado Ekiti is the capital city of Ekiti State and the headquarters of Ado Local government area. Olómọlà (1984) stated that the history of old Adó kingdom began about seven hundred years ago and that its territory was quite large by Èkìtì standards. It covered a large chunk of central and southern parts of Èkìtì. The scholar noted that many of its subordinate towns and villages are scattered over the whole area, which include Agbaun, Ìsao, Ùlẹ̀gẹ̀mọ̀, Ìsínlá, Ùlámọ̀jì, Ùlẹ̀rò, Àsò, among others. Linguistic scholars have treated most of the phonological processes in Mòbà dialect among who are Bámişilẹ̀ (1986), Ajíbóyè (1991), Ajíbóyè (1999), Ajíbóyè and Pulleyblank (2000), Abíódún and Ajíbóyè (2007), Olumuyiwa, (2009), while there seems to be little or no study on Adó dialect in the available literature. Chineze, Chinyere and Nwike (2021) noted that variation in dialects can be viewed as the differences in the dialects of the same language. In some cases, the variation is not much, and may not even be noticed by a casual observer; in other cases, it is easily noticeable because it is much.

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## Phonological Processes

Phonological process is the change that sounds undergo when they interact. Oyèbádé (2008) defines phonological processes as sound modifications motivated by the need to maintain euphony in a language or to rectify violations of well-formedness constraints in the production of an utterance. Also, Abíódún (2010) notes that:

In normal speech, sounds are not produced in isolation, rather morphemes and words are joined together string to make meaningful utterances. As words and morphemes are combined, sounds are influenced by their environments thereby undergoing some adjustments. A sound may change to resemble another contiguous sound, it may be lost, or some segments introduced into the combination. These changes are technically known as phonological processes.

Phonological processes are the results of application of phonological rules that are inherent in the mental orientation of native speakers. Iloene (2010) defines phonological processes as changes which speech sounds undergo when they occur in company of other sounds. Also, Oyèbádé (2008) claims that they are linguistic directives which map underlying forms on surface forms. He noted that they show the derivational sequence or path of an item in its journey from the underlying level to the phonetic level. These phonological processes, according to Yul-Ifode (1999) and Oyèbádé (2008) include assimilation, deletion, insertion, vowel harmony, coalescence, among others. These processes bring about phonological rules which describe the phonological constraints that are present in a given language.

## Statement Of The Problem

Available studies in phonology and dialectology revealed that a number of linguistic scholars have worked on Moba phonology (Bamisile, (1986), Ajiboye, (1991), Abiodun and Ajiboye, (2007), Olumuyiwa, (2009), while little or no study had been reported on the phonology of Ado dialect. The study is informed by the classification of Táíwò (2005) which categorized the two dialects under Central Yorùbá (CY) despite the distance between the speakers of the two dialects, more so, that they do not share the same geographical boundaries. A close observation of the available empirical studies also shows that there seems to be no comparative study on the two dialects under study. It is on the foregoing background that the researcher intends to carry out a comparative analysis of the phonology of Moba and Ado dialects of Yoruba Language.

## Aim And Objectives Of The Study

This is a comparative study of Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language.

This study is designed to investigate the:

- i. phonological processes in Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yoruba language,
- ii. phonological similarities between Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language,
- iii. phonological differences between Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language.

## Research Questions

- i. What are the phonological processes in Moba and Ado dialects of Yoruba language?
- ii. What are the phonological similarities between Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language?
- iii. What are the phonological differences between Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language?

## METHODOLOGY

The research design of this study is a survey type. The instrument for data collection was the adapted 1700 wordlist of the Summer Institutes of Linguistics (SIL), Dallas, Texas. The adapted instrument was used to elicit data from the native speakers in the selected towns and villages across the language communities in Mòbà and Adó local government areas of Èkìtì state. The researcher modified the wordlist to reflect the local environment and the culture of the people so as to get large volume of data on the language. Phrases and sentences were formed by the researcher while the respondents were asked to pronounce them in their own variant dialect, using the questionnaire as guide.

Native speakers who are 60 years and above in the two dialect areas, who speak the dialects fluently formed the population for this study. The sample of the study consisted of 100 respondents of 50 males and 50 females, 50 from each of the study dialects, who were purposively selected to ensure gender equality across the study areas for the interview using the adapted SIL wordlist.

In order to preserve the data for easy access, the researcher made use of Techno 10D ipad to record the interviews that were conducted with the selected native speakers. The device automatically saves recorded passages or discussions once it is put on. It gives the opportunity to play-back the recorded items which allowed the researcher to listen and transcribe appropriately. In addition, the researcher made use of printed academic materials and consulted internet for relevant electronic materials.

## Data Presentation And Analysis

The table two below presents the data collected from respondents on Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá language.

### (2) Data for the Study

Yorùbá	Mòbá Dialect	Adó Dialect	Gloss
ikùn	ukù	ukù	abdomen
apá	aká	aká	arm
ẹ̀yìn	ẹ̀ìn	ẹ̀yì	back
fòrotò	fòrotò	abénú	bladder
ara	ara	ọ̀ra	body
egungun	eigun	egigun	bone
ìpéèpéjú	ìpérìpéjú	ùpéèpéjú	eyelid
èékán	èíkáná	èkíkáná	finger nail
ìka	òkika	òkika	finger
ìgbègbè	ugbògbò	ugbègbè	goiter
ọ̀wọ̀	ọ̀ọ̀	ọ̀ọ̀	hand
orí	erí	orí	head
oògùn	ogùngùn	ogìgùn	medicine
orí ilé	erí ulé	erí ulé	roof

isẹ	usẹ	usẹ	work
àpò	àpò	àpò	pocket
fowó kàn	móòkan	móòkan	touch
ooju	ojuju	ojijun	sore
yán	íyán	yán	yawn
wá jẹun	á jẹun	yá jẹun	come and eat
anìkànjẹ	anùkànjọpon	àdánùkànjẹ	selfish
yẹra	yẹra	yẹra	avoid
ó dígbà	é dù gbà	ó dàbò	goodbye
òwe	òe	òe	proverb
jí	jí	jíun	steal
ìbojì	ìbojì	ubojì	cemetery
ìşasùn	ùşà/àgègè	ùşasùn	cooking pot
ẹnu ọnà	ẹrun ọnà	ẹrun ọnà	doorway
ìrìn àjò	ùnrìn àjò	àjò	journey
tábà	agírà	tábà	tobacco
eèrà	erirà	erirà	ant
ekòlò	ikòlò	ekòlò	earthworm
ewúré	ìdérègbè	ìdérègbè	goat
òbúkọ	òúkọ	òúkọ	he-goat
alángbá	alángbá	òdògba	lizard
osun	ògògò	osun	mushroom
eérú	erírú	erírú	ashes
oyẹ	oyẹ	ètítù	harmattan
òkè	orokè	òkìtì	mountain
àtètè kóşe ùbèrè pèpè		pèrè mù şékè	beginning
túkà	fón ká	túrá	scatter
isàlẹ	oódò	odò	down part



mélò ó ní?	èlò é se?	eye sé se?	how many?
bóyá	béyá	bóyá	perhaps

### (3) Consonants in the dialects of Mòbà and Adó

There are eighteen consonants attested in Adó dialect. They are: b, m, f, t, d, n, s, l, r, dʒ, ɲ, j, k, g, kp, gb, w, h. However, Mòbà attests twenty consonants with the presence of [ʃ] (palatal alveolar fricative) and [ɣ] palatal fricative.

Consonants do occur in different positions in word-initial position, word-medial position or intervocallically. With the exception of [ɲ], all other consonants can occur at the word initial of the dialects, while no consonant is permitted in the word final because only open syllables are attested in the dialects like that of Standard Yoruba.

(4) The data below show examples of occurrence of consonants in the dialects:

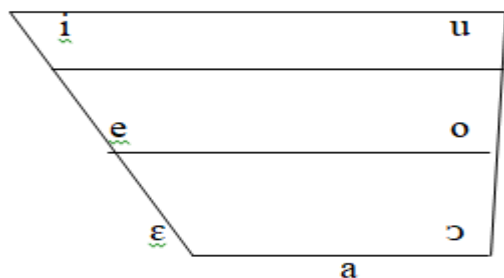
Yorùbá	Mòbá	Adó	Gloss
yẹra	yẹra	yẹra	avoid
tábà	agírà	tábà	tobacco
túkà	fọn ká	túrà	scatter
ejò	ejò	ejò	snake
jí	jí	jíun	steal
ìbojì	ìbojì	ubojì	cemetery

From the above data, it has been noted that consonants are only allowed at the word-initial and word-medial positions.

### The Vowel System

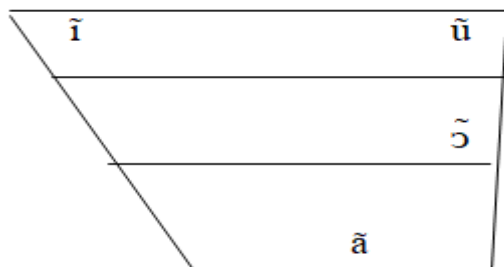
Linguistics scholars, such as Awóbùlúyì (1982), Abíódún and Sànúsí (1999), Táíwò (2005), and Olúwúyìwá (2009) among others, have reported that Mòbà belongs to Central Yorùbá dialect group and that the group is distinguished from other dialect groups based on their number of oral vowels that are attested in the dialect group. Mòbà attests seven oral vowels and four nasal vowels while Ado (being part of Èkìtì) attests nine-vowel system like other Central Yorùbá group such as Àkùré, Ifẹ̀ and Ìjèsà.

### Vowels in Mòbà and Adó Dialects



### Oral vowels.

## Nasalized vowels



In Standard Yoruba, all the vowels are allowed at the word-initial except [u]. However, [u] which is high back vowel is attested in word-initial positions of the two dialects. For example: \_\_\_\_\_

(5) Yorùbá	Mòbá	Adó	Gloss
ĩsu	usu	usu	yam
ilé	ulé	ulé	house
iná	uná	uná	fire
iṣé	uṣé	usé	work
idodo	udu	udodo	narvel
ilù	ùlù	ùlù	drum
ikùn	ukù	ukù	stomach

From the above data, it can be observed that only few words with vowel [i] initial fall into this category as there are a lot of common Yorùbá words that are not captured by this, as can be seen in the examples below:

(6) Yorùbá	Mòbá	Adó	Gloss
ite	ite	ite	nest
ìka	òkìka	òkìka	finger
eérú	erírú	erírú	ashes
oyé	oyé	ètítù	harmattan
òkè	orokè	òkitì	mountain

The data for the study also revealed that other words that are not [i] initials do not manifest [u] epenthesis. Also, nasal and nasalized vowels are attested in two dialects as in:

(7) Yorùbá	Mòbá	Adó	Gloss
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egungun	eigun	egigun	bone
osun	ògògó	osun	mushroom
ìrìn àjò	ùnrin	àjò	journey
oògùn	ogùngùn	ogìgùn	medicine
èékán	èíkánná	èkíkánná	finger nail
irin	unrin	unrin	iron
idin	indin	indin	maggot

Examples above reveal that the dialects manifest nasal (eg èíkánná as irin unrin, idin indin. èkíkánná) and nasalized vowels such

### Syllable Structure of the Dialects

It has been reported earlier that the dialects, being a sub-dialect of Yorùbá Language, do not permit consonant clusters, it operates V, CV, VV, VVCV, and CVCV as show below:

#### (8) Yorùbá Mòbá Adó Gloss

òwe	òe	òe	proverb
ọwọ	ọọ	ọọ	hand
ọyé	Ètítù	ọyé	harmattan
bóyá	béyá	bóyá	perhaps
ewúré	eúré	eúré	goat
tábà	agírá	tábà	tobacco

Note that the dialects also operate open syllable structure, the dialects do not allow consonant in word-final as presented above.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

**Research Question One:** What are the phonological processes in Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá language?

### The Phonological Systems of the Dialects

Analysis of the data collected for the study revealed that seven phonological processes are present in the two dialects. They are deletion, insertion, nasalization, labialization, vowel harmony, assimilation and denasalisation. This might be as a result of the fact that the dialects have their sources from Yoruba Language and at the same time belong to the same dialect group of Central Yoruba. However, five of the phonological processes are presented below as analysed from the data collected above.

**(a) Deletion:** Deletion is a phonological process whereby what is present in underlying representation get lost at the surface level, (Àiná-Adébáyò & Odébíyí, 2025).. Deletion may either involve vowel or consonant. It involves vowel when two or more vowels meet across morpheme boundary; while it can be consonants in any morpheme. The following examples are drawn:

(9) Yorùbá                      Mòbá                      Adó                      Gloss

òwe	proverb	òe	òe
òbúkọ	he-goat	òúkọ	òúkọ
ìwà	ùà	ùà	manner
egungun	eigun	egigun	bone

**Vowel Deletion in Noun + Noun Construction in Mòbà and Adó Dialects**

The data presented below are examples of V<sub>1</sub> or V<sub>2</sub> deletion in noun + noun construction where the second noun is also a vowel initial in the two dialects.

(10)      Noun + Noun                      Surface Structure                      Gloss  
(Mòbà and Adó)

ojú	ilé	ojúlé	street
lamb	ọmọ	ẹran	ọmẹran
ìdí	ilé	ùdílé	family
etí	ìgbó	etígbó	nearby bush

**Vowel Deletion in Verb + Object Noun Construction in Mòbà and Adó Dialects**

In the dialects under study, the process of vowel deletion between transitive verb and the object noun was also noticed. The data below are examples of vowel deletion in verb # object noun construction in Moba and Ado dialects.

(11)      Verb + Noun                      Surface Structure                      Gloss                      (Mòbà and Adó)

tọ	itọ	titọ	to urinate
dé	adé	dádé	wear crown
bu	omi	bomi	take water
jẹ	ọba	jọba	become a king
pa	ẹran	pẹran	kill animal
gé	igi	gegi	cut tree
re	ata	reta	gather pepper
kọ	ilé	kólé	build house

to	erù	torù	arrange load
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From the data above, it can be observed that the vowel of the verb is deleted in (a); that is,  $V_1$  while the first vowel of the noun survives deletion. Also, the data presented in (b) reveal that the vowels in the verbs survive deletion while the initial vowels of the nouns get deleted in the dialects. The tones are always deleted in this situation as can be seen in the examples above.

### Vowel Deletion in Preposition + Noun Construction in Mòbà and Adó Dialects

It is also observed in the language that vowel deletion can be found between preposition and noun grammatical constructions. The following are pieces of data in this regard.

#### (12) Preposition + Noun Surface Structure Gloss (Mòbà and Adó)

eti	odo	etido	river bank
abe	ule	abele	under roof
eti	ule	etile	near house.

Observation of the data above shows that the vowels in preposition always survive deletion, while the initial vowel of the noun is deleted.

### Consonant Deletion in Mòbà and Adó Dialects

Analysis of the data collected revealed that the two dialects permit consonant deletion. Consonants such as [w, b, g,] are examples that fall into this category as demonstrated below:

#### (13) CY Mòbà Adó Gloss

owo	oo	oo	hand
owe	oe	oe	proverb
obuko	ouko	ouko	he- goat
Iha	i è	ifon è	waist
eyin	èyin	Èyi	back

The data above manifest that voiced vela plosive is deleted across the morpheme boundary in:

egigun → eigun.

Also, trill sound (r) in:

ìpérìpéjú → ùpèèpéjú.

Voiceless velar plosive is deleted in:

èkíkáná → èíkáná.

In addition, voiced nasal sound in èyin → èyi is also deleted across morpheme boundary.

**(b) Insertion:** Insertion is commonly used in borrowed or loan words to break unwanted sequence of consonant clusters or closed syllables in Yoruba language. The following data on insertion were obtained from the two dialects which involved prosthesis and epenthesis in any borrowed words:

(14) CY	Mòbà	Adó	Gloss
moto	imoto	imoto	vehicle
buredi	iburedi	iburedi	bread
sukuru	isukuru	isukuru	school
beliti	ibeliti	ibeliti	belt

Supporting the above, scholars such as Abíódún (2010), Owóyèlè (2016) and Àiná-Adébáyò (2019) reported that in loan words, such as English Language, consonant cluster is restricted by introducing an extraneous prosthetic vowel which is motivated strictly by morpheme structure considerations.

In few cases, insertion of consonant was observed in the dialects. For example:

(15) CY	Mòbà	Adó	Gloss
eekan	eikanna	ekikanna	finger nail
oke	oroke	okiti	mountain
melo ni?	Elo e se?	eye se se?	how many?
ika	okika	okika	finger
ooju	ojuju	sore	ojijun

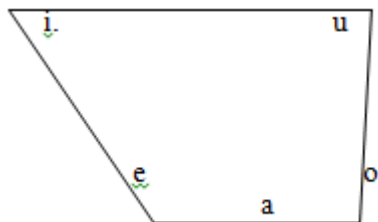
**(c) Vowel Harmony:** This is a phonological process whereby sounds co-occur or align together based on the sharing of the same features. Linguistics scholars (A careful examination of the vowels in the two dialects shows that they both operate

For example, the following are evidences of vowel harmony in the two dialects:

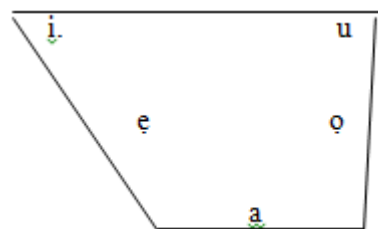
(16) CY	Mòbà	Adó	Gloss
ehin/eyin	èyì	back	èyìn
ọra	ara	ara	body
ika	òkika	okika	finger
ori	erí	orí	head
igbegbe	ugbègbè	goiter	ugbògbò
perhaps	boya	béyá	bóyá

The vowels in the two dialects fall into two harmonic sets that accommodate overlapping of vowels. Also, there is restriction in the co-occurrence of nasal vowels in relation to vowel harmony. The vowel harmony constraint is partial because limited vowels are restricted from co-occurrence. Thus, the two harmonic sets based on tongue root position show that [i, u, a] are neutral because the three vowels occur in the two harmonic sets as presented below:

### Set I (+ART)



### Set II (-ATR)



The vowel charts above reveal that vowels [i, u, a] are common and freely appear in the two charts. However, [e, o] which are in set I and [e̥, o̥] in set II only are restricted and cannot freely occur in segments like [i, u, and a]. For instance:

### (17) Set I

Mòbà	Adó	CY	Gloss
ukú	ukú	ikú	death
ijó	ijó	ijó	dance
àpò	àpò	àpò	pocket
oşù	oşù	oşù	month
òe	òe	òwe	proverb
ulé	ulé	ilé	house
eku	eku	eku	rat

### Set II

Mòbà	Adò	CY	Gloss
alé	alé	alé	night
oó	oó	owó	hand
erú	erú	erú	slave
ẹja	ẹja	ẹja	fish
ẹjó	ẹjó	ẹjó	case
ilè	ilè	ilè	ground
ẹye	ẹye	ẹye	bird

The above examples confirm the harmonic set I and set II where [e, o] do not co-occur with [ɛ, ɔ], showing evidence of vowel harmony constraints in the VCV structure of the two dialects. However, in items with VCVCV structure or more [e, o] are allowed to co-occur with [ɛ, ɔ] in the two dialects as can be seen in following examples:

(18) CY Moba Ado Gloss

ewure	eure	eure/ideregbe	goat
foroto	foroto	abenu	bladder
obuko	ouko	ouko	he-goat
oruko	oruko	oruko	name
eewo	eio	eewo	taboo

(d) **Assimilation:** This is a phonological process whereby two contiguous sounds with different mode of production become identical in part or full production of speech. Examples are presented below:

(19) CY Mòbà Adó Gloss

oní ọ̀ḁ	olóóḁ	olúúḁ	head hunter
èékán	èíkáná	èkíkáná	finger nail
eèrà	eìrà	erìrà	ant
eérú	eírú	erírú	ashes
ipeepeju	ìpèrìpéjú	ùpéèpéjú	eyelid

(e) **Nasalization in Mòbà and Adó Dialects**

In Èkìtì generally, nasality-bearing units include the following segments [ĩ, ã, ã̃, ù, ù̃, m, n] while vowels /e/ and /o/ are not normally nasalized. The data presented below show the manifestation of nasal segments at the phonetic level in Mòbà and Adó dialects:

(20) CY Mòbà Adó Gloss

irĩ	ũrĩ	urĩ	iron
ĩdĩ	idĩ	ĩdĩ	maggot
ùgbí	ìgbí	ùgbí	snail
imú	ĩmú	ĩmú	nose
iú	ĩú	ĩú	inside

(f) **Coalescence in Moba and Ado Dialects**

Coalescence is a phonological process whereby two adjacent vowels are deleted and be replaced with another vowel that shares phonetic similarities with the two that are deleted. It is the merging of two segments to produce the third segment that shares the same features with the merged segments. Analysis of data shows a few manifestation of coalescence in four numbers in the two dialects in the way and manner they pronounce some figures like eleven, twelve, thirteen and fourteen as presented below:

(21) CY	Mòbá	Adó	Gloss
(òkanle-ẹwa)	òkànlówá	òkànlówá	eleven
twelve	(ejile-ẹwa)	èjilówá	èjilówá
ètálówá	(ẹtale-ẹwa)	etalowa	thirteen
(ẹrinle-ẹwa)	erinlowa	èrìnlówá	fourteen

The data above show that vowels (e-ẹ) are deleted and replaced with (o) in the dialects.

**Research Question Two:** What are the phonological similarities between Mòbá and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language?

## (22) Data Analysis Based on Similarities

CY	Mòbá	Adó	Gloss
ìkùn	ukù	ukù	abdomen
arm	apá	aká	aká
hand	ọwọ	ọọ	ọọ
proverb	òwe	òe	òe
he-goat	òbúkọ	òúkọ	òúkọ
roof	orí ilé	erí ulé	erí ulé

In view of the above examples selected from the data collected for analysis, the similarities between the two dialects can be summarized as follows:

- They both operate a V, CV, CVCV syllabic structures like standard Yoruba.
- They both operate four-nasal vowel system
- At the word level, harmony constraint is manifested in VCV structure in the two dialects, but the constraint does not manifest in more complex structures.
- The use of [u] at word-initial is manifested in the two dialects.

**Research Question Three:** What are the phonological differences between Mòbá and Adó dialects of Yorùbá Language?

## (23) Data Analysis Based on Differences

Mòbá	Adó	Gloss
ẹ̀yìn	back	èyì
fòrotò	bladder	abénú
ara	body	ọra
eigun	bone	egigun
ìpèrìpéjú	ùpéèpéjú	eyelid
èíkànná	èkíkànná	finger nail
òkìka	fínger	òkìka
ugbògbò	ugbègbè	goiter
erí	head	orí
ogùngùn	ogìgùn	medicine



The data presented above reveal that different phonological processes such as vowel deletion, consonant deletion, allophone of the same phonemes, and insertion are attested in the differences. Also, analysis of data from the two dialects reveals that the differences in the words did not contrast meaning in minimal pair. Thus, the differences are allophones of the same phonemes. Despite the differences, the speakers of the two dialects still use the dialects to communicate among themselves and understand one another without any hindrance.

## CONCLUSION

This work is a contribution to the study of comparative phonology in dialectal variation of Mòbà and Adó dialects of Yorùbá language. It is concluded that even the two dialects are mutually intelligible, there are differences in the way the native speakers articulate some words. However, the identified differences did not constitute problem of misunderstanding during communication process among speakers of the two different dialects. Also, due to high level of mutual intelligibility between the two dialects, it is concluded that both are dialects of the same language and none is superior or inferior to the other. It is therefore established that despite the fact that Mòbà people share borders with Òşun state, Kwara state, and other local government areas in Ekiti state, this has not influenced the phonological structures of speakers of Mòbà dialect and that the classification of Táíwò (2005) is upheld.

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### Ethic Considerations:

All the participants involved in data collection from the two dialect areas were duly informed of the purpose of the study and they voluntarily participated without being coerced.