

A Comparative Analysis of the Lexicostatics of Usen, Edo and Yoruba

Authors : Mercy Itohan Aruya

Abstract : This paper focuses on Usen, a speech form enclaved by the Edo communities in Ovia South West Local Government Area of Edo State, Nigeria. Usen lies at the border between Edo and the Osun state in Nigeria and has a population size of about a hundred and eighty thousand native speakers (2006 population census of Nigeria). Usen, as it is spoken today is highly endangered and it is serious struggling for survival. The aim, therefore, is to ascertain the linguistics status of Usen using a lexicostatical approach. Lexicostatics is a linguistic technique employed in accessing the degree of linguistic divergence or relatedness between two or more languages based on the proportion of cognates. Data for this study were collected from competent native speakers whose ages fall within the range of 40-65. The instrument for this study is the Ibadan 400 word-list of basic items which are collected with of a digital voice recorder. Our major finding in this paper reveals and establishes the facts that Usen speech form is not a dialect but a language of its own. However, Usen is more related to Yoruba than Edo as the degree of relatedness between Usen and Yoruba is 56.14% while that between Usen and Edo is about 21.4% as shown in this research effort.

Keywords : Usen, lexicostatistics, cognate words, language status

Conference Title : ICSRD 2020 : International Conference on Scientific Research and Development

Conference Location : Chicago, United States

Conference Dates : December 12-13, 2020