

ARIGIDI AS A YORÙBÁ DIALECT: AN ETHNOLINGUISTIC ANALYSIS**Jumoke Helen ASIWAJU**Department of Linguistics and Languages,
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Adekunle Ajasin University, Àkùngbá-Àkókó, Ondo State, Nigeria.<https://doi.org/10.59009/ijlllc.2024.0079>**ABSTRACT**

Arigidi, a speech form spoken in the North-western part of Àkókó region in Ondo state south west Nigeria has remained controversial in terms of its true linguistic status. Various scholars have attempted to classify Arigidi and nine other related speech forms into language family using linguistic features. However, these classifications have failed to resolve the issue as the speech forms have been classified under various language family names. Since language and culture are co-territorial and coterminous, the cultural practices of the inhabitants of a town may provide a good evidence that will help in classifying their language. In line with this belief, this study identifies and compares four notable cultural practices of Arigidi: marriage, naming, burial, and chieftaincy issues and compare them with those of Yorùbá with the aim of identifying their similarities and differences. Findings revealed that Arigidi and Yorùbá share the same cultural practices that are expressed with language with no significant difference. This study concludes that based on the cultural perspective which encompasses language, the Arigidi speech form should be tagged a Yorùbá dialect.

Keywords: Arigidi, classification, language family, ethnolinguistics, Yorùbá dialects, Àkókó.

1. INTRODUCTION

Languages all over the world are usually classified based on many factors. In historical linguistics, two or more languages can be compared in order to trace their source(s) which would help in classifying them into language families. The most common method adopted by many scholars is the genetic factor. This is usually based on the genetic relationship between or among the languages to be compared and classified in terms of their structural similarities Eberhard (Ethnologue 2019). Thus, languages with similar grammatical structures are classified under the same family tree which indicates relatedness while those with different structures are classified under different family trees.

The group of speech forms which includes *Arigidi*, *Erúšú*, *Àfá*, *Ògè*, *Ìdò*, *Àjè*, *Oyín*, *Urò*, *Òjò*, and *Igáší* tagged 'Arigidi Cluster' (Ethnologue 2009) has remained the most controversial linguistic group in Nigeria based on the various names that have been proposed for it by different writers. According to Oshodi (2011), apart from being domiciled in Yorùbá region, the Arigidi people refer to themselves as Yorùbá and also acquire and speak Yorùbá as a mother tongue just like other inhabitants of the Yorùbá region. An important thing to note according to Awóbùlúyì (1992) which has been confirmed by other Yorùbá scholars such as Fábùnmi (2006), Olúmúyìwá (2009), Oshodi (2011; 2016) is that, established Yorùbá dialects are structurally diverse. Thus, structural similarities may not be enough to ascertain that a speech

form is a dialect of Yorùbá. Based on this revelation, since the classification of Arigidi still remains controversial in spite of the structural evidence provided by Oshodi (2011; 2023) which reveal its similarities to Yorùbá and several of Yorùbá dialects, a look at other factors become necessary in order to proffer a lasting solution to the problem of its classification. This is the goal of this study. It attempts to compare some cultural practices of Arigidi and Yorùbá as a means to establishing their level of relatedness that may ultimately help in the correct classification of Arigidi into a language family.

2. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

A number of study have examined the relationship between language and culture. They include Whorf (1956), Sapir (1961), Austin (1975), Bollinger (1993), Tarlanov (1993), Erasov (2003), Trudgill (1995), Vorobyov (1997), Humboldt (1999) and Kateryna & Starenkova (2022). The above studies came up with different findings. While some believe that language is an integral part of the culture as a whole, others think that language is only a form of cultural expression. Language according to Tarlanov (1993), is a form of culture that embodies the historically developing national type of life in all its diversity and dialectical inconsistency. According to Oshodi (2020a), language as the arbitrary system of vocal and non-vocal symbols through which people in the same community or sub-culture communicate and interact in terms of their common cultural experience, belief and expectations. Bollinger (1993) characterized language as a system of vocal-auditory communication using conventional signs constructed of arbitrary patterned sound units and assembled according to set when interacting with the experiences of its members. According to Pei (1966), “a dialect is a specific branch or form of a language spoken in a given geographical area differing sufficiently from the official standard or literary form of the language (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, idiomatic use of words) to be viewed as a distinct entity”. In sociolinguistics, the term dialect refers to varieties of the same language that differ from each other in vocabulary and grammar that are associated with particular geographic regions or socio-groups. This definition was used because of the added proviso that the determination of two varieties belonging to the same language depends on the common perception of the speakers of those variety and not on the technical decision made by linguists. Naturally, dialects are more mutually intelligible than languages.

Based on previous studies, the term culture is very complex and a single definition has not been able to succinctly capture it. For the purpose of this study, we shall adopt Kroeber & Kluckhohn’s account of culture as:

- (1) “the total way of life of a people”;
 - (2) “the social legacy the individual acquires from his group”;
 - (3) “a way of thinking, feeling, and believing”;
 - (4) “an abstraction from behaviour”;
 - (5) a theory on the part of the anthropologist about the way in which a group of people in fact behave;
 - (6) a “storehouse of pooled learning”;
 - (7) “a set of standardized orientations to recurrent problems”;
 - (8) “learned behaviour”;
 - (9) a mechanism for the normative regulation of behaviour;
 - (10) “a set of techniques for adjusting both the external environment and to other men”;
 - (11) “a precipitate of history”;
- and turning, perhaps in desperation, to similes, as a map, as a sieve, and as a matrix.

Kroeber & Kluckhohn (1952)

Language and culture are closely interwoven. Language triggers social interactions while culture assists us to learn how to behave and interact with others. A culture cannot be understood without language, and vice versa. Language is a tool for expressing culture and

cultural bonds that reflects and reproduces culture. Culture influences our values, traditions and methods of interaction while language triggers those interactions. Both language and culture share the realities, behaviours, and human values of a specific group of people.

The question of the link between language and culture has always been of great interest to researchers in various fields: philosophers, sociologists, linguists, psychologists, linguoculturalists, and others. This explains why each culture has its own language system, through which its speakers are able to communicate with one another. Thus, every culture assigns great value to its language.

Language reflects the culture of a people, it does not represent only the actual conditions of their lives but also the mind-set, mentality, national character, traditions, customs, moral norms, the system of values and worldview of the people. The language of a nation cannot be considered without taking into account its culture and national characteristics. Thus, language and culture cannot be separated. There is no society without a language and every cultural practice is usually expressed through language. Therefore, a change in a language will definitely lead to a change in the culture of the speakers of that language.

3. PREVIOUS STUDIES ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF YORUBÁ DIALECTS

A number of scholars have classified the various Yorùbá dialects into different groups. For example, Adétúgbò (1967) classifies the Yorùbá speaking areas of the old western Nigeria into three groups, they are:

- (i) Northwest Yorùbá (NWY) comprising Òyó, Ìbàdàn and Òṣun;
- (ii) Southeast Yorùbá (SEY) comprising Rémo, Òndó, Ìkálè, Òwò and Ìkàré
- (iii) Central Yorùbá (CY) which has Ifè, Ìjèsà and Èkìtì.

The next attempt was by Oyèláràn (1976) who classified Yorùbá speaking areas into four:

- (i) West Yorùbá (WY): Òyó, Ìbàdàn, Ègbá, Òhòrí-Ìfòhìn; and those spoken in Upper Ògùn-Sakí, Ìjìó, Kétu, Sábèé; others include those spoken in neighbouring countries; Republic of Benin and Togo-Ìfè (Togo), Idáísà, Mánígrì
- (ii) Southeast Yorùbá (SEY): comprising Òndó, Òwò, Ìjèbú, Ìkálè and Ìlàje
- (iii) Central Yorùbá (CY): Ilé-Ìfè, Ìjèsà and Èkìtì
- (iv) Northwestern Yorùbá (NWY): Ìgbómìnà, Kákáńdà, Ìgbòlò, Jùmú, Bùnú, Òwòrò, Owé and Ègbè.

Building on the work of Oyèláràn, Akinkugbe (1978), classified the Yorùbá dialects into five groups namely:

- (i) Northwest Yorùbá (NWY): Àwòrì, Ègbá, Ègbádò, Òyó, Òńkò, Ìgbómìnà;
- (ii) Northeast Yorùbá (NEY): Ìyàgbà, Gbèdè, Ìjùmú, Ikiri, Òwòrò, Owé;
- (iii) Central Yorùbá (CY): Ifè, Ìjèsà, Àkúré, Èkìtì;
- (iv) Southwest Yorùbá (SWY): Sábèé, Kétu
- (v) Southeast Yorùbá (SEY): Ìjèbú, Ìlàje, Ìkálè, Òndó, Òwò

Awóbùlúyì (1988) was the first major work that captures and subdivides Yorùbá dialects using the genetic method (structural similarities). He classified them into five different dialectal groups, giving a detailed explanation on sound level, speech level, and word category level.

The five groups are:

- (i) Northwest Yorùbá (NWY): Èkó, Àwòrì, Ègbádò, Òyó, Òṣun, Òńkò, Ìbòlò, Ìgbómìnà;
- (ii) Northeast Yorùbá (NEY): Ìyàgbà, Ìjùmú, Òwòrò, Owé;
- (iii) Central Yorùbá (CY): Ifè, Ìjèsà, Èkìtì and Mòbà
- (iv) Southwest Yorùbá (SWY): Sábèé-Kétu (Anago) and Ifè (Togo) and
- (v) Southeast Yorùbá (SEY): Ègbá, Ìjèbú, Ìlàje, Ìkálè, Òndó, Òwò, Òbà-Ìkàré

Ajongolo (2005) corroborates Awobuluyi's classification. He however added Ào, a dialect spoken in areas such as; Ìfira, Ìdógún, Àfò-Ikún etc. to the SEY group.

Adeniyi (2005) provides the most comprehensive classification to date. He groups the Yorùbá dialects areas into seven. The classification is based on the geographical location, grammar and degree of mutual intelligibility. The classification is as follows:

- (i) East Yorùbá (EY): All Àkókó dialects, Àhòn and Ìdó-àní
- (ii) Northwest Yorùbá (NWX): Ìyàgbà, Ìjùmú, Owé, Ọwọ̀rò, Gbẹ̀de, Ìkírì, Bùnù, Àyèrè (Okun Yorùbá)
- (iii) Central Yorùbá (CY): Ifè, Ìjèsà, Èkítì, Àkúrè, Mòbà
- (iv) South West Yorùbá (SWY): Èkó, Àwóri, Ègbá, Yewa.
- (v) West Yorùbá (WY): Ànàgó, Kétu, Ifè, (Togo), Ọhòrí, Tsabè
- (vi) South East Yorùbá (SEY): Ìjẹ̀bú, Ìlájẹ, Ìkálẹ̀, Òndó, Ọwò, Ìjọ (Àpói)
- (vii) Northwest Yorùbá (NWX): Ọyó, Ònkò, Ọsun, Ìbòlò, Ìgbómìnà.

Also, Fábùnmi (2006) suggests that Mòfòlí, a Yorùbá dialect spoken in the Republic of Benin should be classified under South West Yorùbá (SWY).

Akinlabi and Adeniyi (2017) improve on Adeniyi (2005) by adding a group to the seven group proposed by Adeniyi (2005). The eighth group is termed 'unclassified' and includes speech forms such as Olùkùmi, Nago, Ettu, and Trinidad-Yorùbá.

Oshodi (2011a) attempts a modification of the classification of Awóbùlúyì (1988) by adding a sixth group to it. The sixth group tagged NCY (North Central Yorùbá) includes the ten speech forms earlier classified under different names. His classification is based on the lexical and structural similarities between Arigidi and Yorùbá as well those between Arigidi and many of the established Yorùbá dialects. However, based on new findings on Arigidi, Oshodi (2020) modifies his earlier classification by dividing the speech forms into two groups 'Amgbé', which he puts directly under Yoruboid comprising Àfá, Ọgè, Ìdò, Àjè, Oyín, Urò, Ọjò, and Ìgásí and retains the earlier group 'NCY (North Central Yorùbá)' which comprises Arigidi and Erúshù, where the two speech forms are now tagged Yorùbá dialects.

4. ARIGIDI AND YORÙBÁ: LINGUISTIC RELATIONSHIP

There have been several studies on the linguistic relationship between Arigidi and Yorùbá. They include Oshodi (2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; 2016; 2020a; 2020b and 2023), Olúwádọ̀rò (2014) and Bámìgbádé & Sanni (2018). Oshodi (2011a; 2011b; 2011c; 2011d; 2016; 2020a; 2020b and 2023) examined the relationship between Arigidi and Yorùbá with a focus on lexical and structural relationship between them. He consistently affirms that Arigidi shares over 80% lexical and structural similarities with Yorùbá. He therefore concluded that Arigidi should be considered a Yorùbá dialect. Olúwádọ̀rò (2014) carried out a lexical comparison between Yorùbá and the group of speech forms which he tagged Northwest Akokoid comprising Arigidi, Erushu, Afa, Aje, Udo, Oge, Oyín, Igashi and Uro. He concluded based on his findings that the speech forms are not dialects of Yorùbá. Oládógún (2016a) examined what he called Information structural categories of the speech forms which he collectively referred to as 'Njò-Kóó'. He also asserted that the speech forms are not dialects of Yorùbá. Bámìgbádé & Sanni (2018) examined lexical variation in Ìkàré, a South-east Yorùbá dialect (Awóbùlúyì 1988) and Arigidi with a focus on cognates. They assert that Ìkàré and Arigidi share striking similarities and concluded that Ìkàré and Arigidi are both dialects of Àkókó. It is interesting to note that Oshodi (2016; 2020a; 2020b and 2023) have critiqued the claims of Olúwádọ̀rò (2014), Oládógún (2016a) and Bámìgbádé & Sanni (2018) with particular reference to Arigidi. Oshodi's critique centres around three issues. One, most of the data used by the scholars were incorrect ones obtained from non-competent speakers of the speech forms. Two, most of the claims made

by the scholars do not apply to Arigidi. Three, the names suggested by the scholars do not capture the linguistic situation in Àkókó region. For example, there is no language or dialect known as Àkókó. The name Àkókó, is used in reference to the region which has many speech forms belonging to at least four different language families. Also, 'Njò-Kóo' suggested by Oládúgún (2016a) as the name of the language spoken by all the speakers of the speech forms is a meaningless phrase in Arigidi and many of the speech forms.

5. CULTURAL PRACTICES IN YORÙBÁ AND ARIGIDI

There are lots of cultural practices that are peculiar to a group of people which may not be found among any other group elsewhere in the world and if found at all, the differences in the practice among the two groups would be significant. A number of studies have documented several cultural practices in Yorùbá. Also, there are few Long Essays on the cultural practices of Arigidi. In this section, four notable cultural practices among the Yorùbá and the Arigidi people shall be discussed and compared. They are; marriage, naming, funeral, and chieftaincy concept/titles.

5.1 Marriage

In the traditional Yorùbá setting, marriage is a sequential process which starts from searching for a bride, to courtship, to introduction, and finally to the marriage ceremony (Aṣíwájú 2023). The marriage process starts after a young man desires to get married and picks a maiden of his choice. He informs his family members who take up the other procedures. The first step is the appointment of an 'Alárinà' who is a middle man who formally kick-starts the marriage process by inquiring into the family of the proposed bride. According to Yahaya (2018), the 'Alárinà' is expected to make various investigations (about the town, job, social status, health history and other necessary information) about the family of the maiden in question. The marriage process terminates if the 'Alárinà' discovers any reason for which the man should not marry the lady. It however continues if there are favourable reports from the investigations. Once the 'Alárinà' confirms that the lady is suitable for marriage, an informal meeting known as "Mò mí n mò ó" is arranged by the groom's family with the bride's family for the first time. The meeting which involves only close relatives usually takes place at the prospective bride's house. This is followed by a formal courtship. A date is then fixed for a formal gathering known as the introduction ceremony where the bride's family provides a list of items known as the bridal list. The date for the traditional marriage ceremony is also fixed at the gathering. At the marriage ceremony, the groom's family presents some items to the bride's family. They include peppered corn meal (àádùn), fruits, honey, salt, a she-goat, palmwine, bitter kola (orogbo), tubers of yam, kolanuts (obì àbàtà), chilli/alligator peppers (ataare), and pieces of dried fish (eja oṣàn). Some of these items such as peppered corn meal (àádùn), salt, honey, and sugar are used in prayer sessions for the couple. The payment of the bride price constitutes a very vital part of the traditional marriage rites and ceremonies in the Yorùbá culture (Fawehinmi 2014)). According to Fawehinmi (2014), the bride price is an amount of money paid by a groom and his family to the bride's family. The bride price is said to be one of the highest honour confirming a bride's value and womanhood which gives a husband the full rights to the sexual, economic or procreative powers of the wife. In the traditional Yorùbá culture, the marriage is incomplete without the bride price and the woman is considered "stolen" by the groom.

According to Ogundele (1986), the Àkókó geo-political entity has always been part and parcel of the Yorùbá race and traditional marriage processes are exactly the same with those of Yorùbá. In the traditional Arigidi setting, as confirmed by elders of the town, traditional

marriage commences with a man showing interest in a lady who will later inform his family. The family appoints an intermediary who conducts investigations on the lady and her family to confirm her suitability or non-suitability for marriage. This is followed by an informal visit to the bride's family where a date is fixed for the introduction ceremony. At the marriage ceremony, the groom's family presents the same items listed above for the Yorùbá example to the bride's family i.e. peppered corn meal (àádùn), fruits, honey, salt, a she-goat, palmwine, bitter kola (orogbo), tubers of yam, kolanuts (obì àbàtà), chilli/alligator peppers (ataare), and pieces of dried fish (ẹja ọsàn. Also, the groom's family pays the bride price to honour and confirm the bride's value and womanhood which gives a husband the full rights to the sexual, economic or procreative powers of the wife. In Arigidi just like in Yorùbá culture, payment of the bride price is vital or else the woman would be considered "stolen" by the groom.

5.2 Naming

A lot of studies have been carried out on naming in Yorùbá. These studies which include Ogunwale (1966), Adeoye (1972), Daramola & Jeje (1976), Akinnaso (1980), Abiodun (1997) Ikotun (2014) and Akintoye (2015) and Akintoye (2021) reveal some facts about naming and names in the traditional Yorùbá setting. One, in Yorùbá culture, naming is fundamental and it is often accompanied with extravagant ceremonies. Two, some key factors are usually considered before a name is given to a child. They include; the circumstances at a child's birth, status, its family occupation or occupations, ancestral/deity worship, family/social events, the child's posture at conception, placement among other children etc. Three, the family name is by inheritance. A child born into a family is given a personal name but inherits the family name. Four, some names are gender specific while some cut across both genders. Five, Yorùbá indigenous names are categorized under the following sub-headings: (a) orúkọ àmútòrunwá 'names brought from heaven' like *Òjó*, *Òkẹ* and *Ìgè*, (b) orúkọ òrìṣà 'names associated with Yorùbá deities' like *Ògúngbàmílà* and *Oyáwálé*, (c) orúkọ oyè 'chieftaincy names' such as *Balógun* and *Olúawo*, (d) names that project Yorùbá beliefs about reincarnation such as *Babátúndé* 'Father is back' *Ìyábò*; 'Mother is back', (e) names denoting the family occupation/s such as *Awóyemí* 'The cult suits me' and *Adífálà* 'One who acquires wealth through ifá consultation', (f) àbíkú names (names associated with children's recurrent death) like *Kòsókó* 'Hoes are unavailable to dig a grave' and *Kòkúmó* 'This child won't die again' and (g) orúkọ oríkì 'panegyric names' like *Adió* and *Àkànkẹ*. These are names given to a child by his/her grandparents.

There is no known study on naming in Arigidi. However, based on the claim of some elders of the town, the concept of naming in Arigidi is exactly the same in Yorùbá. For example, just like in Yorùbá, naming is fundamental in Arigidi and it is often accompanied with elaborate and expensive ceremonies. Similar key factors such as the circumstances at a child's birth, status, its family occupation or occupations, ancestral/deity worship, family/social events, the child's posture at conception, placement among other children are usually considered in naming a child. Also, the family name is by inheritance and any child born into a family is given a personal name but inherits the family name. Furthermore, names are also gender specific in Arigidi but some names cut across both genders. However, unlike in some parts of the Yorùbá region like *Ọyó* and *Ọṣun*, 'panegyric names' are given in Arigidi as personal names.

5.3 Chieftaincy Concept/Titles

Encarta (2007) sees the concept of chieftaincy as a cultural form of human affairs that engaged in creating leaders for the societal needs. It can then as well be described as the leader or titular

head of a people or similar ethnic group. A number of writers have written extensively on chieftaincy issues/titles in various communities in Yorùbá land. They include Ashiru & Babawale (2010) and Lateju & Oladosu (2012). Our focus is on the installation rituals and the titles given to chiefs in Yorùbá communities.

In the Yorùbá traditional setting, there are rules that must be strictly adhered to before anyone can be appointed either as a honorary or a traditional chief (Etuk 2002:134). As parts of their tradition and culture, the Yorùbá people have certain rituals that must be performed during the installation of a chief. The most important one is the installation ritual known as “ifini joyè” (the ritual of chieftaincy) for chiefs while it is known as “iwúyè” for a king. One major point is the use of “ewe akòko” (the leaves of confirmation) that are usually placed on the head of the newly installed chief firmly held to the head by a cap. These leaves serve as a symbol that consummate the anointment of the new king or chief. However, in the absence of “ewé akòko”, other leaves such “òdán” or “iyeyè” may be used as a substitute. Also, neck beads and wrist beads are also put on the individual being installed. Some prominent title names in Yorùbá communities include, *Balógun*, *Ótún*, *Òsì*, *Ìyálóde*, *Ìyálójà*, *Ojomo*, *Oşùpòrú*, *Sàdìbò*, *Àjànà*, *Olísà*, *Oşèrè* etc.

Very few studies have examined chieftaincy issues and titles in Arigidi. For example, Ògòdò (1988) and Adetiba (2004) both undergraduate Long Essays examined some cultural practices in Àkókó and passively mentioned some chieftaincy titles in Arigidi. In order to confirm the claims made by these scholars, a comprehensive interview was conducted by the researcher. The researcher interviewed some elders and chiefs in Arigidi with a focus on the processes of installation of chiefs and their titles. According to chief Èdìbò of Ògó quarters, the same processes involved in the installation of chiefs in all known Yorùbá towns are also involved in Arigidi. He observed that the “ewé akòko” must be used in the installation to symbolize honour and authority. He also listed the chieftaincy titles in Arigidi to include the same titles used in Yorùbá communities such as *Balógun*, *Ótún*, *Òsì*, *Ìyálóde*, *Ìyálójà*, *Ojomu*, *Aşipòrú*, and *Èdìbò*, *Àjànà*, *Olísà*, *Oşèrè* etc. It was observed that three chieftaincy titles *Ojomo*, *Oşùpòrú*, and *Sàdìbò* are pronounced as *Ojomu*, *Aşipòrú*, and *Èdìbò* respectively in Arigidi. He explained that there was a time when Arigidi was under the kingship of the Nupe and the slight differences were influenced by the Nupe language. This was also the claim of Akomolafe (1979) who claims that the monarchical title Zaki of Arigidi was influenced by Nupe language because “Zaki” is a Nupe word which means a lion.

5.4 Funeral

Gundu (1988), Okpoko (1993), Umoren (1993), Sommer (1999), Hoy (2013), Collin et al. (2015) and Tubi (2019) all affirm that funeral custom is present in all cultures and that burial is performed in complex rituals as a result of peoples' perception of its values. Different cultures have funeral rites that exhibit their cultural uniqueness Gundu (1988) and Okpoko (1993) identified several types of funeral rites. The most prominent ones being earth burial and cremation, others are maritime burial, aerial burial and surface burial.

The Yorùbá funeral rites involve earth burials. Death in this context is defined as the termination of life on earth. All cultures, have different degrees and beliefs associated with death. According to Gundu (1998) and Okpoko (1993), burial rites in Africa show richness in terms of diversity with a deep spiritual connotation.

In the traditional Yorùbá setting, there are different burial procedures and rites depending on many factors. For example, the funeral rites for a king differs from those of a chief. Also, the funeral rites of an old person differ completely from those of a teenager (a teenager may not get any funeral rites). When a young person dies, the only rite performed is interment. In fact,

the most popular funeral rites are done for old people and this involves five major steps comprising different activities and rites. They are: (a) *Ìtúfò* (announcement), (b) *Ìtójú òkú* (caring for the corpse), (c) *Títé òkú ní ìtẹ̀ èyẹ̀* (lying in state), (d) *gbígbé òkú sí sààree* (interment) and (e) *ìgbàlejò* (entertainment/merriment). These activities and rites are discussed below:

a. *Ìtúfò* (Announcement)

The first step according to Opeyemi & Omigbule (2019) is *itufò* which is the public announcement of the demise of an individual. The death of an elder is not usually announced like any normal news. In some cases, depending on certain factors, especially the need to put certain things in place, the news of a person's death may be delayed. Before the announcement, the deceased is covered in a white cloth. The surroundings are kept clean to accommodate mourners and comforters. The family would hold a meeting to decide on the burial site. *Ìtúfò* (Announcement) comes in different forms depending on status, age and cause of death. For example, the death of a Yorùbá king is announced with the cutting off of the upper part of every three in the king's palace and those in the main market of the town. The market is also moved to the front of the king's palace.

b. *Ìtójú Òkú* (Caring for the Corpse)

The next step involves preparing the corpse for burial. The first thing is to give the corpse a bath with extra care taken to make sure that the soap and sponge used are new and clean (males corpses are bathed by men while female corpses are bathed by women). According to Folorunso (2003), a male corpse would have his head shaved and get dressed in “*bùbá, ʃoʃo and agbádá*” and the shaved hair is carefully wrapped in a piece of white cotton, is buried behind the house. For a female corpse, Olajubu (2003:101), a female corpse will get a new hairdo, gets her finger and toe nails trimmed and be dressed in a new set of “*bùbá and iró*”.

c. *Títé Òkú ní Ìtẹ̀ Èyẹ̀* (Lying in State)

After preparing the corpse for burial (i.e. bathing and dressing), the corpse is laid on a mat in at the door of a room in a decent state. The body openings such as the nose, mouth, and ears are blocked with thread. Outside, women of the household praise, hail and say the *oriki* ‘panegyric’ of the deceased while mourners also go about mourning. Idowu (1996:205) observes that one of the first rites performed is to slaughter a fowl called ‘*adiẹ irànà* ‘the fare-fowl’. Traditionally, the slaughtering of the fowl is to make the road easy for the deceased.

d. *Gbígbé Òkú sí Sààree* (Interment)

The next step is the interment. In the traditional Yoruba setting corpses are buried few hours after a person is pronounced dead or at most the next day. This is usually to await the arrival of some people who needed to be present at the burial. To be interred, the corpse is usually wrapped in a new mat and lowered into a grave. One important aspect is the digging of the grave. It is usually done by the young men within a specific age group in the town or village. They bear different names from one Yorùbá town to another. For example, according to Osewa (2012), the group is known as *Èṣàpè* in *Ìrè-Èkìtì* (an ancient Yorùbá town and home to *ògún*-the god of iron). In some instances, certain things are put into the grave alongside the corpse. For example, some may put *ẹ̀ko títù* (cold pap), white kola nut, clothes, walking stick, and beads. Usually, corpses are buried in their family compound while the oldest person in the family is buried inside his room. Once the corpse is lowered into the grave, the first born of the deceased pours the first soil on the corpse followed by the deceased children and other family members. It is the age group (e.g. *Èṣàpè*), that will eventually cover up the grave.

e. *Ìgbàlejò* (Entertainment of Guests)

The final rite is the entertainment of guests (Adamolekun, 2001). In the Yorùbá setting, once the corpse is interred, the next thing is to offer food to everybody who came to bid the deceased

goodbye. The interesting about this part of the funeral rites among the Yorùbá people is that entertainment as a rite does not end on the day of the interment. Seven days after the death an elderly person, another ceremony called *ije* is performed. During this ceremony, the children and family of the deceased would prepare food and drinks for well-wishers and the people of the community. Prayers are also offered for the soul of the deceased. The same process of cooking and entertaining the community is repeated after forty days.

According to Ayeni (1996), funeral processes and rites in Arigidi are performed exactly the same way like those of the Yorùbá. For a deceased elderly person, it starts with *itúfò* (announcement), (b) *itójú òkú* (caring for the corpse), (c) *títé òkú ní ité èyè* (lying in state), (d) *gbígbé òkú sí sààree* (interment) and (f) *ìgbàlejò* (entertainment/merriment). The processes of bathing and dressing the corpse are the same. The covering of body openings such as the nose, mouth, and ears with thread, the act of women of the household praising, hailing and saying the *oriki* 'panegyric' of the deceased while mourners also go about mourning are done in the exact way in Arigidi. The rite of the '*adiẹ irànà* 'the fare-fowl' (Idowu 1996:205) is also a vital ritual in Arigidi. The Arigidi age group counterpart of *Èṣàpè* known as *Ìlàkurẹ* is usually responsible for the digging and filling of the grave. Furthermore, the final rite which is the entertainment of guests. Just like in the Yorùbá setting, entertainment as a rite does not end on the day of the interment. Seven days after the death of an elderly person, another ceremony called *ije* is performed. During this ceremony, the children and family of the deceased would prepare food and drinks for well-wishers and the people of the community. Prayers are also offered for the soul of the deceased. Finally, the same process of cooking and entertaining as being done in Yorùbá communities is also done in Arigidi after forty days.

6. DISCUSSION

A number of facts were revealed about the similarities among some notable cultural practices between Arigidi and Yorùbá. In both Arigidi and Yorùbá, cultural practices like marriage ceremonies, burial activities/rites, and naming ceremonies are conducted in practically the same way with no noticeable difference in the process. Also, the mode of mourning e.g. a widow is expected to begin the mourning process by staying indoors for forty days after the burial of her husband. Whereas, a man is not expected to stay indoors to mourn his wife because there is no specific way through which a man should mourn his wife. Also, the burial pattern for different individuals in Yorùbá as observed by Awolalu (1979) and Folorunso (2003) depending on age or other factors in Yorùbá are the exactly the same in Arigidi as corroborated by Ayeni (1996). For example, in both Yorùbá and Arigidi, a king's burial is shrouded in secrecy and only the initiates can directly participate in it. A hunchback is buried with two pots. The corpse is put in a pot and the other pot is used to cover the pot containing the corpse. A pregnant woman who died during labour is never buried in that state. The unborn child must be removed and the two corpses buried as separate individuals. Anyone killed by thunder has a different burial process. The corpse is always given to the priests of *Ṣàngó* (the god of thunder) who have to perform certain rituals before the corpse can be buried. For naming, the Arigidi people perform their naming activities in the exact same ways that established Yorùbá groups do. Moreover, they bear Yorùbá names and also follow the same pattern of naming a child as dictated by several factors. However, Arigidi people do not have panegyric names. This is not strange because such names are not common among established Yorùbá groups in Àkókó such as *Ìkàré*, *Àkùngbá* and *Ọkà*. The name Arigidi according to Oshodi (2020a) was derived from *aru egidi* → *aruegidi* → Arigidi "one who carries (on the head) a local food made from corn". All the lexical items involved in the derivation of Arigidi are traditional Yorùbá words. For chieftaincy issues, e.g. coronation, the process and pattern are the same. The only

difference noticed in this area is the titles which have some slight differences in terms of pronunciation as shown in *Ọjọmọ*, *Ọ̀ṣìpòrì*, and *Sàdìbò* for Yorùbá while in Arigidi they are pronounced as *Ọjọmu*, *Àṣìpòrì*, and *Èdìbò*. The issue of proximity between Arigidi and some Yorùbá towns may be cited as the reason for the similarities in their cultural practices. This argument cannot be substantiated. It should be noted that two groups may be neighbours for decades yet, their cultural practices will differ. The Ijaw people who live in the southern part of Ondo state are a good example. They are neighbours to the Ìlàjẹ people but their traditions and cultural practices differ. This is because unlike the Ìlàjẹ people who are Yorùbá and who speak a dialect of Yorùbá, the Ijaw are not Yorùbá and they speak a completely different language that is not related to Yorùbá. This is to contradict the likely assumption that proximity between two communities may affect their cultural practices. By implication, the similarities in the cultural practices between Arigidi and Yorùbá as revealed in this study cannot be adduced to the proximity between Arigidi and a number of Yorùbá towns. It is a testimony that the Arigidi people have the same culture and traditional practices like other established Yorùbá groups.

7. CONCLUSION

This study has presented another dimension to the controversy regarding the linguistic classification of Arigidi. The study examines the issue through the lens of culture. Culture affects the people's values, traditions, and pattern of interaction while language is employed for those interactions. Language provides avenues for interaction while culture suggests the correct way to do this. Cultural ideas and beliefs are exhibited and expressed through language. Therefore, an examination of culture and language and the link between them allows us to carry out historical studies and analyses in order to draw conclusions on both cultural and linguistic status of a group of people. For example, incantations are an integral part of the Yorùbá culture and these can only be done through the Yorùbá language. This is also the case in Arigidi, as incantations are done purely in Yorùbá. Thus, this study through the lens of culture and tradition has presented verifiable and additional facts to corroborate the existing claim that Arigidi is a Yorùbá dialect. Evidence from culture and tradition have also confirm this.

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