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Lexical Variations in the Ewe Language Spoken In Ho in the Volta Region of Ghana

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Abstract

The study was conducted to investigate the lexical variances observed in the Ewe language spoken among the Ho group. This study aims to examine the observed variations in speech patterns among both indigenous individuals and immigrants residing in the vicinity of Ho, the capital city of the Volta Region. The data analysis used the application of Labov's variationist theory from 1996 and Giles' speech accommodation theory from 1973. Information was gathered from native communities and those who had migrated to the area under investigation. The research employed a qualitative methodology and utilized purposive sampling procedures. The data were acquired through the utilization of observational methods, interviews, and the analysis of live radio broadcasts. Investigations have uncovered substantial regional and social disparities in the Ewe language spoken in Ho, leading to the utilization of distinct linguistic characteristics in everyday communication. The dialects within the speech community exhibit lexical, phonological, and grammatical diversity. There are some lexicons that the three dialects share, while others are unique to only two of the three dialects. Additionally, there are certain lexicons that are different from one dialect to another. The study provides confirmation that the dialectal backgrounds of language users within the speech community do not have an impact on the issue of mutual understanding. This is evident from the fact that the Eʋedome, Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu dialects can be considered as being mutually intelligible.

Key words: *Lexical, variation, ewe language, Eʋedome and Tɔŋu or Aŋlɔ, Tɔŋu, Ho*

1.0 Introduction

The term "lexical variations" pertains to the diverse range of choices and usages of terms or vocabulary within a given language. In various situations, such as literary translations

(Nugroho & Laksman, 2020), regional dialects (Faizah et al., 2019), and sociolinguistic and cultural influences (Zenner et al., 2010), these variants can manifest. Carrió-Pastor and Calderón (2012) conducted a study on phonological processes. By looking at lexical variations, we can better understand how people use language to choose between synonyms or other word forms, considering things like the intended meaning, the sociocultural context, or the phonological context. Furthermore, it provides insight into the influence of these variances on the utilization, interpretation, and exchange of language.

There is a wide range of vocabulary in the Ewe language that comes from various sources. An influential feature is the assimilation of English loanwords into Ewe, wherein specific phonetic elements in English words are substituted with indigenous sounds that possess a higher degree of acoustic similarity to the foreign sound. Burns (2011). The precolonial period witnessed the entrance of foreign European words, which played a significant role in the emergence of the pidgin language. This linguistic amalgamation of European and African languages played a crucial role in the formation of the Ewe language (Wornyo, 2016). Furthermore, the deliberate act of incorporating style, referred to as atsi̱, contributes to the diversity of vocabulary. The practice of Atsiÿ entails the manipulation of established thematic elements, which is evident in the augmentation, diversification, or substitution of subjects within discussions conducted in drum language. Yang, in the year 2010. These elements emphasize the effects of phonological adaptation, linguistic contact, and artistic expression on lexical variety in the Ewe language. The lexical variants present in the language have an impact on the communication patterns of Ewe language speakers in Ho, which is in Ghana's Volta region. According to Aziaku's research, the informal domains of the Ánlo-Ewe community, including residences, streets, businesses, marketplaces, and recreational facilities, are predominantly characterized by the utilization of English and mixed-Ewe English variations Kpornu (2020) . This observation implies that individuals who speak Ewe do not confine themselves to language-specific areas but rather opt for the variant that they find most suitable for their communicative objectives. .

This data challenges the notion that language usage in Ghana is predominantly limited by various domains. Aziaku (2015) conducted a study. Brown, Avetisyan, and colleagues (2020). Emphasizes the necessity for the Anlo-Ewe community to actively strive towards preserving the Unmixed-Ewe lineage in order to prevent its deterioration. This study investigates the diversity of vocabulary used in the Ho speech community. The main objective is to detect the differences in vocabulary used by native Ewe speakers in the Ho speech community during their daily conversations. This study aims to investigate the extent of variety present within the community, with a specific focus on the Ewedome, Tornu, and Anlo ethnic groups.

2.0 Literature Review

The Variationist Sociolinguistic Theory (Labov 1966 & 1972)

Labov (1966) introduced the Variationist Sociolinguistic Theory, which serves as a conceptual framework for understanding language evolution and variation. The Labovian theory, proposed in 1966 and expanded upon in 1972, utilizes a methodical methodology for analyzing language. It aims to elucidate the connection between social and linguistic factors to ascertain the existence and magnitude of linguistic variations within a language.Labov's work in 1966 laid the foundation for numerous notions and theoretical frameworks in the field of variation studies. The initial investigation into variation can be attributed to the scholarly work of John Fischer (1958), in which he provided evidence that language variance within a cohort of infants was impacted by social variables, including gender (sex) and social classification. Labovian sociolinguistics offers a quantitative methodology for studying sociolinguistics. This study aims to examine the factors influencing individuals' selection of specific linguistic variants during periods. The researcher can use these sociolinguistic variables to make objective and

quantitative comparisons between linguistic variables. Labov (1966) demonstrates the application of this theory in a study, assuming that there can be differences in language usage among a specific set of individuals due to both external (social) and internal (personal) factors. The Labovian theory holds significant importance in quantitative methodologies related to the examination of language change and variation, as it affords researchers the chance to quantify social variables. However, it can also serve as a means of stratification in qualitative research, as exemplified by the present study.According to the Variationist Sociolinguistic Theory, it is recommended to gather data from individuals who are native speakers of a particular language. However, when selecting speakers, it is important to take into account social variables such as age, gender, and social class in order to ensure a comprehensive representation of the collected data (Deklu, 2014, p. 31). Hudson (2006, p.146) outlines a five-phase implementation of the Labovian theory in a review. As per his assertion, the investigator is required to undertake the subsequent actions during the entirety of the data collection process:

1. Choose the individuals who will be speaking and the language variables.
2. Gather textual data: identifying individuals who are amenable to being interviewed and recorded.
3. The objective of this task is to detect and classify the linguistic variables and their variations present in the texts.
4. Analyze the data.
5. The results should be interpreted.

According to Hudson (2006), the selection of participants for this study was based on social characteristics such as age and gender. The subjects in this study were chosen from the conventional suburbs of Ho, where the primary dialects spoken are Ewedome, Ănlo, and Tornu. The Ewedome dialect was chosen as the host dialect. Furthermore, the Labovian technique provides a straightforward means of assigning scores to texts and identifying the similarities and differences in the utilization of linguistic characteristics within the speech of speakers. Hudson (2001: as cited in Deklu, 2014) posits that a score is calculated for every variable inside each portion of the collected data. This enables the comparison of texts based on a specific variable at a given point in time. Additionally, he argues that scoring can be conducted using groups identified in the study to alleviate the potential challenge of obtaining high scores from a vast array of variables under investigation. The concept also asserts that the geographical location of a speaker, known as place, and the racial background of an individual might impact the factors employed. Trudgill (1975/1983) affirms that the geographical location of an individual has an impact on the utilization of a linguistic variable. Labov et al. (197b) incorporate the element of race into their examination of New York, focusing on the unique characteristics of speech exhibited by black adolescents (p. 7).Deklu (2014) states that the extent to which an individual belongs to a group can also impact the prevalence of linguistic variables in this study. According to Milroy (1980: as referenced in Hudson 2001), individuals who have highly tight networks are more inclined to exhibit a widespread utilization of the language variable compared to those who have more open interactions. Furthermore, various segments of a community acknowledge distinct spectrums of linguistic variables that function as a method of distinguishing that particular segment.

When examining the correlation between sex and prestige, Hudson (2001) asserts that specific elements need to be considered. In certain nations, there is a disparity in access to formal education between men and women. In a dignified country, men will have greater exposure to status and adherence to standard forms compared to women. Additionally, he asserts that the variable being examined must be truly stratified. When choosing speakers for a comparison study, it is important to ensure that both genders are adequately represented in terms of educational attainment, age, and other relevant factors. For example, in a comparison study, if

a female with a university education is interviewed, it is necessary for the male counterpart to have an equivalent level of education simultaneously. This facilitates a legitimate comparison to be conducted. The ultimate point to consider is that the manner in which an individual communicates is contingent upon the specific context in which the speech is delivered. Labov (1994, p. 157, as referenced in Deklu 2014) accurately states that a person's speech varies based on the level of focus on the specific speech forms employed. Hence, within a formal context, individuals tend to allocate greater emphasis to speech forms compared to informal conversations. A normal Labovian interview should include parts that specifically address each of these speaking scenarios. Consequently, the interview questions were formulated in a manner that accommodated the variations in speech styles.The linguistic study of change and variation has been significantly affected by Labov's (1966) seminal work, "The Social Stratification of English in New York City." Labov employed sociolinguistic interviews as the primary method of elicitation, wherein the researcher posed a sequence of inquiries to the participant. Labov's study facilitated the development of the sociolinguistic variable idea, which may be defined as a collection of various expressions for the same topic. Additionally, the research conducted by Labov (1961), Maratha Vineyard, and the New York City department store has revealed that there are consistent variations in language characteristics.

The primary objective of this research is to investigate the systematic variations in the utilization of specific linguistic characteristics when referring to identical lexical items among speakers of the Ewedome, Anlo, and Tornu dialects of the Ewe language in Ho. Consequently, the Labovian theory will be employed to analyze the collected data. For instance, kòdzè (speaking the Anlo dialect), kdzòé (speaking the Tornu dialect), and àgblénu (speaking the Ewedome dialect) are all terms that refer to the word 'hoe'. This study aims to logically describe the variations in the utilization of certain linguistic characteristics in Ho.

3.0 Methodology

This study utilized a qualitative research approach and purposive sampling techniques to gather data from indigenous villages and settlers in the Ho area of Ghana. Data collection involved the utilization of observation, interviews, and analysis of recorded radio broadcasts. The analysis of the data and investigation of lexical changes in the Ho-spoken Ewe language were conducted using Labov's Variationist theory from 1996 and Giles' speech accommodation theory from 1973. The researchers investigated on specific lexical variants among Ewe speakers in the Ho speech group, employing a combination of elicitation techniques and semi-structured interviews. The research primarily investigated the distribution of variation among the Ewedome, Anlo, and Tornu dialects. It aimed to determine whether there were common variants across these three dialects and whether mutual intelligibility was achieved when diverse lexicons were utilized in natural conversations.

4.0 Results and Discussion

This section presents an analysis of the distribution of variation, encompassing lexical, phonological, and morphological aspects, among the Ewedome, Anlo, and Tornu dialects in the Ho language. The primary focus of this chapter is the examination of the utilization of various lexical variations within the Ewe speech community, namely among Ewe speakers. The study conducted by Yankson (2018) involved the selection and testing of lexical items in Ewe that are recognized to have many lexical realizations. The researchers employed a combination of the elicitation method and semi-structured interviews to gather data from language users. This study aims to investigate the extent to which specific variants are utilized in the three dialects under investigation, namely Ewedome, Anlo, and Tornu dialects. Additionally, we seek to determine whether speakers of these dialects can achieve mutual intelligibility when lexicons vary in natural conversations.

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Background Information on Participants

For this study, a total of sixty (60) subjects were sampled, comprising thirty (30) males and thirty (30) females. Of the total number of male participants, twenty (20) were defined as Male Adults (MA) because their ages ranged from twenty (20) to eighty (80) years, and ten (10) were classified as Male Children (MC) because their ages ranged from seven (7) to fourteen (14) years. On the other hand, the thirty (30) female participants are composed of twenty (20) Adult Females (AF) who range in age from eighteen (18) to seven-five (75) years. The remaining ten (10) individuals are classified as Female Children (FC) and range in age from six (6) to twelve (12) years. A total of ten (10) male and ten (10) female participants are employed in different formal domains, while an additional ten (10) male and ten (10) female participants were selected from certain informal domains.

Table 1 shows the background information of participants and their respective percentages.

Variants in Eʋedome, Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu Dialects

Table 1: Variants in Eʋedome, Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu Dialects

Categories	Frequency	Percentages
Males	30	50%
Females	30	50%
Adult Males (AM)	20	66.6%
Adult Females (AF)	20	66.6%
Male Children (MC)	10	33.4%
Female Children (FC)	10	33.4%
Males in the Formal Domain (MFD)	10	50%
Males in the Informal Domain (MID)	10	50%
Females in the Formal Domain(FFD)	10	50%
Females in the Informal Domain (FID)	10	50%

Dialects differ on syntactic, morphological, phonological, and lexical levels, as was previously mentioned. For that reason, the lexical variants seen among Ewe Speakers in the Ho speech community are covered in this section. Approximately 100 variables were chosen from every language used in discourse across genders, age groups, and statuses to create the set of corresponding dialectal variants covered in this section.

Variants common to all three dialects

It was discovered that the referents covered in this section shared the same lexical variations in Tornu, Anlo, and Ewedome. This suggests a certain degree of mutual understanding and validates the contact phenomenon the researcher hypothesized in the earlier chapters. Consider the examples in Table 2.

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Table 2: Variants common to all three dialects

No.	Eʋedome (Variable)	Aŋlɔ (Variant)	Tɔŋu (Variant)	Gloss
	Clothing			
1.	Awu	Awu	Awu	Clothing
	Food items			
2.	(E)tsi	(E)tsi	(E)tsi	Water
3.	Mɔlì	Mɔlu	Mɔlù	Rice
	Parts of the body			
4.	Alɔ	Alɔ (go)	Alɔ	Cheek
	Humanbeing			
5.	Devi	Devi	Dèvì	Child
6.	Nyɔnu	Nyɔnu	Nyànu	Woman
7.	Ɲútsu	Ɲútsu	Ɲùtsu	Man
	Fuel			
8.	Aka	Aka	Àkâ	Charcoal
	Insects			
9.	Tagbatsu	Tagbatsutsu	Tsatsu	Housefly
10.	Emu (tuli)	Emu	Avagɛ	Mosquito
	Institution			
11.	Suku	Suku	Suku	school
	Location			
12.	Dome(dome)/ titian	Domezã	Dome	Middle
	Gravel/ Pebble			
13.	Kpèku	Kpekui	Kpèkui	Pebbles
	Medicine(herbal)			
14.	Amatsi/ Atike	Atsike	Amatsi/ Átsìkè	Medicine

The Ewedome, Anlo, and Tornu dialect use variations that blatantly reveal the same grammatical structure, as demonstrated by Table 2 examples 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, and 14. There is no difference in the variations used for "clothing," "water," "building," "charcoal," "school," and "man."

Since the high front unrounded vowel in example (3) is the only phonological segment that differs from the other, the Ewedome variant for "rice" is analyzed as having the same lexical form. Except for tone pattern variations, the realizations of the Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu forms of -mɔlu are the identical. The second syllable of the Tornu variety has a low tone, while the Aŋlɔ variant's has a high tone.Similarly, in example (6), whereas Eɔ̃edome and Aŋlɔ have /ɔ/ in the first syllable, the Tornu variant for woman has /à/. Examples 9 and 12 further demonstrate that while the syllable pattern of all three variations varies somewhat, the underlying referent is

expressed in the same way. The Ho dialect uses tagbatsu, tagbatsutsu, and tatsu to refer to "housefly" in Ewedome, Aŋlɔ, and Tornu, respectively. Example (9) illustrates these most prevalent variations. Once again, the syllable structures of the lexicons differ. The underlying variant that undergoes partial reduplication to create the Aʊlɔ variant appears to be the Eƨ edome variants. The beginning and last morphemes of the Eedome variety are used by the Tornu variant, giving it a distinctive structure.In illustration (12), the elder generation typically expresses the Ewedome variation for "middle" as dome, whereas the younger age typically reduplicates it as domedome. It is important to note that titina is another known variety that the average adult male Ewedome speaker typically uses. The claim made by Eckert (1997, p. 164) that "[a]dults have regularly been shown to be more conservative in their use of variables than younger age groups" is supported by this evidence. On the other hand, the lexical variety domeza is created in the Aſlɔ dialect by appending the bound morpheme -za to the root dome. The older generation in the Ewedome dialect speaks the same variant as the Tornu variant.The main reason for this is that lexical variants shared by all three dialects encourage members of a specific speech community to frequently shift their vocabulary. Additionally, it supports the mutual intelligibility of the dialects, which is supported by our observations and data. The majority of speakers were found to freely switch between the Aſlɔ and the Ewedome variations, depending on which one immediately comes to mind and how best to fit in with the interlocutors involved in a given speech occasion. For example, when a native speaker of Ewedome communicates with a native speaker of Aŋlɔ, they will utilize tagbatsu or tagbatsutsu. Both lexicons are understandable to a native Ho speaking community member who speaks Aŋlɔ.

Variants common to two dialects

The variables in this section share the same input and variant distribution in two of the three sampled dialects (that is, either Anlo and Tɔŋu or Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu have the same form variation for one variable, or Ewedome and Tɔŋu have the same variant). We'll talk about these variations' structures, how often they're used, and the social factors that influence how a certain viable is used in a discourse.

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Table 3: Variants common to two dialects

No.	Eʋedome (Variable)	Aŋlɔ (Variant)	Tɔŋu (Variant)	Gloss
	Parts of the Body			
15.	Ali	Ali/ Alime	Gagawe	Waist
16.	Ve	Ekɔ	Ekɔ	Neck
17.	Yɔme/ Yɔnu	Aŋɔme	Aŋɔme	Lower abdomen
	Fruits/ Foodstuff			
18.	Ablɛ	Atɔtɔ	Atɔtɔ	Pineapple
19.	Agbeli	Agbeli	Akute	Cassava
20.	Nkransa/ Kakadro	Gometakui	Kakadro	Ginger
21.	Kpeli	Bli	Bli	Corn
22.	Sabala	Sabala	ablɔ/abrɔ	Onion
	Insects	Afii/ Afi ya	Geɛ	Here
23.	Anyidi /Aɖeɖe	Aɖiɖi	Ðiɖi	Ant
24.	Adzayi	Ayiyi	Yiyi	Spider
	Food			
26.	Koko	Katsa/ dzogbɔ	Koko	Porridge
	Clothing			
27.	Eɖo/Etse	Avɔ	Avɔ	Cloth
28.	Duku	Taku	Taku/Duku	Headgear
	Location/ Time			
29.	Efi	Afii/ Afi ya	Geɛ	Here
30.	Fimi	(A)fi ma	Ga ma	There
31.	Lewuie/fifiɛ	Fifia	Fifia	Now
	Toiletries			
32.	Adzalë	Adzale	Adi/Adzale	Soap
33.	Afɔdzi	Agbotsi	Agbotsi	Toilet
34.	Gbeklɔ	Akutsa	Akutsa	Sponge
	Household Items			
35.	Afɛ	Ayiɖa	Afi/Ayiɖa	Comb
36.	Ahuhɔ̃e	(A)huhui	Hwihwi	Mirror
	Weather			
	Ŋdɔ	Ŋdɔkutsu	ɣetoto	Sunshine
37.	Pets			
	Dade	Dadi	Todzovi	Cat
38.	Questioning			
	Tsie	Nu ka	Nu ka	What
	Ao	Ao	Oho	No
39.				
40.	Amphibian			
	Akpakpla	Akpɔkplɔ	Akotso	Frog
41.				

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Table 3 presents lexical variants used as referents for the English variables sampled. There are three (3) categories of variant distribution from the table.

These are:

a. Variants that have the same form in Eʋedome and Aŋlɔ but are realized as a different lexeme in the Tɔŋu dialect.
b. variants that have the same form in Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu but is realized as a different lexeme in the Eʋedome dialect.
c. Variants that have the same form in E₱edome and Tɔŋu but is realized as a different lexeme in the Aŋlɔ dialect.

Variants that have the same form in Eʋedome and Aŋlɔ but is realized as a different lexeme in the Tɔŋu dialect.

According to the data presented in Table 3, the following instances (15, 19, 22, 29, 30, 32, 37, 38, 40, 41, and 42) which represent the terms 'waist', 'here', 'there', 'cassava','soap', 'no', 'cat', 'frog', 'mirror' 'sunshine', and 'onion' respectively, have similar inputs in the Eʋedome and Aŋlɔ languages. However, these examples display unique morphological realizations in the Tornu dialect. The lexicons represent the customary indigenous terms employed for these designated entities within the dialect. According to our dialect consultant, it is suggested that these variants are primarily limited to speech occurrences in rural Tɔŋu settings as opposed to urban areas. The data, however, indicates that certain individuals within the Ho speech community, who are native speakers of Tɔŋu, occasionally employ certain variants inadvertently or within their own dialectal context. Furthermore, it has been demonstrated that individuals who are native speakers of English and Arabic are unable to comprehend some variants when they are used by others who speak Turkish within the speech community. These circumstances led to the increase and regularity in the utilization of authentic Ewedome and Aŋlɔ vocabulary in the T₵ú dialect. In the Ho speech community, the younger generation of Tɔŋu natives exhibits a preference for the use of ali over gagawe, efi/afi over gax, adzale over adi, and agbeli over akute. Conversely, the reserve is predominantly utilized by the older generation of native TÁu speakers within the Ho speech environment.

Variants that have the same form in Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu but are realized as a different lexemes in the Eʋedome dialect.

Within this category, the variants 'pineapple', 'neck', 'corn', 'what', 'lower abdomen', 'ant','spider','sponge', and 'cloth' from table 3 (16, 17, 18, 21, 23, 24, 27, 34 & 39) share the same inputs in Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu but have a distinct input in Eʋedome. The Eʋedome variations are predominantly utilized by the elderly demographic, particularly males. Women tend to include terms commonly associated with youth into their speech due to their responsibilities and roles as mothers or major caretakers within families. As a result, they are perceived to be more closely connected to the younger generation in comparison to males. Older guys, often referred to as stewards of culture, typically exhibit resistance to linguistic or dialectal changes, displaying a strong loyalty towards their native languages and dialects. As previously said in the initial category of variants examined, individuals who employ these variants within the speech community typically do so within a specific subset of language users with whom they share a close affiliation, rather than encompassing all Ewe speakers within the speech community. For example, a native English speaker may substitute the word "*lawuie"* with " *fifie* " when they realize that their conversation partners do not comprehend the more familiar word "*lawuie*". It is crucial to note that the term "*ve,"* which is sampled as the English variation for "neck," is considered a homonym in the dialect due to its dual meaning of referring to an "alligator." This suggests that within a conversation, the presence of other terms that are

colloquially associated with this vocabulary can assist the listener in accurately comprehending its meaning.

Variants that have the same form in Eʋedome and Tɔŋu but are realized as different lexemes in the Aŋlɔ dialect.

Examples (20, 26, and 35) from table 3 include the terms 'ginger', 'porridge', and 'comb' under this particular group. The term for 'ginger' in the Eʋedome and Tɔŋu languages is kakadro. However, Ewedome use nkransa as an alternative substitute. In contrast, Aŋlɔ employs gometakui as the alternative form for this variable. Some speakers perceive it as gometaku in their idiolect. The /i/ in the compound gome-taku-i is operating as a diminutive marker and does not modify the fundamental semantic structure of the morpheme. Koko is another variety that is commonly found in Eʋedome and Tʋ́u. It has been noted that certain other Kwa languages, such as Akan, Ga, and Dangme, also use the term 'koko' to refer to 'porridge'. This observation suggests that the variety in question may not possess the same level of nativeness as the ǍlȻ variant, specifically katsa/dzogbor. Indeed, koko is increasingly becoming a domestic adaptation of 'porridge'. Within the Ho speech community, only regions that are recognized as typical ǍlȻ places employ the katsa/dzogbor dialect. Otherwise, the remaining Ewe speakers, regardless of gender or age, within the speech community utilize the koko dialect.
The final variant within this category is a̱f, which is employed in Eʋedome while afi is utilized in TȻ́u as referent lexicons for the term 'comb'. The a̱f and afi variants are considered identical variants as phonological variation does not result in any alteration in form. In the Eʋedome variety afɛ, the final vowel /ɛ/ is lower vowel that the counterpart /i/ in afi which is formed with a significantly higher tongue position. The Aŋlɔ variation exhibits a distinct and notable characteristic. It is important to note that in the speech community, the terms a̱f and ayía are used interchangeably.

The examples in this category are ‘ginger’, ‘porridge’ and ‘comb’ in examples (20, 26 & 35) from table 3. The Eʋedome and Tɔŋu for ‘ginger’ is *kakadro*. Eʋedome however uses *nkransa* as an alternative variant. Aŋlɔ on the contrary uses *gometakui* as the variant for this variable. It is perceived as *gometaku* in the idiolect of some speakers. The /i/ in the compound *gome-taku-i* is functioning as a diminutive marker and does not change the central semantic structure of the morpheme.

Another variant common to Eʋedome and Tɔŋu is *koko*. It is observed that some other Kwa languages like Akan, Ga and Dangme also refer to ‘porridge’ as *koko*. This may be an indication that the variant may not be as native as the Aŋlɔ variant- *katsa/dzogbɔ*. In fact, *koko* is becoming more like a national variant for ‘porridge’. In the Ho speech community, only areas known to be typical Aŋlɔ locations use *katsa/dzogbɔ*, otherwise the rest of the Ewe speakers across both gender and age variables within the speech community use *koko*.

The last of the three variants in this category is *afɛ* and *afi* used in Eʋedome and Tɔŋu respectively as referent lexicons for ‘comb’. The variants *afɛ* and *afi* are analysed as the same variants since phonological variation does not cause change in form. In the Eʋedome variant *afɛ*, the final vowel /ɛ/ is lower vowel that the counterpart /i/ in *afi* which is produced with a relatively higher tongue position. The Aŋlɔ variant appears to be seemingly distinctive-*ayiɖa*. It must be mentioned that within speech community, both *afɛ* and *ayiɖa* are used interchangeably.

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Variants different for all three dialects

Table 4 shows that in the Ho speech community, Eʋedome, Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu have different lexemes for specific items and concepts. Although every one of these varieties is in use somewhere in the speech community, some of them are more prevalent in regular people's speech. A dataset of variants with distinct forms in each of the three dialects is covered in this section. Within the speech community, Ewe speakers will talk about the structure and form of these variants, as well as how often they are used in speech events based on gender and age.

Table 4: Lexical variants different for all three dialects

No.	Eʋedome (Variable)	Aŋlɔ (Variant)	Tɔŋu (Variant)	Gloss
	Vegetables/ food			
42.	Atisẽ	Fetri	Atife	Okro
43.	Kukli	Atadi	Áblɛ	Pepper
44.	Kɔŋ	Dɔkuŋu	Kokoe	Kenkey
	Body Parts			
45.	Ɖlɔgo/Kpete*ʃ*e/gbi	Me*ʃ*i	Gbi	Buttocks
46.	Akɔdodrome	Axatome	Anyixatome	Armpit
47.	Mitoeme/ minye*ʃ*e	Me*ʃ*ime	Gbitome	Anus
	Household items			
48.	Koloe/Koli	Ʊegba	Agbayibɔ	Earthenware bowl
49.	Dzowɔ/ Dzokalifi	Dzofi/ Afi	Dzomafi	Woodashes
	Insects			Mosquito
50.	Tuli	(E)mu	Avagɛ	
	Clothing			Shorts
51.	Agbote/ Aveŋte	(A)vote/ Godi	Ágbitè	
	Weather			Sunshine
52.	Ɖdɔ	Ɖdɔkutsu	ɣetoto	
	Toiletries			Towel
53.	Tsiletse	Papaŋu	Tsìlènù	

In example (42), the Aŋlɔ variant- *fetri* is the most frequently used variant among Ewe speakers in Ho. The Eʋedome, variant, *atisẽ* is the second most preferred variant but its use is restricted

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to predominant Eʋedome suburbs like Bankoe, Ahoe, Heve, Dome, and Hliha. Even within these areas, it is seen to be used by adult speakers rather than young speakers. *Atife* which is the Tɔŋu variant is the least common of all three variants.

Example (45) shows the variants for the variable, 'buttocks' sampled from the three dialects under investigation. The Eʋedome dialect has three separate words for this referent. These are *ŋlɔgo, kpetefe and gbi*. The Tɔŋu dialect also uses *gbi* for this variable. The Aŋlɔ dialect uses a different variant- *mefi.* All these variants are used interchangeable by speakers within the speech community. Observation however showed that adult males used *gbi* more frequently than the other variants.

The dialectal variants in example (46) which are used for the body part referent 'armpit' are *akodrome/ akododrome* in Eʋedome, *axatome* in Aŋlɔ and *anyixatome* in Tɔŋu. Again, the use of the Eʋedome and Aŋlɔ variants is more widespread compared to the Tɔŋu. These variants are freely used in all speech events regardless of age, gender and other social variables of the participants involved in the discourse. In fact, a high number of non-native Tɔŋu speakers are first time hearers of this variant, thus accounting for its rare usage in the speech community.

The variants, *Kukuli, atadi, and ablɛ in* example (43), Table 4 are referents for the variable 'pepper' in the Eʋedome, Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu dialects respectively. Although the Tɔŋu variant here is less representative in the language of speakers of Ewe in Ho, it is well understood by most adult speakers of Ewe across age, gender and social status.

In example (48), all three variants of the variable 'earthen ware grinder' are lexically distinct. Interestingly, all of them are notably common in the everyday discourses of language users. A native Eʋedome speaker will refer to this item as *koloe* or *koli* in his or her indigenous setting, an Aŋlɔ speaker will call it ʋ*egba* (originally Eʋegba) in a typical Aŋlɔ setting while Tɔŋu speaker will prefer to call it agbayibɔ in within a classic Tɔŋulocality. However, as signaled earlier, within the Ho speech community, native speakers of these dialects use any of the other variants invariably depending on the participants involved in the speech event. It must be noted that irrespective of the listener or audience involved, there is equally a complete understanding of the choice of variant used for this variable.

The variants in example (49) display a fascinating similarity on the morphological level. The three dialects present variants which are compounds. The Ewedome has two alternate variants are *dzowɔ* and *dzokalifi*, the Aŋlɔ variant is *dzofi* or *afi*, and the Tɔŋu variant is *dzomafi*. Conventionally, a compound is formed when two or more free lexemes come together to form a new word which would belong to the same syntactic class as its bases or not. Dolphyne (1988, p.117) obtains that "compounds are formed of two or more stems". She further indicates that each of the stems that form these compounds could be simple, derived or composite. By these definitions, our assertion about this set of variants is accurately supported. Let us now look at the bases of each of variant which qualifies it as a true compound.

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I.	.Eʊedome	*dzowɔ*	*dzokalifi*
		dzo + (e)wɔ	*dzo + aka + lifi*
		fire + powder	fire + charcoal + wɔ
		'ashes'	'ashes'
II.	Aŋlɔ	*dzofi*	
		dzo + afi	
		fire + ash	
		'ashes'	
III.	Tɔŋu	*dzomafi*	
		dzo + me + afi	
		fire + inside + ash	
		'ashes'	

In the formation of the second variant for the Eʊedome dialect and the Tɔŋu variant, there is vowel hiatus or vowel sequence. This phenomenon is common in Kwa languages; it is usually resolved by deletion and resyllabification. From the example (I), since /o/ and /a/ are adjacent vowels in *dzo+aka+ lifi*, the /a/ was deleted to form the compound *dzokalifi*. A similar situation is seen in examples (II & III) where the /a/ of the second base is deleted thus *dzo + afi* is realized as *dzofi* while *dzo + me+ afi* become *dzomafi* as the /e/ of the second base was deleted to preserve the /a/ of the last base. The use of all the variants identified in example (49) is common in the discourse of speakers in the Ho speech community.

The variants identified in examples (44, 50, 51 & 52) have some differences in their structural realizations. In example (50), although the Aŋlɔ variant uses *ŋdɔkutsu* as the preferred variant the dialect sometimes truncates it such that, it is realised as the Eʊedome variant, *ŋdɔ*. From our data and observed, it is evident that the Tɔŋu variant *ɣetoto* is the less used variant within the speech community.

The variants for the variables mosquito and kenkey (examples 44 & 50) follow what pertains in example (50) where the Eʊedome and Aŋlɔ variants *tuli* and *(e)mu* are used as referents for 'mosquito' and *kɔŋ* and *ɖɔkunu* for 'kenkey' are preferred over the Tɔŋu variants *avage* and *kokoe* for the same referents.

Example (53) shows a set of variants that are very commonly used within the speech community. They are used interchangeable across genders, social status and generations. These everyday variants are *tsiletse, papaŋu* and *tsìlènù* used for the variable 'towel'.

The dialectal variants used for the variable 'anus' in example (52) are *mitoeme*/*minyeƒe* for Eʊedome, *meƒime* for Aŋlɔ and gbitome for Tɔŋu. Although the Eʊedome and the Tɔŋu variants are used by speakers, they are sound quite vulgar and so most people refrain from using them in public, those who do are considered to be unrefined. To satisfy Hyme's (1972) communicative competence, speakers across all ages, gender and other social variables, would

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rather use the Aŋlɔ variant *mefime* which is considered more pleasant and appropriate, thus seems to achieve more decorum.

The last set of variant in this category is example (51). The variable 'shorts' has the variants *agbote/ aveŋte* in the Eʋedome dialect, *(a)vote/ godi* in the Aŋlɔ and ágbitè in the Tɔŋu dialect. It is revealed that old male native Eʋedome adults tend to use *aveŋte* in their speech while the older generation of native Aŋlɔ speakers, both male and females prefer the use *(a)vote* over its alternative- *godi*. In the case of the Tɔŋu variant - ágbitè it is used in the everyday discourses of both the old and young generation.

Loan words as variants

Borrowing has long been studied as one of the many linguistic outcomes of language contact (Weinreich, 1953; Appel, 1987). To Davis (1993), "the term loanword refers to a word that enters a language through borrowing from some other language". The main characteristics of loan words are the pronunciation of the loanword in the borrowing (or recipient) language is often quite different from its pronunciation in the original (or source) language and the peculiar phonological characteristics of loan words which make them distinct from the native vocabulary (Davis, 1993; Agbedor, 2006; Wornyo, 2016). Usually, if languages or dialects do not have specific terms to describe certain concepts, they tend to borrow words from other languages or dialects close to them that already have labels for these concepts as a result of need. In a few instances, however, the borrowing language could have a more traditional means of referring to a concept yet borrow a different word for the same concept for other reasons such as prestige, simplicity or modernity but not for need. This section examines words which are borrowed from English and are used by the average Ewe speaker in the Ho speech community.

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Table 5: Loan words as variants

No.	Eʋedome (Variable)	Aŋlɔ (Variant)	Tɔŋu (Variant)	Gloss (Variant)
	Clothing			
54.	Beleti	Beleti	Beleti	Belt
55.	Siketi	Siketi	Siketi	Skirt
	Jewellery			
56.	Wɔtsi	Wɔtsi	Wɔtsi	Watch
	Worship			
57.	Tsɔtsi/ sɔlime	Tsɔtsi	Tsɔtsi	Church
	Drum			
58.	Bani	Bani	Bani	Band
	Institution			
59.	Suku	Suku	Sùkù/suku*ʃ*eme	School
60.	Kɔtu /ʋɔnudrɔ*ʃ*e/nyadrɔ*ʃ*e	Kɔtu /ʋɔnudrɔ*ʃ*e /nyadrɔ*ʃ*e	Kɔtu /ʋɔnudrɔ*ʃ*e	Court
	Occupation		Drava	
61.	Drava	Drava /		Driver
62.	ʋukula	Draivaʋukula	ʋukula	Driver/machinery
	Sports			
63.	Bɔlu/ Abo	Bɔlu/abo	Bɔlu	Ball
64.	Tools	Sofi	Sofi	Shovel
65.	Sofi Siza/ sakisi /akobe	Siza/sakisi/ Kpasu	Siza/sakisi	Scissors
66.	Food/ Vegetables	Sukli	Sùklì	Sugar
67.	Sukli Timati	Timatere/ Tomatosi	Timati	Tomatoes

Table 5 contains loan terms that can be classified into two distinct groupings. Group one consists of examples (56, 60, 57, 58, 64, 65 & 67) that are employed due to necessity. On the other hand, examples (57, 60, 61, 63 & 64) are part of group two and are primarily utilized by the speaker to showcase prestige, simplicity, modernity, or to ensure comprehension among the listener or audience. These concepts are precisely described by native expressions that align

with the speaker's intentions. In the case of 'belt', Ewe speakers in Ho exclusively utilize the native version of the English word for the object, which is pronounced as beleti, as demonstrated in example (54) in Table 5.

Nativization is the process by which the borrowing language incorporates the borrowed word through an adaptation process. To meet the phonotactic characteristics required by the Ewe language, English words undergo a three-level adaption procedure to be considered as 'genuine' Ewe words. The initial stage pertains to phonemic adaptation, when the recipient language (Ewe) assumes the role of a determinant, facilitating the segmentation of the borrowed word into phonologically permissible segments within the Ewe phonology.

At the initial stage, it is necessary to substitute English words that include sounds unfamiliar to the Ewe sound system with a sound in Ewe that closely resembles the English sound in the borrowed word, both in terms of production and perception. The second and third levels encompass the organization of syllables and the utilization of essential prosodic components mandated by the target language in order to render the phrases nativized. Therefore, in order for a term taken from English to be fully incorporated into the Ewe lexicon, it must undergo adaptation at the phonemic level, syllable structure level, and/or stress or tone level (Wornyo, 2016; Agbedor, 2006).

For instance, belt becomes beleti in (54). Belt satisfies every phonetic requirement of Ewe at the phonemic level, except for the consonant cluster, which appears in belt as [lt]. In Ewe, a CV structure is the fundamental syllable structure. Nonetheless, in cases where the second consonant is a trill or a lateral, the language allows for a CCV structure. For example, in Ewe, terms like klɔ ‘to wash’, *drɔe* ‘dream’, kple ‘and’, and gba ‘to break’ are all acceptable. Consonant clusters are therefore only permitted with laterals or trills at the beginning of syllables, never as the coda, as is the case in languages like English, according to the phonotactics of Ewe. This explains why the act of vowel insertion breaks the consonant sequence, or consonant cluster, changing "belt" (CVCC) to "beleti" (CVCVCV) in order to adhere to the syllable structure of Ewe.

Example (55) and example (54) both demonstrate the same procedure, as the English word'skirt' contains an initial cluster of consonants that must be broken during the nativization process in Ewe. This is because the second consonant in Ewe is not a lateral or trill. In Ewe, the English word 'skirt' is translated as siketi. Put simply, when a word in English has a syllable structure of CCVCC, it becomes a word in Ewe with a syllable structure of CVCVCV.

As previously stated, the second set of loan terms that have been recognized as lexical variants often employed within the Ho speech community exhibit alternative native lexicons, as evidenced by examples (57, 59, 63, and 65). Due to the presence of the affricates -ʧ, / in the inventory of consonant sounds in Ewe, the conversion of the word 'church' into Ewe merely needs to adhere to the syllable structure. Hence, the term [ʧɜ:ʧ] gets assimilated into the Ewe language as tsɔtsi [ʧɔʧi]. To meet the syllable requirement of having all Ewe words finish in vowels, the letter /i/ was added at the end of the word. The syllable structure of an English word with CVC is transformed into an Ewe word with CVCV syllable structure. In the Ho speech community, it is crucial to note that the variety tsɔtsi is predominantly employed by speakers of Aŋlɔ ancestry, as opposed to people from the other two dialectal origins. However, it is important to note that there is a comprehensive understanding of the phrase among individuals of all genders and generations within the community. Individuals who possess a predominant Ewedome dialect exhibit a greater inclination towards employing the term 'sɔlime when making references to 'church', as evidenced by example (57) in Table 5. Curiously, the majority of Ewe speakers in Ho do not have any objections to using the English word for this variable.

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The nativized iteration of the driver, drava, underwent a comparable process of adaptation, as observed in example (57). In the Ewe vowel systems, the lack of diphthongs necessitates the substitution of a vowel that is closest to the diphthong [ai] in [draivə]. The schwar vowel, which is not included in the Ewe vowels, is the final vowel in the word "driver." Therefore, it is necessary to replace it with the vowel [a], which appears to be the most similar central vowel to []. The phonemic modifications result in the borrowing of [draivə] into Ewe as [drava], so satisfying the three-level adaption criteria. The alternate term for "drava" is "ukula," which is employed by individuals of both genders and across all age groups.

The data and discussion suggest that no lexical variation exists between English loan words as they seem to have a common lexical representation across the Eʋedome, Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu dialects and by extension, the Ewe spoken in the Ho speech community. However, English loan words which have Ewe lexical variants in either of these dialects display and remarkable pattern of variation among the three dialects. Whereas example (60) confirms all three dialects have the same variant, example (59) shows that aside from having a common Ewe variant across all three dialects, the Aŋlɔ dialect still has *nyadrɔfe* as an alternative variant for the variable 'court'. In some other instances, only two dialects seem to have a common variant, the third dialect uses a completely different variant. Typically, a Eʋedome or Tɔŋu uses *timati* as a referent to 'tomatoes' while Aŋlɔ use *tomatere* or *tomatosi* as shown in example (67). Similarly, in example (65), the Eʋedome and Aŋlɔ indigenous variants for 'scissors' are different and quite uncommon among the younger generation- Eʋedome the variant is *akobe* while the Aŋlɔ one is *kpasu*. The Tɔŋu dialect only uses either of the two loan word variants *siza* or *sakisi*

The discussion emphasizes that lexical variation occurs across the Eʋedome, Aŋlɔ and Tɔŋu dialects. It also indicates that members of the Ho speech community are more comfortable with using English loan words as lexical variants for variables that have known lexical referents in Ewe. As a relatively highly educated urban community, evidence of the use of these loan words can be accounted for by the familiarity of language users to English and the close interaction between Ewe and English, Ho being a multilingual urban centre (Winford, 2003).

5.0 Conclusion

The study on lexical variations in the Ewe language spoken in Ho, Ghana, has revealed significant regional and social discrepancies, resulting in the use of a diverse set of linguistic features in daily communication. Variations in lexical, phonological, and grammatical diversity are observed within the speech community throughout its various dialects. The presence of mutual intelligibility among the three dialects, namely Ewedome, Anlo, and Tornu, implies that the linguistic differences among individuals using these languages do not hinder the process of understanding. The findings of the study suggested that there are specific lexical variants that are common to all three dialects, while others are unique to only two of the three dialects. Moreover, the study examines the incorporation of borrowed vocabulary as substitutes in each of the three dialects.

6.0 Recommendation

1. The study proposed that while selecting speakers for data collection in the Ewe language spoken in Ho, it is advisable to consider social characteristics like age, sex, and social status. This consideration is crucial to ensure a comprehensive representation of the linguistic variances in the language.
2. The research posits that the level of affiliation with a particular group might have an impact on the prevalence of linguistic factors, and various segments within a

community may attribute distinct sets of linguistic characteristics for the purpose of identification.

3. This study emphasizes the significance of comprehending the lexical variations employed by distinct cohorts within the speech community, as younger cohorts exhibit dissimilar lexicons in comparison to older cohorts.

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