

Yorùbá Language Development and Digital Communication: Ability, Capacity and Capability

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Abstract

This paper interrogates the influence of digital communication on the development of the Yorùbá language. Yorùbá is one of the three national languages in Nigeria, along with Hausa and Igbo. The Yorùbá language has been observed mostly by the elites to be endangered, in spite of its exposure to rigorous formal use at all levels of education up to tertiary, broadcasting and publishing for literary and academic purposes. Newspapers and magazines abound in the Yorùbá language. Of late, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) has included the Yorùbá language among its languages of broadcasting. It has also been legislated as a national language in Brazil. However, the language is making an in-road transition into digital communication systems, especially noticeable in the social media networks such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp and Google. This study exposes the resources and contents of this media and provides argument supported by data for empowerment and endangerment of Yorùbá language. It concludes by making recommendations in respect of harnessing the benefits of digital communication for the advancement of the Yorùbá language as well as purposeful and sustainable functional use of the language. Such benefits include improved orthography, audio and video recordings on YouTube, Facebook and Instagram to enhance proficiency in the Yorùbá language.

Keywords: Yorùbá language, digital communication, media, empowerment, endangerment

Introduction

Digital communication is the process of transmitting information from the sender to the receiver through any of electronic (mass) media. It is an act of exchanging information between individuals on the internet. Digital communication through the use of different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp and Google has recently been the major source of communicative medium among literate youths and adults whose knowledge and understanding of the mentioned platforms have not only helped to bridge long distance communication gaps, but also made information accessible, easier than in time past. With the above, one may not wonder for too long before arriving at

an answer to the recent crowd-pleasing attitude towards social media, most especially among the youth.

With over 500 hundred indigenous languages, Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá having the largest number of speakers, the role of digital communication on the development (empowerment) of such languages is worth interrogating. This study however focuses on the impact of digital communication on the development of the Yorùbá language.

Before the advent of social media, the Yorùbá people have ways in which communication gaps are bridged, thereby making sure that information is disseminated promptly. Ajíkòbí (1999:19) states clearly the importance of drummers and town-criers that disseminate information either in the markets or town squares where hundreds are gathered. However, one will immediately notice that such exercise is time consuming and information disseminated orally may either be incomplete or bear additional information at the discretion of the disseminator. This may however end in rancour. The above issues are solved quite well by social media which is the new trend in global communications system. It is also noteworthy that the former is designed to capture the attention of all and sundry given the fact that the code of communication is understood by all. However, digital communication is restricted to a literate few. This is because the code of communication is mainly English-based. Hence, it is believed by the locals who can neither read nor write that platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are made strictly for and should be used by those who speak and write the English language. All these, but not limited to them form the concern of this study.

It is established that a handful of research works such as Awofolu (2002), Odoje (2014), Fagbolu et al (2014), Fagbolu et al (2015) are available on the use of Yorùbá language in the digital space, especially in the area of corpus linguistics and machine translation. This study however further expands the scope of such research as it is designed to examine deeply, the extent or presence of the Yorùbá language on social media and the extent to which such has contributed to the growth of the language. It also expatiates on how judiciously the resources at the disposal of social media users have been employed, and examines the content of Yorùbá targeted post on selected social media handles and their contributions to development. Also, additional focus are discussions on the ability, capacity and capability of the Yorùbá language to stand head-to-head as the major language of communication on social media platforms. In addition, it discusses and makes

recommendations on the challenges facing the use of Yorùbá language on social media platforms.

Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study is to make recommendations on how digital communication will be used for the empowerment and development of the Yorùbá language. We will examine the contributions of digital communication to the development of Yorùbá language since its advent. Also, we will ascertain the resources at the disposal of social media operators, and the role they play in their contents. The challenges facing the use of Yorùbá language in the digital space will also be examined. This study will look into the possibilities of how Yorùbá language can satisfy effective social media communication as well as determine the ability, capacity and capability of the Yorùbá language with reference to social media communication system.

Research Questions

1. What are the noticeable contributions of digital communication to the development of Yorùbá language since its advent?
2. What are the resources available to social media operators and how are these resources employed in content?
3. What are the challenges facing the use of Yorùbá language on social media spaces such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Google?
4. How can Yorùbá language satisfy effective social media communication?
5. What is the effect of digitalization on the ability, capacity and capability of the Yorùbá language in general communication?

Research Methodology

In carrying out this research, we had several group discussions among researchers with each contributor handling at least two social media platforms presenting data and analysis on the assigned platforms. This prompted further contributions on how best to extract data from each platform by other researchers. A questionnaire covering questions on the use of Yorùbá language on social media platforms and the views of native speakers of the language was also raised and distributed across selected areas.

One hundred randomly selected people, thirty-five students of the University of Lagos (Yorùbá speakers alone) filled out the questionnaire. Sixty-five copies of the questionnaire were administered to people in Ìwàyà, Abúlé-Ojà, Àkọkà,

Bàrígà, and selected students of Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin, Lagos.

The questionnaire is divided into four sections, with different foci. The first section contains question one to ten which shows the status of the respondents. The second section queries the Yorùbá speaking and listening abilities of the respondents in order to have a vivid view of how frequent the language is put to test. The third section encompasses the Yorùbá reading and writing abilities of the respondents, while the fourth section deals with the knowledge on the presence of Yorùbá language in the digital space. The questionnaire was administered in English for easy comprehension by the respondents.

Data was gathered through social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp and Google. Data from each platform are elicited through the content (aim of the post), accuracy of the post and the response from viewers of the pages.

Digital Communication and Yorùbá Language Development: The Arguments and Concerns

Developed nations across the world have all employed their languages in almost, if not all day-to-day activities. However, same cannot be said of African indigenous languages, a category to which Yorùbá belongs. Different scholars have in time past dug deep and discovered different reasons for this lukewarm attitude towards indigenous languages in Africa. This unbecoming attitude is the backbone of the moribund state of indigenous languages. The negative attitudes of parents who do not speak their indigenous language to their children have also been cited as a major reason why the youth are losing touch with indigenous languages. The Yorùbá people are in a language contact situation with English having been around for more than three centuries and with the literate few who make use of social media on day-to-day basis believing more in the capacity of English, the reasons for the perceived low coverage of Yorùbá language in the digital space are not far-fetched.

The case of English dominance is due to the language diversity of Nigeria. This is in turn the greatest challenge the nation currently faces (Ajepe & Ademowo, 2016:10). The nation since independence has not been able to replace English with any of its numerous indigenous languages. The 1979 insertion of the three major languages (Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá) into the constitution as official languages was aimed at reducing the seeming embarrassment of having English

as the only official language. However, forty years later, the situation of English dominance has only grown from strength to strength. The argument raised against the adoption of an indigenous language as an official language in 1961 was that Nigerian needed English to survive in the age of science and technology (Akinyele, 2000:37). One may also trace the deficit of indigenous languages in the digital space to such comments. Digital communication as we know is metropolitan based, and English is the major medium of communication in such metropolis.

The argument now swings in the opposite direction; it is now believed that for any nation to enhance its technological development, the mother tongue plays a key role. The problem faced by the Yorùbá language like many other African languages is how to re-orientate a generation of young speakers who could barely comprehend, speak or write the Yorùbá language to study and become productive in such language. We identify two major problems facing the Yorùbá language development in general, and conclude that they are the major problems facing Yorùbá language in digital communications too.

The very first of such problems is political in nature. We rue on the inability of the Nigerian government to consolidate on the 1979 inclusion of indigenous languages into the constitution. The focus has been on minority language speakers and their fear of ethnic domination as rightly stated by Akinyele (2000:38). However, the new trend of research on Yorùbá language has taken the same shape. Scholars seem to want to project the speech forms of their own dialect, believing that what is today referred to as Standard Yorùbá is closer to some dialects than others. Hence, more research on Yorùbá dialects seem to have overtaken research on the Standard Yorùbá which could have in turn further established the Yorùbá language in the digital space.

Secondly, the issue of collaborative research. This problem as perceived is not in any way peculiar to the Yorùbá language, other languages also bear the same burden. Until languages of developing societies are exposed to different disciplines, one may not be able to truly determine ‘what is’ and ‘what is not’ in the usage of such languages. The most noticeable aspect of such collaborative research is the area of computational linguistics and language engineering. The computer programming skills are and remain with the programmers, the data needed to develop the language is and remains with the linguist. Until both skills meet and are judiciously put to use to produce programs for Data Analysis, and useful Artificial Intelligence related developments, the developing languages will continue to bear the brunt.

Sources, Resources and Contents

Sources: The core part of data used for analyses in this paper was drawn from different social media handles including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp, Google and Instagram. The reason for selecting the above mediums is that we observed that they are the most used social media platforms in Nigeria. According to data retrieved from various online surveys on presence of Nigerians on social media, find below the statistics of social media users.

- **Facebook:** Internet World Stats, an online user and population Statistics site as at June 2019 reports that Nigeria has a population of 119,506,430 internet users, with a penetration of 59.5 percent, and a total of 17,000,000 Facebook subscribers. Only countries like Egypt and Algeria rank higher. Facebook is also highly ranked by Statscounter at 72.54 percent of users.
- **Twitter:** An estimate of about 1.8 million monthly twitter users are active in Nigeria according to @EiENigeria. The most reliable statistics on twitter accounts in Nigeria was conducted by Portland Communications which estimates Nigerian tweets to about 360 million and ranks second in Africa behind Egypt with 500 million tweets monthly. However, global digital report 2019 approximates Nigerian twitter users to about 1.6 million.
- **WhatsApp:** The most active social messenger in Nigeria is WhatsApp because of its ease of use and low data consumption rate according to discussion with several users. An online survey carried out by Pulse.ng also backs this claim when it rated WhatsApp at 85 percent of users, with Facebook coming close at 78 percent.
- **Instagram:** Ranked third at 57 percent by Pulse.ng online survey, Instagram is the platform that Nigerians rely on the most to share images and short videos. An online report, NapoleonCat, predicts about 5,686,000 Instagram users in Nigeria as at June 2019.
- **YouTube:** Among the social media platforms examined in this study, YouTube appears to rank lowest with about 1.7 percent users. Only LinkedIn ranks lower with 0.22 percent of users. The low ranking of YouTube is in connection to its high data consumption rate.
- **Google:** Google remains the search engine relied upon by millions of Nigerians for reliable Information. Trend.google.com.ng reports over 74,000 key searches daily by Nigerians on Google.

Resources: By resources, following Yusuff (2008: 84) we mean the knowledge (be it cultural, historical or linguistic) at the disposal of the person who operates the social media handles. That is, their intuitive knowledge of Yorùbá language and how they have put such knowledge to use. For example, a post from two

social media handles treating the same topic, and employing Yorùbá language as the medium of interaction will only be separated on the basis of information available to the persons behind the posts. For example, the use of language from a person whose upbringing is from the hinterland (such as Òyó and Ìbàdàn) will be completely different from that of someone who grew up in the urban. We examine how this language phenomena also affect posts on social media.

Contents: Owing to the numerous social media handles projecting Yorùbá language contents, we examine the contents of FIVE handles each from Facebook, Twitter and Instagram and YouTube. The data for analyses on WhatsApp and Google are strictly drawn from the responses returned from the questionnaires. The accounts examined are based on consistency of posts, number of views (as for the cases of Instagram and YouTube) and number of people's responses or comments.

Frequency of Yorùbá Targeted Posts on Facebook

Account	Statistics	Content	Resources	Issue(s)
Ojúṣe ọkọ síyàwó àti iyàwó sí ọkọ rẹ (a general group)	362,887 members	Discussion on topics bothering on marriage, family life and general well-being of the family.	A mix knowledge of Yorùbá traditional marriage norms and the modern trends.	Poor orthography
Àbáláyé Nigeria	1,854 followers, with an average like of about 1,831	Dedicated to protecting the Yorùbá culture, proverbs, and Yorùbá studies in general.	Well projected knowledge of the Yorùbá language and culture.	Inconsistent translations.
BBC News Yorùbá	274, 306 followers, with an average of 221, 915 likes.	News in Yorùbá	Newsworthy information.	Inconsistent orthography and translations
Àṣà àti Ìṣe ní Ilẹ Yorùbá	1, 038 followers, with an average of 1,024 likes.	Mixed traditional and modern images.	Making use of images to depict meaning.	Poor orthography
Àlọ Àpamò àti Àlọ Àpagbè	1,273 followers, with an average of 1,228 likes.	Yorùbá riddles and folktales	Aspects of knowledge of social culture.	Poor orthography

Frequency of Yorùbá Targeted Posts on Twitter

Account	Statistics	Content	Resources	Issues
@YorubaNewsAlert	13,600 followers	News and Yorùbá related entertainment posts.	Well-structured knowledge of the Yorùbá language.	Inconsistent Orthography and code mixing.
@Yobamoodua	4,950 followers	Health related issues in Yorùbá language, poems, etc.	Knowledge of Yorùbá indigenous healthcare delivery system.	Very good orthography
@Alakoweyoruba	4,259 followers	News and current affairs	Knowledge of contemporary socio-political issues.	Inconsistent orthography
@YorubaNames	3,753 followers	Over 100,000 Yorùbá names and their linguistic analysis.	Access to relevant Yorùbá social culture and published collections of Yorùbá names.	Poor orthography, and inaccurate linguistic analysis.
@YorubaProverbs	22,100 followers	Yorùbá proverbs in paraphrased forms.	Knowledge of relevant Yorùbá socio-cultural system	Paraphrasing proverbs, thereby losing touch with key features of the Yorùbá proverbs.

Frequency of Yoruba Targeted Posts on YouTube

Account	Statistics	Content	Resources	Issues
Tunde Kelaniv	31, 991 subscribers	Yorùbá entertainment, movies and talk shows	Yorùbá written literature and oral heritage.	Inconsistent posts in Yorùbá.
Itan Yoruba	1,196 subscribers	Yorùbá history	Oral tradition	Research based
@Queens TV	676 subscribers	Yorùbá language tutorials in English and Yorùbá languages.	Oral Tradition, and Yorùbá Nursery Rhymes	Research based
Yoruba stars	4,700 subscribers	Classroom views and instructions	Oral tradition	Research based
Apreeltv	60,437 subscribers	Entertainment, talk shows, and music	Current affairs, Yorùbá oral tradition.	Inconsistent posts in Yorùbá

Frequency of Yorùbá Targeted Posts on Instagram

Account	Statistics	Content	Resources	Issues
@Yorubahood	29,000 followers, with 1,799 posts	Yorùbá movies and short videos	Yorùbá entertainment	Absence of Yorùbá write- ups.
@Yoruba	1,567 followers, with 13 posts	Yorùbá cultural related posts.	Well projected knowledge of the Yorùbá culture	Absence of Yorùbá write- ups.
@Alamoja.yoruba	1,047 followers, with 379 posts	Yorùbá greetings, Yorùbá names, cartoons in Yorùbá, teaching the Yorùbá language to children through cartoons.	Deep knowledge of the Yorùbá language and culture (proverbs, idioms etc). English to Yorùbá translations and vice-versa.	Inconsistent orthography.
@Lakotun	422 followers, with 101 posts.	Dedicated to showcasing the Yorùbá culture, books and proverbs.	Well projected knowledge of Yorùbá culture and arts.	Code mixing that favors English language.
@Soroniyoruba	508 Followers, with 61 posts	Lessons to help Yorùbá in the diaspora learn and keep Yorùbá alive.	Yorùbá linguistic and cultural loyalty but no backed up adequate knowledge.	Poor orthography and inconsistent expressions.

Frequency of Yorùbá Targeted Posts on Google

Academia.Edu reports 779 paper titles matching the Yorùbá search.

Olukoni.blogspot.com is also dedicated to teaching Yorùbá grammar, literature and history. The total number of page views is 97, 624 with average downloads of 467,741. With the high rate of views and downloads, the posts are not spared the stain of poor orthography.

Learnyoruba101.org, is a site dedicated to teaching the Yorùbá language/ translation services. With English-Yorùbá code mixing, the Yorùbá orthography is very poor.

The Yoruba Blog is a blog dedicated to promoting the Yorùbá language and culture with a consistent orthography. However, the translations are inconsistent.

Results

According to the analysis of the administered questionnaires, 82% of our respondents falls within the ages of 18 to 25, while 18% falls within the age range of 26-35. The results tally completely with the focus of this study. That is, the main target of the research is to review the use of Yorùbá language in the digital space, and provide evidences on the current status of the Yoruba language on social media, as it is used by a generation that seem to have almost lost contact with the language.

The gender ratio is 63% male and 37% female. This may be due to the fact that it is easier to convince men to help patiently fill a questionnaire than women. As for the level of their education, 84% filled in tertiary education, 12% filled in secondary, while 4% were unspecified. 84% reside in the urban area, 11% in the rural area, while 5% were unspecified.

Questioning the frequency of their Yorùbá language usage on WhatsApp (chat, voice or video calls, or general broadcast messages), only 21% claimed to often make use of Yorùbá language. 51% of the respondents seldom use Yorùbá on WhatsApp, while the remaining 28% claimed not to use Yorùbá language as a medium of communication at all on WhatsApp.

On the frequency of their Yorùbá usage on Facebook, only 21% claims to make use of the language almost always, 41% seldom uses it, 28% claims not to use Yorùbá at all for any kind of Facebook related activities, the remaining 10% were unspecified.

On the question that queries the language they employ the most on all other social media platforms, English rates higher with a massive 68%, 22% claims to use a code-mixing style involving English and Pidgin English. Only 5% claims to often use the Yorùbá language with the person they are speaking to being the key determinant. 5% percent were also unspecified.

The questionnaire further queried respondents Yorùbá reading abilities, 52% rated their reading ability as very good, 29% marked fair, while 19% marked poor. On their writing ability, 46% marked very good, 28% fair and 26% marked poor. Rating the Yorùbá content on Google, 46% marked good, 28% marked fair while 26% marked very poor.

Considering Artificial Intelligence as key to language development, the questionnaire further queries respondents' knowledge on the Google Translate machine translation. About 88% claims to know about Google Translate, 10% of respondents knows nothing about it, while 2% were unspecified. It further queries their activities and usage of the Machine on English-Yorùbá and Yorùbá- English translations. Sixty one per cent claimed to have tried such translations on Google, while 39% is yet to put it to test. Only 7% identified SwiftKey as a keyboard that supports Yorùbá tone marks on android phones, a larger percentage (93%) does not know of any.

On the question of whether digital communication is of any help to Yorùbá language development, 70% marked 'YES', 28% marked 'NO', while 2% was unspecified. Also, 67% believed that digital communication has been of help in promoting the Yorùbá language, 28% believed that it has added no value to the Yorùbá language, 5% remained unspecified.

Interpretations

According to the online statistics of social media usage in Nigeria, WhatsApp appeared to be the most used. Putting this side by side with the result from our questionnaire analysis, one can only conclude that the usage of Yorùbá on WhatsApp is very low with about 26% claiming to use the language often. We suspect according to our final survey that a core percentage of the 26% are students studying languages in the University of Lagos and Adeniran Ogunsanya College of Education, Ijanikin. The 51% that claimed to seldom use the language on WhatsApp also falls within the age range of 26-35. That is, Yorùbá language is hardly visible on the chats of the younger generation (18-25).

WhatsApp is followed closely by Facebook according to statistics of users. However, Yorùbá language also suffers the same fate just as it is on WhatsApp. The percentage of usage is also very low at 21% only. Other noticeable usages are coming from groups that are created and dedicated to projecting an aspect of the Yorùbá culture, some of which we have stated above. The question that comes to mind here is *how correct or accurate is the data provided on such pages?* According to data gathered from different Facebook accounts, such data lacks adequate information. We will further exemplify this in the next section.

The availability of Yorùbá language on google is also poorly harnessed with a whopping 39% claiming not to have tested Yorùbá-English translations on

Google translate. 93% of the respondents know nothing about any form of android keyboard that can type Yorùbá alphabets with diacritics.

The above identified problems are perceived to rise as a result of the poor reading and writing abilities of the respondents. Only 52%, which is a bit above average, claimed to comfortably read Yorùbá texts. On the contrary, only 46% among the 56% who can read claimed to be comfortable when writing in Yorùbá. We then conclude that it will be a bit difficult to have a good number of Yorùbá posts on social media based on the fact that such will not interest any individual who can neither read nor write in the same language fluently.

Ability, Capacity and Capability of the Yoruba Language

The ability, capacity and capability of the Yorùbá language in serving as the major medium of communication for native speakers and non-native speakers who can speak, read and write is not in any way in doubt. Although, the language is yet to be exposed to such test. This study supports the argument of Lyons (1981:27) that every language on its own is a developed system of communication be it from a civilized or developing society. Lyons (1981:27) states:

The truth is that every language so far studied, no matter how primitive or uncivilized the society using it might appear to us in other respects, has proved upon investigation to be a complex and highly developed system of communication.

If this be the case, then we can prove to any length that there is no expression in the English language that cannot be represented and expressed in the Yorùbá language. To say that this study has identified a couple of reasons for the low patronage and lukewarm attitude of the people to the Yorùbá language in the digital space does not obliterate its functionality as a competent linguistic means of human communication.

To cite a few examples, the twitter handle @YorubaNames with over 3,000 followers claims to contain a repertoire of over 100,000 Yoruba names, and as one will expect, most people will rely on such quick means to analyse Yoruba names. However, as laudable as the attempt is, it is mostly marred by spurious translations rising from poor analysis. The name Fátúnmbí is translated as '*Ifa has given me a second birth*' instead of '*Ifá has given me a rebirth*'. One can only

refer to this as a form of translation that takes the morphology of the name into consideration and forgets the importance of its semantics.

The twitter handle @YorubaProverbs with over 220,000 followers also presents mostly rearranged and paraphrased forms of the Yorùbá proverbs. With this, one will expect a changed form of most proverbs, thereby making the populace lose touch with key features of proverbs. This also will lead to a change in semantics, leading to the Yorùbá people losing one of their most valuable speech assets- the proverbs.

With the number of views on the Olukoni.blogspot.com (97,624 views and 467,741 downloads), it is obvious that a large number of students rely on information from that site to help solve academic issues. A site that contains abstract information and no diacritics on posts, coupled with an extremely poor orthography is neither commendable nor recommendable.

The Yorùbá language is not a complete outcast on the different aspects of digital communication, the major problem as exposed by this study is that experts and researchers (especially in academics) who command a good grasp of writing, reading and cultural knowledges are not involved in most cases. This however may not serve the interest of native speakers, whom, as shown by numbers of subscribers are willing to learn.

Recommendations

- **Involving Experts:** The major step to help improve the use of the Yorùbá language as a medium of digital communication, is to involve ideas from experts (either by contract or consultations). This will go a long way in improving the quality of contents and also drawing closer the attention of the audience who might have lost interest due to one lapse or the other. The resources at the disposal of such experts will no longer gather dust on the shelves but also help enlighten the people and strengthen the cause of the Yorùbá language. Experts in this sense are not just scholars in literature or linguistics alone, computer and language programmers are also very much needed to help improve upon available software(s) and develop new ones. Social media remains the most effective and the most available means of information gathering and dissemination. Those that are providing information on Yorùbá language and culture are predominantly non-experts. This fact gives rise to disinformation, inconsistent orthography and spurious translations. The need to have experts showing profound interest in the

management of digital communication for Yorùbá language becomes paramount.

- **Terminology Development as Focus in Research:** An under-researched but trending aspect of language is terminology development. Although quite a lot has been done on health (Yusuff & Fadairo, 2013), (Yusuff et al (ed.), 2017), vocabulary of primary science and mathematics in nine Nigerian languages (NERDC, 1990) and governance related terms (NERDC, 1991), a lot is still left untouched on new trends of terminologies, especially in the aspects of digital communications. The availability of such terms will also help build the interest of the audience.
- **Digital Oriented Research:** This study from the beginning has not in any way failed to recognize the lapses of academic research on the perceived lukewarm attitude towards the Yorùbá language. Research in recent times has focused more on the structure of the Yorùbá language, neglecting aspects of collaborative research and computational linguistics. The Yorùbá language data set should also be exposed on a larger scale to programs like Natural Language Tool Kit (where corpus is built and analyzed) and a host of others to meet up with the speed of digitization. Pérez-Paredes (2011) expatiates on the importance of corpus linguistics to data driven language learning. The new paths for the analysis of language are geared towards digital analysis of large corpora which creates better understanding of the rules and usages of such languages. Also, as suggested for all languages in India by Niladri and Bidyut (2001:4), a monolingual general corpus is needed for the development of the Yorùbá language in the digital space.

Conclusions

This paper has critically examined how important digital communication is, to the development of the Yorùbá language, with reference to different social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google and WhatsApp. As examined, the paper discusses, based on the data extracted from the above-mentioned platforms, the nature of the content of Yorùbá targeted posts, their lapses and the way forward.

The available resources available to the social media user as mentioned are in their numbers, ranging from knowledge of Yorùbá oral tradition like riddles and folktales, knowledge of relevant Yorùbá socio-cultural system, knowledge of contemporary socio-political issues and access to relevant published works in Yorùbá. The lapses noticed are based on orthography and translation errors. Also, a minute set of data proved to lack adequate research and information. On the

academic end of the results from this study, we discovered that a lot work is still floating in the area of digital research such as building a monolingual corpus, web-based dictionaries that can aid spellings, the use of diacritics and pronunciations. For example, it is observed that the biggest volume of dictionary of the Yoruba language was published since 1958 (Abraham, R. C.). The dictionary is neither republished in the original form, nor is it revised and made available in the modern electronic form which will make it readily accessible at any time of need.

It is however an obligation to praise the loyalty of the people behind the posts, and also make recommendations such as involving experts, terminology development and digital oriented researches. This paper also concludes that the ability, capacity and capability of the Yorùbá language is strong enough to stand side by side in the digital space if the above recommendations are well taken care of.

In all, there is an obvious and overt observation of linguistic and cultural loyalties amongst the handlers. If they were looking only towards economic benefits, they would not put so much interest in posting in the Yorùbá language.

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