

## **TECHNOLOGIZING ORAL TEXTS: ARCHIVING YORÙBÁ ORAL LITERATURE THROUGH NEW TECHNOLOGICAL MEDIA**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

The study of oral literature started in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by European scholars who had a sustained interest and concern for the origin of human culture and the best way to teach and impart it to the coming generation.<sup>1</sup> Yoruba oral literature is one of the major ways in which the Yorùbá culture is transmitted and disseminated. However, civilization and urbanization processes among the Yorùbá of southwestern Nigeria have culminated in a state of cultural diversity and cultural integration which has led to cultural hybridity; and this has affected the Yorùbá society both negatively and positively. Some of the areas which are adversely affected are the Yorùbá language, literature and culture. Research findings have revealed that the Yorùbá language is endangered.<sup>2</sup> Yoruba scholars are making frantic efforts to see that the language does not go into extinction. Such efforts include the collaborative seminar organized by Yorùbá Studies Association and Oodua People's Congress on 21 February of 2007 and 2008 to mark the International Mother Language Day and a workshop sponsored by the Macmillan Publisher Plc, Nigeria on 14 May, 2008. The aim of the language and culture organizers was to create awareness on the development of nation. Yorùbá culture and literature are also fast disappearing, whereas these aspects of Yorùbá life are supposed to be the people's identity.

Culture is central to the development of any nation, and it must be nurtured if a nation wants to experience a sustainable development.<sup>3</sup> The transmission of culture among the Yorùbá depends largely on their literature, which is an effective weapon of socialization, entertainment and social control. Within the framework of Parson's functionalist theory, the fiduciary system, a sub-system on which the structure of society rests, handles the transmission of culture. The school and family handle the function which deals with the transmission of culture, norms and values of a society to the actors in the society.<sup>4</sup> Literature is one of the weapons used for the internationalization of these norms and values, be it written or oral. Hence, the documentation of the oral aspect of literature has been a field of interest among scholars and lovers of the Yorùbá cultural heritage.

The literature of the Yorùbá of southwestern Nigeria is fundamentally oral from inception. It was the introduction of Western culture/Western education that brought about the written tradition. With the threat of endangerment of the Yorùbá language as well as annihilation of the Yoruba indigenous culture, as a result of cultural integration,

there is dire need for restoration, documentation, processing and storage of oral poetry. Therefore, in this paper, the present state of documentation of Yorùbá oral literature and the needs and challenges being faced in using the new technological media are examined.

### **Yorùbá Oral Literature**

Yorùbá oral literature is a living phenomenon which is contemporaneous with the written tradition. Oral literature is a creative text delivered by the word of mouth. It refers to the heritage of imaginative verbal creations, stories, folk-beliefs and songs of pre-literate societies which have evolved and passed on through the spoken word from one generation to another.<sup>5</sup> It also comprises riddles, puns, tongue-twisters, proverbs, recitation, chants, songs and stories; in short, it represents the verbal aspect of folklore.<sup>6</sup> Often, the Yorùbá oral poet composes and performs his art vocally, and comes face-to-face with his audience.

The Yorùbá oral and written traditions have similar qualities. Some of the qualities are:

- the creative expression of personal experiences, emotions, ideas, or social experience for pleasure or moral education
- the creative use of language for the expression of personal experiences, emotions, ideas or social experience for pleasure or moral education
- the use of the oral forms for either the symbolic or realistic representation
- the creative exploitations of the communicative resources of language.<sup>7</sup>

It could be inferred from the above that both the oral and written traditions have utilitarian and pedagogical values. Hence, they are taken as teaching courses/subjects at all levels of education in schools. However, the teaching and documentation of oral literature are given priority at tertiary institutions.

### **Early Attempts on the Documentation of Yorùbá Oral Literature**

The knowledge of previous attempts made on the documentation of Yoruba oral literature is pertinent for us to have some understanding of the present state. Hence, in this section, we shall examine the early attempts on the documentation of Yorùbá oral literature.

The study of Yorùbá oral literature, like all other African oral literatures, was initiated by the debate about the creative abilities of the so-called primitive people, that is Africans. Do they have literature? What sort of literature do they have? Is their literature comparable, in anyway, to the literature of the civilized world? To answer the above questions, literary scholars and anthropologists, like Claude Levi-Strauss, Ruth Finnegan, William Bascom, Ulli Beier, Adeboye Babalola and Wande Abimbola, began the search for African literature.<sup>8</sup>

Until 1819 when the Yorùbá language was reduced to writing by Bowdich, documentation of Yoruba oral literature could not be embarked on. Her publication of

Yorùbá numerals spurred linguists and missionaries to produce orthography for the Yorùbá language.<sup>9</sup> The pacesetter efforts of Bowdich and other missionaries tremendously affected the documentation of Yorùbá oral literature in *Ìwé Kíkà Yorùbá*, a book published by the Church Missionary Society (CMS).<sup>10</sup> This attempt by the CMS could be said to be the first attempt made on the documentation of Yorùbá oral literature.

The introduction of Western education by the Church Missionary Society further enhanced the documentation of Yorùbá oral literature because some of the new converts, who had attained literacy in the Yorùbá language, directed their newly acquired knowledge towards the production of various Yorùbá writings. In the process of doing this, they ended up in documenting oral genres like Ifá verses, folktales and stories. Notable among such works are *Òrúnmìlà* (1908), *Ifá, Enia Soro* and *Ìwé Ìgbádùn Aiye*. *Òrúnmìlà* and *Ifá* are collections of various tales and myths of Odú Ifá (Ifá verses), while *Enia soro* and *Ìwé Ìgbádùn Aiye* are mere re-production of folk narratives as creation of the author.

The collection of oral literary genres in this era extended to the production of Yorùbá proverbs by early scholars, some of the printed texts include *Òwe Yorùbá* (1947) *Àkójopó Àwon Òwe Yorùbá* (1962), *Egbòkànlá Lé Ogóòrìn Òwe Yorùbá* (1955), and *Ìwé Òwe ní Èdé Yorùbá* (1955). One of the things that helped the transmission of Yoruba culture to scholars from other parts of the world then was that most documentations made on proverbs had English translations. The tools deployed for documentation by these scholars then were basically oral interview and the print media. The outcome of collections done through interviews were published texts, which later became resource materials for early scholars in Yorùbá oral literature. For instance, Beier and Gbadamosi (1959) examine the ideas contained in Yoruba proverbs. They conclude that Yorùbá world views are reflected in their proverbs. The classification of Yorùbá proverbs done by Sobande (1967) and Bamgbose (1968) also relied heavily on the collection done by the early scholars.<sup>11</sup>

### **Systematic Collection and Documentation of Yorùbá Oral Literature**

The second phase of documenting Yorùbá oral literature covers the systematic collection and analysis of Yorùbá oral literature by literary scholars. This era witnessed the use of the traditional media for the collection of oral poetry and folk narratives. It is worthy of note that oral poetic genres were given more attention then. Up till then little attention had been focused on the documentation of folk narratives, like folktales, stories and myths. Few of the works that are available on documentation of prose narratives are Adeboye Babalola's *Akojopo Alo Íjàpà*, Olagoke's *Ijapa ti Rókó Oko Yánníbo*, Alamu's *Àlò Àpagbè* and Túnjí Ò pádótun's *Àlò Ònítàn*.

In this phase, the tools available for documentation were mainly traditional tape recorder and reel-to-reel recorder. The above sets of equipment were able to capture the audio aspects of performance which were later transcribed and presented as texts for teaching. Such efforts metamorphosed into Wande Abimbola's *Ìjìnlè Ohún Enu Ifá* (Parts I- III), *Àwo n Ojú Odù Mè rìndínlógún* and Adeboye Babalola's *The Content and Form*

of Yorùbá Ìjálà, Àwo n̄ Oríkì Orílè and Àwo n̄ Oríkì Orílè Me rindinlogún. The success of the above scholars motivated scholars to work on È sà, S àngó-Pípè, Ìjálá, Ìrèmò jé, Ìgbálá, Ègé and Yorùbá festival songs. Many of the documents were also translated into the English language in order to make them accessible to non-Yorùbá speakers. Examples are Abimbola's *Sixteen Great Poems of Ifa*, Bade Ajuwon's *Hunters Funeral Dirges*, Karin Barber's *I could Speak until Tomorrow* and Akintúndé Akinye mi's *Yorùbá Royal Poetry*. The use of reel tape for documentation of Yoruba oral literature was not restricted to Yoruba literary scholars; the individual efforts made by Frank Speed and Doige Simond are also significant. They were both medical practitioners with the University College Hospital, Ibadan. They had interest in Yoruba culture. This made them to contribute to the documentation of Yoruba oral poetry with the reel recorder. Some of the poems documented by them are stored in the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan. The use of reel recorder was made more popular when radio broadcasting was extended to the Nigerian community.

By 1959, when the Western Nigerian Television/Western Nigerian Broadcasting Service (WNTV/WNBS) was established as the first television station in Africa, one of the clear mandates given to the management was the use of indigenous languages on the station. The bulk of indigenous materials used then were largely drawn from Yorùbá oral literature. The Yorùbá travelling theatre practitioners like Hubert Ògúndé, Dúró Ládíípò and Kó lá Ògúnmó lá were involved in the documentation of oral literature in this era. They used the theatrical tradition as a means of transmitting Yoruba oral literature and culture through some radio programmes on air. The various efforts of recording Yorùbá literature on gramophone records was sandwiched between the effort of the radio station and the travelling theatre. Notable among such works was Delano's *ABD Olówe*. However, in the 1970's, the use of reel-to-reel tape and gramophone records had metamorphosed into the use of cassette recorder. The documentation of Yoruba oral literature on cassette was promoted by the radio station. Its availability and accessibility to the general populace makes it one of the enduring tools in the history of Yorùbá oral literature documentation. Even, till now, cassette is still in vogue in the Nigerian society.

However, limitations of audio cassette in capturing both the audio and visual aspects of oral performance spurred the Yorùbá oral literary scholars to go in search of new media that would be able to capture the real culture of Yorùbá as it is represented in Yorùbá oral performance.

The need for the documentation of oral performance through the use of media that could capture both the audio and visual aspects of performance arose as a result of the loss of some of the vital aspects of oral literary performance. This situation posed a lot of challenges to researchers of Yorùbá oral performances. Some of the challenges include:

- the researcher cannot record on paper the social cohesion which the song, chant and dance generate
- the timbre of the instruments used in classifying poems cannot be transmitted to the reader on text
- the language of drums that the drummers send to the singer-performer and the dancing audience cannot be conveyed to the reader
- the personality of the artist is lost.<sup>12</sup>

For instance, the following are essential to composition, performance and assessment of the creative ingenuity of a performer of most oral literary genres in Yoruba:

- (a) the voice of an artist sets him apart from the members of the orchestra and audience
- (b) his voice is used to assess him
- (c) the emotive and affective indices in form of pitch range, a reticulation control tempo, and the like cannot be represented in a text.
- the paralinguistic features of the oral poetic performer, like movements of parts of the body, either to accompany or add to what is uttered in speech, could not be represented.
- audience participation, which is a vital feature of oral performances, could not be captured in the text and recorded poems in tapes, cassettes and compact disk
- most often, audience is involved in the actualization and recreation of any given piece of oral literature.

In order to have solutions to the above challenges, oral performance documentation moved to the era of celluloid also known as umatic video. The introduction of celluloid in the late 1970's marked the beginning of visual recording. The recording of oral performance through this means captured the audio and the visual aspects. By 1976, the film industry emerged with the production of *Àjàní Ògún* by O Īá Balógun. Between 1976 and 1980 other theatre practitioners produced films that captured the oral poetic genres and culture of the Yoruba people. The films produced within that period include *Ìjà Òminira* (O Īa Balógun), *Aiyé*, *Jaíyésinmi*, *Àròpin N Tenia* (Hubert Ogunde's), *Kádàrá*, *Taxi Driver* Parts I and II, *Ìyá Ni Wúrà* (Adéye mi Afo Īayán), *Ò rún Mòdrù*, *Àare Āgbàyé* and *Mos ēbo látán* (Moses O Īàiyá).<sup>13</sup> A distinctive feature of the film produced in this era is the transposition of Yorùbá oral poetry into the dramatic traditional form. In Adélékè's view, the Yorùbá film presents 'eidetic images' and it utilizes aspects of culture.<sup>14</sup> Besides, Yorùbá language is used as the vital medium of communication in these films and they served as vehicle of cultural expression.<sup>15</sup> The era was successful, and many people were attracted into film. However, the use of celluloid as a means of transporting and documenting Yorùbá oral literature was short-lived because it was expensive and it offered limited possibilities for reproduction and circulation. In addition, the celluloid did not give room for proper synchronization of the audio and visual aspects of performance.

The above limitations justify why celluloid was replaced by video recordings. The video-recording stage filled the gap of lack of synchronization of sound and images which was earlier created by the celluloid. Apart from the fact that going to cinema is now a choice, home-video could now be produced. Through the use of home video, the language and culture of the people could be taught in any part of the world.

## The Present State of Documentation of Yorùbá Oral Literature

Currently, the documentation of Yoruba oral literature is based on the foundation that was laid by the early researchers, although the new media are being introduced gradually into our culture. There are four principal efforts involved in transporting culture and Yoruba oral literature. These are:

- A The Yorùbá dramatic tradition
  - a. Radio and television
  - b. Individual researchers
  - c. Institutions

## The Yorùbá Dramatic Tradition

Efforts of Yorùbá film producers in the documentation of Yorùbá literature cannot be ignored. Yorùbá script writers, film makers and producers have employed various means of incorporating Yorùbá culture into their films. Oral narratives and poetry are deployed for thematization effects in films. For instance, *S àngó* is a film based on the myth about S àngó; *Oduduwa*, is a film, is based on the Yorùbá myth of creation. Most times, many of the myths are adapted into the plays. There are times when the script writers are loyal to history. In a nutshell, the dramatization of historical facts and myths has been a sure way of documenting Yorùbá oral literature. Transposition of Yoruba culture is also done through Yorùbá home-videos and, at times, stylistic features used in home-videos draw from Yoruba proverbs, riddles and puns. All these have aesthetic effects on the storylines but they are also an indirect way of documenting oral literature with the new media in form of Video home System (VHS), Compact disc (CD) or digital video disc DVD. Some producers, like Mainframe, are so conscious of the Yoruba cultural heritage that they do not allow language interlarding in any discourse in the films they produce. Examples of such films are *Saworo Ide* and *Agogo Èwò*. Documentation through the above media has made some aspects of Yorùbá oral literature accessible to all. Even those who cannot afford buying copies of the VHS, CD and DVD can rent them at video clubs.

## The Efforts of Radio and Television

Efforts of earliest Yorùbá scholars on documentation gave impetus to radio and television to look into the elements of oral literature. For instance, the documentation of Ifá verses was for a long time done through *Ifá Olókùn Asòrò Dayò*, a dramatized programme viewed on Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) Ibadan for a very long period. “Àkíkà”, a programme focused on the documentation of Ìjálá, is also anchored at the Broadcasting Corporation of Ò yó State (BCOS), Ibadan. All the radio and television stations in the Yorùbá speaking states also document folktales for use, as children educative and entertainment programmes. Examples of such are *Wo ru*, a programme viewed on the NTA, Ibadan, and *Tales on the moonlight*, that is viewed on the Nigerian Television Authority (NTA) National Network.

Documentation of oral narratives is not limited to folktales. History and facts about towns and villages are also documented by the television stations. An example is *Orírun*, a programme transmitted on BCOS television. The purpose of this programme is to document origins of cities, towns and villages in Ò yó State. Although the documentation done by radio and television are mostly for commercial purposes, they are always made available whenever researchers need them.

One advantage that is derived from all the documentations done by radio and television stations is that the oral performances documented are original. The producers always go for recordings at the period of festivals. This aids the originality of the performances, as all the characteristics of oral literature are embedded in them.

### Individual Efforts

Recently, some of the Yorùbá literary poets have taken the step of transporting their poetry to the audience through the use of new technological media. For instance, the following poets have documented their poetry through the use of audio and video CD:

Artist	Genre	Location
Yemí Elebuihon	Ifá	Ò yó
Àlàbí Ògúndepo	Ìjálá	
Kó lá Akintáyò	Ìjálá	Ò yó and Ò s un
speaking areas of		
States		
Tóyòsí Arigbabuwo	Ekun Ìyàwó	
Babatunde Balogun	Oríkì Orílè	Ìkàlè of Ondo State
Fóyèké Àjàngílá	Esa Eégúngún	
Comfort Omoge	Orin Àsíkò	Ìjè s a land of Ò s un
Adedara Arihunralojaoba	Orin Adámò	
State		
Ye mi Elémùré	Orin Alámò	Èkìtì of Èkìtì State

### The Need for the New Media

The need for the new media for the documentation of oral literature arose when it was discovered that the traditional media were not interactive media. Interaction is important to an average Yorùbá man because he sees himself as an integral part of Yorùbá oral performance. The limitation of radio as a medium portrayed in the Yorùbá 'asò rò mágbèsì' (One-who-speaks-without-expecting-a-reply). The term is derogatory, because it is only a *sìgìdì* (statue) that behaves as such within the context of the Yorùbá culture. With the new media, there comes a new lease of life for Yorùbá expressions in a natural way, because the new media provide facilities for interactivity. Thus, the introduction of phone-in-programmes and sending of text messages have reduced the

distance that was hitherto created between the audience and the performer in the traditional media.

Furthermore, the digital technology could capture images both in the static and in motion forms. There is also no difference in the way performance is stored. Once a performance is stored in the digital form, there is a level of uniformity in its processing and dissemination of the information it contains.

Another advantage of the digital technology is the economy of scale. Most of the new media have many utilities and they make use of various devices to bring back the level of interactivity lost through other media like print, radio and television. Therefore, documentation of Yorùbá oral literature is now being done using the new media like Ipod, digital video disk (DVD), video compact disc (VCD), flash drive, MP3, mobile phone, camcorder and computer. The documentation of oral literature in this way now gives audience access to the performance again and again. The use of new media enhances mobility of Yorùbá oral literature, because the recorded performance could be posted on the computer, and a researcher could now view it as he uses his computer.

Besides, the importance of memorization could not be ignored in acquiring skills in oral performance could not be undervalued. The new media are always mobile. Oral literature is now recorded, and researchers can now download such into phones, MP3, Ipod and computer. This enhances memorization and aids learning of Yorùbá oral performance. In addition, the new media create an opportunity for the teaching of Yorùbá oral literature and culture to the people in the Diaspora, with little or no stress. This is because Yorùbá oral literature could be posted on online archives and a website could be created for the documentation of these genres

### **Institutional Efforts**

Institutional efforts are the efforts made by higher institutions where Yorùbá is studied as a subject. The responsibility of transmitting Yorùbá culture and oral tradition to other parts of the world is picked up by higher institution where Yorùbá is studied. The researcher fully agrees with original position that the electronic age, which is an age of secondary orality, depends on writing and prints for its expression. Therefore, researches done on Yorùbá oral poetry combine the use of the print and electronic media for collection and documentation of Yorùbá oral literature. It is worthy of note that, year in, year out, students research into various aspects of Yorùbá oral literature. Until recently, many of the works done dwell on the Òyó-speaking areas of southwestern Nigeria with the exception of Olutoye's doctoral thesis on Ùjààmésé, a festival song among the Èkìtì of southwestern Nigeria. With the emergence of universities in all other areas of Yorùbá, we now have documentations of Yorùbá oral literature that are transcribed in their dialects. Examples include Idowu-Osho's doctoral thesis titled "The Èrùngbé tradition of Oral Poetry in Ìkòròdú, Southwestern Nigeria, and Àyàndokún's M. A. project titled "Voices in the Wind: An appraisal of Oríkì Ibarapa Méjèjèjè", the project is a documentation on a linguistic group in Òyó State. It is noteworthy that many of the documentations done are still in the old media, like cassettes and VHS.

The documentation of Yorùbá oral literature at various tertiary institutions, has moved to the use of DVD. Now, some researchers use oral literature to reconstruct history, and such is produced as CD and DVD. In some institutions, a combination of the use of print and new media is embarked upon for transporting Yorùbá literature. This step is taken to address the problem of the failure of texts and the print media to capture the paralinguistic resources involved in oral performance. These media often obfuscate the issue of space and time in the performance of Yorùbá oral literature. Yoruba oral tradition now lives in a boundless global village. The posting of Yorùbá oral literature through communication technology also creates a medium for mass interaction. Many people who have never visited the Yorùbá geographical zone will have insight into their culture.

Judging by what exists currently, it could be inferred that little has been done among the Yorùbá oral literary scholars in the area of documentation of Yorùbá literature with the new media. It was discovered while carrying out this research that few Yoruba oral literary scholars and students make use of mobile phones, MP3, Ipod and camcorder in place of VHS and cassette. However, some individual researchers have collections of oral poetic genres like, *è sà*, *oríkì*, *ìtàn* and *ìjálà*, and such documentations, are now adapted to reconstruct histories of cities and some contemporary events. The beauty of it is that these documents are produced in forms of CD, VCD and DVD. In addition, some of these documentations are resource materials used as teaching aids at schools and by individuals to teach the Yorùbá language and culture. An example of this is Adeola Faleye's newly released documentation on the late Timi of E ò ò , in Ò s ùn State of Nigeria.

Every year, graduate students working on oral literature turn out documentations on oral genres from different parts of the Yorùbá-speaking states. These students are now encouraged to do their recordings with the new media, because they are easy to carry about, easy to memorize, and good for documentation. After the completion of theses or master projects, the documents can now be stored in DVDs. Such data are labelled and kept in departmental language laboratories. The data are also transcribed and translated as appendices in dissertations or theses and electronic copies in form of DVDs are submitted to the postgraduate school.

The newest phase in the documentation of Yorùbá oral literature by higher institutions is documentation of Yoruba oral literature in print and CD/DVD forms. One of the texts that came as a result of this effort is titled *Orís irís i Èwì Alohùn Yorùbá Pèl-ù Fónrán Onífídíò Apá Kìn-ín-ní*. The book is a collection of twenty-five oral poetic genres, from different parts of Yorùbá communities. It cuts across the seven Yorùbá-speaking states of southwestern Nigeria (i.e. Ò yó , Ogun, Ò s ùn, Lagos, Ondo, Èkìtì and Kwara).

The new development that has taken place in the documentation of oral literature, especially in its study, has shown that the new media have facilitated its collection, documentation, processing and storage. However, there are some challenges that confront the use of these new media in Yorùbá society.

## Challenges and Prospects

The documentation of Yorùbá oral literature has not been the primary focus of many higher institutions. However, the need for the documentation lies in the fact that oral literature is studied as a course at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The teaching of oral performance is, therefore, necessary, and more often, students are supposed to acquire skills in performance, and be able to perform some of the oral poetic genres before graduating from the university. This requirement makes the documentation of oral literature necessary. The method for its mastery and learning has drastically improved with the use of the new media. In the University of Ibadan, oral artists' performances are recorded live, using a camcorder, The recorded performances are transmitted into DVD which is later produced on masse for students' consumption. This reduces the stress of rote learning which we normally embarked upon in the past. The master DVD is finally labelled and stored in the appropriate department's laboratory for future references.

However, some challenges face the use of these new media. The challenges could be categorized into four:

- (a) Human attitude
- (b) Familiarity/Accessibility of the new media
- (c) Financial constraints
- (d) Infrastructural problem

### Human/Attitudinal Problem

Awareness of how the new media could be used in the reconfiguration of Yorùbá history and culture and the dissemination of Yorùbá oral literature needs to be created because the attitude of many Yorùbá literary scholars and artists to documentation of Yorùbá oral literature, through the new media, is still negative. Scholars and artists in this category believe that the only advantage that could be gained in the use of the new media for dissemination of oral literature is mobility and accessibility of the Yorùbá oral poetic genres and narratives to the global world. In the opinion of these scholars, documentation of Yorùbá oral literature will do the following harms:

- Dymystification of Yorùbá oral poetic genre
- The characteristic of direct interaction between audience and the performer/artist will no longer be active but passive; in essence, it will turn us to spectators instead of 'spectactors'.
- The immediacy of composition, use of digression and emotive/affective relationship between the audience and artist will cease to exist.
- Performance will be mechanical, and the naturalness of oral performance is lost.
- The life in oral performance will be annulled
- Individuals will be reinforced and this is against the spirit of communication that is entailed in the 'ownership' of oral literature, and this leads to exploitation, because capitalism thrives on individualism; socialization derived from going to watch a performances will also be lost.

- The economic gains accrued to performers at the point of performance will be lost.
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The aftermath of this attitude is seen in the way some Yorùbá oral artists detest the documentation of their performance.

There is also the ethical issue that must be addressed in the documentation of these genres. The issue of who owns the copyright of Yorùbá oral genres posted on webs and online archives must be seriously taken into consideration if, indeed, the documentation of Yorùbá literature will thrive among the Yorùbá. The Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria, an association that comprises the bulk of researchers that work on the study of oral literature, must be saddled with the responsibility of working out the modality for having a mutual understanding between artists and researchers.

Radio, television, movies, and home videos are part of the Yorùbá culture. Therefore, there should be a synergy between Yorùbá oral literary scholars and media stations. At present, the home video transmits Yorùbá oral literature and culture through the use of DVD and CD, and such are used to teach, and are stored in the computer, and so on. One of the visible challenges facing the home video producers is the way some aspects of culture have been misrepresented in their films. At times, there are lots of language interlarding, misuse of words and proverbs, and corruption of culture. Cultural hybridity is visible in most of the home video. However, there is the need for Yorùbá researchers to checkmate the home-video producers. Prompt attention must be paid to their weaknesses. They must be encouraged to be familiar with the culture and research into any aspect of the culture they intend to portray in their video films so as to have a proper documentation. They should be enlightened about the function of their Video-films as a vehicle of cultural expression in Yorùbá society and even in the Diaspora.

The issue of capacity building is also a great challenge to the use of the new media for documentation of Yorùbá oral literature. People have to be trained because, as it is, many people do not have access to the media and technologies. The government has its own role to play in releasing funds for such trainings, which may be anchored in all institutions that have something to do with documentation of oral literature, because the extinction of the culture of a people amounts to the extinction of such a people. Therefore, attempt to preserve the culture will enhance sustainable development in our society.

Rapidity in the development of the new media is also a great challenge faced by Yorùbá literary scholars. Nigeria is a consumer, rather than a producer, of technology. The country is a dumping ground for used technology. Therefore, we are not always aware of new technological developments on time. This may also determine how much we can achieve in the use of the new media for documentation.

The issue of poverty is another challenge that must be addressed. Education is not given the expected priority in Nigeria. Many students live in abject poverty. They hardly

eat three square meals a day. Getting money to invest on the new media for collection of data on field trips may be difficult for students in this category. Therefore, the Millennium Development Goal of eradication of poverty must be addressed, for easy accessibility to some of these media, especially the mobile ones like Ipod, MP3, and mobile phones.

The issue of incessant power outage must also be addressed if teaching and learning of Yorùbá oral literature through the new media will succeed. For oral poetry to be taught using the projector, steady power supply is a necessity. The situation of epileptic power supply must be taken care of by the government, in order to help researchers in fulfilling their role.

### **Conclusion**

This paper examines the documentation of Yorùbá oral literature retrospectively and prospectively. It is revealed that documentation of Yorùbá oral literature has been an object of interest to scholars because of their sustained interest in human culture. Oral literature is part of culture, and, at the same time, a vital tool of transmission of culture. If we take cognizance of the role culture has played in the development of countries like China, Malaysia and Japan, it is expedient for Yorùbá literary scholars to sustain the nurturing of their culture, for the development of their society.

The state of endangerment of the Yorùbá language and culture is also discussed. Many of the younger generation no longer use the language, and the few who use it are fond of interlarding it with English. This has promoted a state of linguistic hybridity. Oral literature is a vehicle for promotion of language because the core of the language is embedded in the use of proverbs, pun and other stylistic features which are embedded in it. It is assumed that listening to oral performance will solve the problem of language extinction.

Repetition of oral poetry that is recorded in Ipod, MP3, or mobile phone will assist in making the Yorùbá language, literature and culture accessible to the younger generation, and this will keep the oral tradition alive.

It is stressed in this paper that there is the urgent need for the use of the new media for transmitting Yorùbá oral literature and culture. The various bodies that need to promote the use of these new media are the government, Yorùbá Studies Association of Nigeria, broadcasting stations and, even, individuals that have interest of their culture at heart. It is in doing this that real 'life' and preservation will be given to Yorùbá oral literature and culture and transmitting it to other parts of the world will be easier.

## ENDNOTES

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- <sup>1</sup> Isidore Okpewho, *African Oral Literature, Background, Continuity* Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1992 p. 5
- <sup>2</sup> A. Adeleke Fakoya “Endangerment Scenario: The case of Yorùbá” 2008 p. 1
- <sup>3</sup> Tunde Babawálé, “Culture, Politics and Sustainable Development: Lesson for Nigeria” in Labode Popoola et. al ed. *Contemporary issues in Sustainable Development: Lessons for, and Challenges to Nigeria*. Ibadan: The Postgraduate School University of Ibadan 2008 p. 5
- <sup>4</sup> T. Parson, *Societies*. Eaglewood: Chff W.J. Prentce Hall 1966
- <sup>5</sup> F. B. O. Akporobaro, *Introduction to African Oral Literature*. Lagos: Princeton Publishing Company.2005 p. 29
- <sup>6</sup> Isidore Okpewho, *African Oral Literature, Background, Continuity* Bloomington: Indiana University Press 1992 p. 5
- <sup>7</sup> F. B. O. Akporobaro, *Introduction to African Oral Literature*. Lagos: Princeton Publishing Company. 2005 p. 32
- <sup>8</sup> F. B. O. Akporobaro, *Introduction to African Oral Literature*. Lagos: Princeton Publishing Company 2005 p. 36
- <sup>9</sup> P. E. H. Hair, *The Early Study of Nigeria Language*. Essays and Bibliography Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1967 p. 4
- <sup>10</sup> Bisi Ogunsina, *The Development of the Yorùbá Novel*. Ilorin: Gospel Faith Misison Press. 1992 p. 29
- <sup>11</sup> Olatunde Olatunji, 1984 p. 169
- <sup>12</sup> Olatunde Olatunji, “Issues in the Study of Oral Poetry in Africa”. *Journal of African Studies*, UCLA, LOS Angeles. Vol 6, No. 2 1979:112-119
- <sup>13</sup> Durotoye Adélékè, “Culture, Art and Film in an African Society: An Evaluation” *Nordic Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 12, No. 1, 2003 p. 50
- <sup>14</sup> Durotoye Adélékè, “Audience Perception of Yorùbá Films: Ìbàdàn As A Case Study, Ph.D. Thesis, University of Ibadan. 1995 p. 173-174
- <sup>15</sup> Olatunde Olátúnjí, *Beyond the Spoken Word: An African Language Literature Experiences*. An Inaugural Lecture of University of Ibadan 1993 p. 4

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