

NETWORK OF YORÙBÁ PRINT CULTURE – "YORUBA PRINT"

Shola Adenekan, Oluwabunmi Tope Bernard and Nureni Aremu Bakenne

YORÙBÁ PRINT CULTURE: 1840 – TILL DATE

Yorùbá Print Culture: Network and Modernities

Since 1852, when the first Yorùbá dictionary was compiled, Yorùbá print culture has been influencing all cultural forms in South-West and North-Central Nigeria, from short stories in magazines, to scripts for Nollywood films (the world's second largest film industry that is based in Nigeria), and to poetry reading in school halls. Some of the fictional characters that one sees on local television often reprise the portrayals from Yorùbá language newspapers, books and magazines, over the years. However, a lot of the existing scholarship on Nigerian and Yorùbá print culture – in the context of comparative literary studies - focuses on works written in the English language. Nevertheless, much of the materials that we have surveyed so far at archives in Nigeria and elsewhere produced original thoughts and ideas in Yorùbá, and much of what they articulated is grounded in a worldview that is uniquely Yorùbá. Albert S. Gerard (1986) and Phillip S. Zachernuk (2000) do broadly the same thing, in their respective studies of African and southern Nigerian intellectual cultures.

Why Yorùbá Print Culture?

Yorùbá Print Culture is important because of its articulation of its relationship between transcontinental print networks and local contexts of production. The newspapers, small magazines and books of colonial and postcolonial Nigeria, especially those in Yorùbá language, produced new cultural spaces and intellectual traditions that made new publics possible. Early signs of anticolonial struggles in colonial West Africa can be found in the various networks of Yorùbá print publications that existed during the colonial era. The subversive assertions and complications of postcolonial identities also make Yoruba print culture significant, especially through its foregrounding of the epistemic violence of colonialism and an emergent activist response to this. In postcolonial years, new networks helped to produce new genres of poetry such as Ewi, and this also influenced the formations of new Christian denominations such as Redeem Christian Church of God, which has several branches in Europe and the Americas. The world's second biggest film industry Nollywood, thrives because of its link to Yorùbá print culture. This project challenges the single story-of abject and poverty - about Africa, by showing that societies on the continent use print technology as an important tool that allows them to adapt and connect with an ever-changing world, as well as actively participate in the world republic of letters.

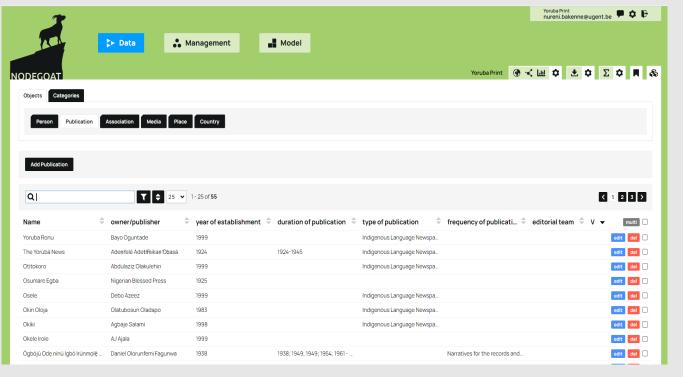


Fig. 3: Node Goat Indicating Yoruba Publishers



Fig. 4: Node Goat Indicating Social Visualisation of Information

Countries where Yoruba is spoken Sierra Leone Ghana Togo Benin Nigeria

Yorùbá culture is one of Africa's most prominent and influential cultures. About 50 million Yoruba people in today's Nigeria are to be found in the South-West and North-Central of Nigeria. Outside of Nigeria, there are Yorùbá - speaking people in the West African countries of Benin Republic, Togo, Gambia, Ghana, Ivory Coast and Sierra Leone. Outside of Africa, there are people who identify as Yorùbá or with Yorùbá culture in countries like Trinidad and Tobago, Brazil, Cuba, and the United States. Although, there are no definite headcounts, there are arguably over a million people of Yorùbá descent in Europe. According to the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, "A mixture of the old and new descendants of the Yorùbá now live in North America, the United Kingdom and the rest of Europe." Many of these people directly and indirectly engage with Yorùbá print culture regularly through a myriad of media formats, which include printed materials, the broadcast media and digital platforms.



IWE EKINI
LI EDE YORUBA

Fig. 2: Alawiiye Book Series by J.F. Odunjo

Fig. 1: Yoruba Book Series by D.O. Fagunwa

No. I. Ablętokata October 1859. Price 1d. or 1206.

Ntobati awon chia kò bate ku iwe mwon ni oma' kan-ti won fi .iri ithin gbà li odo elòmiran ni gbigboponnà yi kere ju, nitori awa mkan li olè mò, ati lati mu die mò nino awon enia ti owà li aiye, patàki awon ti owà li ni owa li aiye, patàki awon ti owa leti odo wa. awon eniti omo ottip pipò to bi awa tikai-a wa ti mo. Nigbati awa lè kà iwe, awa jogun on Ismla ti a fi gbo jhin nkan ti osummo nost, ti ukan ti olini rere: airi ti nkan ti ofi ge li o'o pipe.- Nipa onà yi li awon oyinbo ti owà li onà jijin rere si ile nwou fi mo gbogbo nkan ti oge nibè, nitori Iwe ihin tako mi gbogbo nkan ti oge nibè, nitori Iwe ihin tako mi gbogbo ihin na, ey ti toi ge nipa imotelà Qloran, eyi ti awon enia nge ati eyi ti nwon berè lati ge. Iba gepe awon oyinbo kò le ka iwe, moy ki ba ti mo nkan nwonyi, Iwe ilini iba si dabi abo takada ai uwon. Bebe awon oyinbo pèlu si ni ive ti ako an myon lati odo ore awon ajaiti owi tun nwon niti oran ikoko won, li eyi ti bi nwon kò ri ara nwon lioqun pipo, sibè a won mo oham ti oge dajudaju.

Mr. Herbert Macaulay's Open Letter to the Governor (Yoruba Version)

SPECIAL EDITION.

EKO AKETE.

"EMI VIO FI OHUN TI O NDUN MARUNUU HAN AWON ALAGBARA, NGO SI JE ALAGBAWI AWON ODI "-W. T. SILAB VOL. V. NO 255. SATURDAY, DEUEMBER 31, 1927. 4d.

The Leading Weekly Vernacular Newspaper in Nigerla.

White's Radical Gonkiller.

(NATIVE.)

[A complete cure for old and tresh Gonorrhoca.]

When Gonorrhea is not properly cured, it gives rise to other troubles and diseases, such as Barreness, Piles, Kidney Diseases, Stricture, Rupture, Rheumatism, Sore-eyes, etc.

N.B.—This Medicine cures Gonorrhea completely in either man or woman, so that no secondary diseases can follow.

Made from pure Native Herbs, and sold only by Victor White, Esq., Chemist.

41, Offin Road, Lagos.

PRICE: Ten Shillings (10/-) per bottle.

Packing and Postage 2/6d extra, to all parts of Nigeria.

EGBOGI ALAWOTAN ATOSI.

[Fun April India in Illum]

Ti a ko ba tete wo Asosi san daradara, o man ndi enia lowo lati se abiamo, o si ma nfa origi arun mi wa, bi.—Jedi-jedi, Aran, Iju, Kda, Ijake, Ase, Isakuregbe, Arun Oju, ati arun mi.

N.B.—Egbogi yi nwo Alosi san lawota, patopata, ko si nje kio ri sye wu arun mi sile.

Presented By+
EDWARD THE SEVENTH BY THE GRACE OF GOD OF
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND &
THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN & IRELAND &
THE BRITISH DOMINIONS BEYOND THE SEAS, KING, THE
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, EMPEROR OF INDIA BIBLE
DEFENDER OF THE FAITH, 1904 TO REPLACE THE
ALAKE OF ABECOKUTA, JULY 1904 TO REPLACE FATHER OF
ALAKE BY QUEEN VICTORIA, 1848 TO SAGBUA FATHER OF
THE PRESENT ALAKE WHICH WAS LOST IN A FIRE
INCIDENT 20 YEARS LATER
INCIDENT 20 YEARS LATER

Fig. 5: First Newspaper in Nigeria, October 25, 1859

Fig. 6: Eko Akete, December 31, 1927

Fig. 7: First Bible written in Yoruba , 1900

Research Materials

The "YorubaPrint" team, made up of Shola Adenekan (Principal Investigator), whose work dwells on Network of Yoruba Print Culture; Oluwabunmi Tope Bernard (Postdoctoral Fellow) focuses on Short Biographies of Yoruba Writers while Nureni Aremu Bakenne (Ph.D. Researcher) researches on Nigeria's First Newspaper-ìwé ìròhìn Fún Àwọn Ará Egbà àti Yoruba. The team has been collating and digitizing relevant research materials for this project. The research team's activities include research trips to archives; a compilation of a bibliography of resources (updated thrice-yearly on the online project database); the identification of key resources for digital preservation in the online project archive subject to copyright permission. In collaboration with research associates in Nigeria, the team has already digitised some precarious materials from various archives in West Africa and the UK, as shown in the list: • Akede Eko 1929-32, 1934, 1937-53 • Eko Akete 1922-25, 1927-29, 1937 • Eko Igbehin 1946-47 • Eleti Ofe 1923-30, 1947-53 • Osumare Egba 1936-3 • Irawo Obokun 1952-54 • Irohin Yoruba 1945-54 • Iwe Irohin 1860-67 • Iwe Irohin-Eko 1890 • Yoruba News 1924-26, 1929-32, 1936, 1938-40 • Irohin Yoruba 1954 - 2016 • Gbohungbohun • Iwe Irohin fun Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba. We have also set up a database for the University of Ibadan (Nigeria) libraries, where the digitized materials are stored for local use. The project has been working with the Digital Humanities Research team at Ghent University. The data we are extrapolating are being analysed through a visualization software called Nodegoat.

References

- 1 Adenekan, Shola. "Yorùbá Print Culture: Network and Modernities, 1852-Present ERC Starting Grant 2020". An ERC Research Proposal (2020):5.
- 2 Barber, Karin. "When people cross thresholds." African Studies Review 50.2 (2007): 111-123.
- 3 Barnes, Andrew. "Samuel Ajayi Crowther: African and Yoruba Missionary Bishop." Oxford Research Encyclopedia of African History. 2018.
- 4 Falola, Toyin. "African history before 1885." (2000).
- 5 Gérard, Albert S., ed. European-Language Writing in Sub-Saharan Africa. John Benjamins Publishing, 1986.
- 6 Zachernuk, Philip Serge. Colonial Subjects: an African intelligentsia and Atlantic ideas. University of Virginia Press,



Fig. 9: Samuel Ajayi Crowther (Centre) with other Missionaries at Kenston, Kent, United States in 1873



