

The Social Media and the Revitalisation of Yorùbá Language and Culture

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Abstract

The social media provides a space for interaction of people and languages across the globe. Today, the English language is the main medium of interaction on the social media rendering indigenous languages endangered. In spite of this, the Yoruba language continues to find its space. This paper, therefore, examines the impacts of the social media on the preservation of Yorùbá language and culture especially among the younger generation. This is with a view to ascertaining the degree of its relevance and their contributions to the revitalisation of Yorùbá language and culture. The study adopts Visser's (2014) model of heritage revival which stresses the strategies and opportunities for cultural revival inherent in the social media and ethnolinguistic vitality theory (EVT) by Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977). Two major classifications are recognised; Nigeria and the diaspora platforms Facebook popular Yorùbá pages and Instagram such as BBC Yorùba, Òwe àti Èwà Yorùbá pónbélé, Yorùbá di wúra, Àkànlo Èdè Yorùbá, Orúko Yorùba and Másòyinbó. Proudly Yoruba German girl/omọ *Ilorin* and Yorùbá Pikin make up the platforms from the diaspora. The study finds that these platforms provide indigenous knowledge of the Yorùbá culture ranging from teaching of Yorùbá language, proverbs, traditional values, traditional music, not neglecting addressing current issues as they emerge in the society. The paper posits that this development will ensure the continued use of the Yorùbá language. The paper recommends that other languages should adopt these methods for the maintenance and revitalisation of their indigenous languages. Group administrators should

address contemporary issues relating to the younger generation.

Key words: Social media; Language Revitalization; Facebook; Instagram; Younger generation

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INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the most essential properties of man. It is the only element that distinguishes humans from animals. A language is employed to serve many purposes ranging from communicating with fellow humans, expressing our minds and desires, languages are also used for social interaction, without which the whole human race will be left incommunicado it is also for personal reinforcement, learning aid and for transmission of culture since language and culture are intertwined. Halliday (1978) mentions that language serves three functions, which are ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions. Language is also an important mark of identity, which indicates that out of the 6500 in the world, one can identify a particular language. Language loss is a global pandemic over the years.

However, efforts are also being intensified by linguists and communities to revive their languages and culture which are essentially ethnic identification markers that has swept the world. Several of African languages are plagued by the presence of languages with higher prestige. These languages can be both endoglossic and exoglossic in nature. Unfortunately, more than sixty years after independence, the hegemony and domination of English in the linguistic landscape of Nigeria has not

changed and the indigenous languages are still struggling behind the English language in terms of prestigious status and institutional support. However, the emergence of the social media which was initially designed for information dissemination, has gradually becomes an everyday use among everyone across all ages. The social media has become an important avenue for inter-personal interactions and dissemination of information. The social media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and/or exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks. It is a modern means of communication which is clearly distinct from the traditional methods because communication and interactions are done in virtual communities the users have the privilege of sharing videos and pictures. It is also important also for its user-generated contents whereby comments and reactions are generated on posts. It is interesting to note that the use and presence of users on the social media is not on anyway limited by age, education, gender or social status. In this case, in almost everywhere, it is hardly impossible to come across a place where there is nobody using the social media. In situations as this, it is only imperative that the Yorùbá language is not left out. This corroborates Yusuf (2017:209) assertion that ‘though the development and adoption of information and communications technologies (ICT) by the Yoruba language media is an emerging trend with snail-pace success, there are now concerted efforts by different African media organisations to make full use of the opportunities IT offers’. The endangerment of the Yorùbá language is echoed in Yusuf, Adétómíwá and Adédèjì (2020:149) where they state that 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 the tertiary, broadcasting, and publishing for literary and academic purposes’ the study notes that the English language is the dominant language on the internet followed by the code-mixing of English and pidgin English while Yorùbá is less used. The relevance of the internet is stressed in Agba (2002:253) where he indicates that Internet is the most technologically advanced medium of communication. It is multimedia information superbly way that facilitates business, sports, politics, entertainment and other endeavours across international boundaries.

In one of the Yorùbá platforms, *Qmọ Yoóbá*, indicates that the inadequacies evidenced in Twitter and Google on Yorùbá translation inspired him to go on YouTube to share information. *Qmọ Yoóbá* in Avila (2017) informs that “we have stories to tell, stories the world has never seen before, give us the opportunity to tell it and the world would be a better place for all. The national Language Policy (2022) maintains that language endangerment is at different levels, this is because” within the Nigerian linguistic landscape, there are different Nigerian

languages some of which are at different levels of endangerment “therefore some are categorised as being mildly endangered, moderately endangered and other are grossly endangered the Yorùbá language is not categorized as endangered, it is far from truism for anyone to think it is safe, this is because the language is not spoken by majority of young elites. However, the Yorùbá people of southwestern Nigeria have choose to deliberately work on the promotion of the language through the internet. There are several personal and group handles that have consistently maintained the Yorùbá language as medium of expression. Other platforms like BBC Yorùbá also feature news reports in Yorùbá with thousands of viewers/respondents. This initiative has made the social media; especially Facebook and WhatsApp a common denominator or melting pot for both the rich and the poor; the educated and uneducated. Studies on the Yorùbá language on the internet include Àjàyí and Fáṣehun (2018), Ọnádípe-Shalom and Adétòkun (2023). Àjàyí and Fáṣehun’s (2018) paper focused on how the internet can increase the knowledge people have about wild life. Ọnádípe-Shalom and Adétòkun’s (2023) study was on interlading on social media. Alshehri (2016) discusses the need for language revitalisation in terms of its significance, strategies, methods and issues involved. The study concludes that ‘ethical reasons, aesthetic motivations, economic justifications, cognitive benefits are adequate to embark on any language revival program.’ Alshehri (2016, p.3)

Apart from Facebook, the Yorùbá language is also visibly used on Instagram. These Yorùbá handles are to teach the language and culture of the Yorùbá people. Some of the popular Yorùbá platforms on Instagram include *Yorùbá di wùrà*, *Àkànlò Èdè Yorùbá*, *Orúkọ Yorùbá rẹwà*, *Yorùbá literature*, *Yorùbá di wùrà* is a platform for the teaching of names animals in Yorùbá land, names of plants, traditional occupations of the Yorùbá people, historic Yorùbá towns etc. the handle also presents current issues which make the platform relevant at all times

Àkànlò-Èdè Yorùbá is another platform on Instagram where Yorùbá language features prominently. The platform is used to promote the widespread knowledge of Yorùbá idioms and its right usages. The major aspect of Yorùbá language in this platform is Yorùbá idioms is idioms, which are also translated for viewers who do not understand the Yorùbá idioms.

Orúkọ Yorùbá Rẹwà. This platform is dedicated to the teaching and promotion of indigenous Yorùbá names. It showcases the beauty and meaning of several Yorùbá names. This handle also give the meaning of these Yorùbá names in English language for other fans where not Yorùbá. For example, *Olúwafadékémi*: the lord pampers me with royalty/crown, *Èbùnolúwa* God’s gift *Ayomíde* my joy has come.

Yorùbá Literature: This platform promote the use of

Yorùbá language by teaching basic communication tools such as proverbs, folktales and other Yorùbá cultural values such as greetings. This platform also provides English translation. This serves a dual purpose of educating the indigenes as well as carrying non Yorùbá speakers along. The platform attempts to educate the young people on why bilingualism should be additive and not subtractive. This also facilitates inter-generational transmission of the language from the adults to the younger ones.

In order to properly evaluate the vitality of a language, linguists have proposed several scales by which the vitality of a language can be assessed. Brenzinger, Yamamoto, Krauss, Aikawa, Miyaoka and Dwyer (2003) identified nine factors for verifying language endangerment. The language being investigated will then be scored marks for each of the factors. Lewis (2006, p.5) maintains that “the combined scores of the factors then provide a measure of the level of endangerment and a sense of the level of urgency for remedial and revitalization efforts to be undertaken. This was the outcome of the meeting of the Ad Hoc Expert Group on Endangered languages convened by the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Unit. These factors were set as assessment scales for the evaluation of the vitality/endangerment of a language.

The Yorùbá are one of the most cultured people on earth. They are known for their vast cultural heritage ranging from greetings, wedding, naming, burial to cooperative practices. The rich cultural heritage of the people are found in their local wisdom, In proverbs not excluding their folktales. According to Yusuf, Adétomíwá and Adédèjì (2020) elucidates several inadequacies ravaging the use of Yorùbá on social media. Some of these include the hegemony of English and the negative attitude of the Yorùbá elites. However, there is need to evaluate the various platform where Yorùbá language is the medium. Since response to new domains and media, Martin (2022) and Trev (2020) report that over of half of the contents on the internet is in English language. He added that “an assessment of a language’s response to new media is important for understanding how new technology affects the vitality of a language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Crystal (2011) one of the four major means of engaging the public in language revitalization efforts is the internet, the others being the media, the arts and the school curriculum. Earlier studies on this subject include Balógun (2023), Yusuf, Adétomíwá and Adédèjì (2020), Yusuf (2017), Oguchi, Chigozirim, Olátúnbòsún and Atakale (2015), Yusuf, The study of the attitudes of youths to the use of indigenous languages Nigerian home videos was carried out among three hundred University students by Oguchi, Chigozirim, Olátúnbòsún and Atakale

(2015) the study revealed that the youths believe the home videos could be a major means of teaching and disseminating the indigenous languages and culture. The research recommends the improvement of the quality of the production especially as regards subtitling to English. Alshehri (1916) discusses on the strategies, methods and issues relating to language revitalization. He noted that “Indeed, a remarkable number of languages have disappeared in many parts of the world, and this event has resulted in losing a lot of vital cultural practices.” (Alshehri, 1916, p.11). He further discussed the visibility of the Yorùbá language on the internet with the understanding that it has become a dominant indigenous language on social media for reportage and mark of identity. Yusuf (2017) is a study on inappropriate terminologies often used on digital platforms in their presentation of news and reports. Balógun (2023) posits that the media and electronic technology are strong devices by which contemporary urban culture can be passed and language maintained (see Balógun, 2023, Colangelo, 2020; Crystal, 2000).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical frameworks adopted in this study are Visser’s (2014) strategies in heritage language revival and Giles, Bourhis and Taylor’s (1977) Ethnolinguistic vitality theory (EVT) Visser (2014) discusses the important roles the digital revolution has come to play in language maintenance and revitalization. He opines that the digital age offers great opportunities for cultural and heritage institutions to connect with and engage their audience since meaningful and sustainable way. We also employed Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977, p.308) ethnolinguistic vitality theory (EVT) which refers to socio-structural factors that make “a group likely to behave as a distinctive and active collective entity in intergroup situations” and an ‘active collective entity within multilingual settings” (Landry and Bourhis 1997, p.30). Giles, Bourhis and Taylor (1977) aver that three basic socio-cultural variables are relevant in the study of group’s vitality. These are status factor (includes the economic, social, prestige, and socio-historical aspects), demography (the numerical strength of the ethnolinguistic group and their spread within the territory and the institutional support factor (whether the language is recognised in the media, education and government). They determine the ability of a group to survive as a distinct entity in a multilingual setting. Edwards (1992) gives eleven factors that can influence ethnolinguistic vitality across three different levels. These are demography, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, politics (including law and government), geography, education, religion, economics and media.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a qualitative research methods to examine the language maintenance strategies employed by speakers of Yorùbá language on social media. Data drawn from Ten platforms were purposively selected for this research from Facebook and Instagram. All the selected platforms engage in teaching the language, culture and traditions of the Yorùbá.

LANGUAGE MAINTENANCE EFFORTS

Language maintenance, according to Hoffman, (1991, p.186) is described as a situation where members of a community try to keep the languages they have always used. It is an effort at stabilising endangered languages by linguists or speakers of the language. Unfortunately several communities are unaware that ‘a community does not realize its language is threatened until it is too late to do anything to remedy the situation’. According to Fasold (1984, p.238) language maintenance is a phenomenon whereby “the community collectively decides to continue using the language or languages it been traditionally used”. Language maintenance therefore, recognises the presence of languages of higher status and purposively strategies areas to strengthen the valourising and empowering the local language. One of such areas is the use of the languages on social media. Dixon (1997, p.144). In addition, Pauwels, (2016;21) indicates that language maintenance also relates to ‘situations where an L1 continues to be used in some but not all contexts by various generations of speakers’ Several studies have been conducted on language maintenance efforts by communities. These include, Bámgbóṣé (2012) this study on urban multilingualism emphasizes the need for multilingualism in heterogeneous communities without making the other languages less safe. Other studies include Ònádípẹ-Shalom (2013) where the Ògú language is said to e maintained more by the older generation than the younger generation. The study also reveals that the language, though endangered by the Yorùbá language is maintained in religion. Borbely (2000) in examined language maintenance and shift in an indigenous Romanian community in Hungary. Veettil, Binu, Karthikeyan (2020) investigated language maintenance and shift among keralites in Oman. According to earlier report , the parents are more loyal and competent in the heritage language than the second generation the children’s communication is strikingly marked with code-switching, and code mixing but their study revealed that that was only a temporary phenomenon and did not take place at the cost of L1.(p. 319). Thy argued that the mother tongues still the preferred language in the home domain and that instead of language shift, what is prevalent among the younger generation is lot of code-mixing and code switching. Hornsby and McLeod (2022)

text is on the various methods families can adopt to revitalise their languages

Giles et al (1977), submit that status, demographic and institutional support factors influence language maintenance. Under status, Apel and Muysken consider economic, social, socio-historical and language status. They opine that the economic strength of a language group automatically determines the survival of the language. An economically poor, disadvantaged people “have a strong tendency to shift towards the majority language” (1977, p.308). These people, in their quest of a better standard of living are forced to shift to the major language.

The second is demographic factor which states that numerical strength of a group will determine the maintenance or shift away from the language. Clyne (1982) and Anderson (1979) also argue that the language of the more prestigious group is always adopted at home whenever there is inter-ethnic marriages i.e. English and other ethnic groups, Moreover, Anderson (1979) investigation reveals that minority languages survive better in rural areas than in urban centres, especially where the language is maintained in the home. This is not surprising however, since many social attractions and benefits available in the urban centres are absent in the rural areas; hence there is less motivation becoming a bilingual.

The third factor is the institutional factor. Giles et al (1977) maintain that governmental support for minority languages such as their use in the mass media, in religion, educational support, in administrative service will enhance language maintenance. Another factor that can influence language maintenance is geographical location. Minority languages thrive in locations where there are large concentrations of their speakers. Grosgean (1982) cites the German Language Island in Ohio and Texas and the Chinese concentration in New York. This also includes the Hausa speaking immigrants in Sabo and Qbáléndé, such that we have Yorùbá children who understand and speak the Hausa language in the area. This also applies to the Ogu people in Makoko area of Lagos Mainland in Lagos State. Furthermore, this phenomenon has also helped the Hausa and Nupe-speaking immigrants in Mokola, Ibadan (Oyetade, 1990).

Visser (2014) remarks that the important roles the digital revolution has come to play in language maintenance and revitalization. He opines that the digital age offers great opportunities for cultural and heritage institutions to connect with and engage their audience since meaningful and sustainable way. However, little has been achieved through the digital revolution because of lack of connection between the content of an institution and its audiences. In this regard, the sampled Yorùbá platform have been consistent in their contents in showing the language, culture and traditions of the Yorùbá people and this has endeared them to many.

A careful observation will reveal that most of the Yorùbá contents online are purposively created to teach and give the knowledge of Yorùbá language and culture to their viewers. This is in line with Rehg and Campbell's assertion that (2018, p.1) "language revitalization is possible only if it is possible to create or maintain the conditions under which language acquisition can take place. The main objective of each of the Yorùbá platforms on the social media is to create platforms on the social media to teach the language using the simple method of teaching, music and drama.

The study identifies two major classifications. The first is the local efforts by indigenous people/speakers who endeavoured to use their social media handles to teach and disseminate the knowledge of Yorùbá language and culture. They are BBC Yorùbá, Yorùbá òdún, Egbé Agbáṣàga parapò, Ìlú Fèyíkògbòn (omọ Yorùbá) and Èwà Yorùbá. There are many of these.

The News Category

These refer to the various channels that give news and information on real life events. These are avenue for the dissemination of news among the Yorùbá. All news items are reported in Yorùbá language. Apart from these there are posts on the social media which have Yorùbá as the basic medium of communication; all these have increased the visibility of the Yorùbá language on the internet. In addition, these various news outlet has drastically reduced the gap between the literate and the unlearned, the informed and the uninformed because their inability to read can now be compensated by these channels.

The development of online radio is another means of promoting the Yorùbá language on social media. The broadcast of radio news and programmes on social media is remarkable for inter-generational transmission of local knowledge which are now common phenomenon on Facebook and WhatsApp status. Unlike in the earlier times where people listen to news and programmes on the radio, without seeing the personalities behind the voices, with the emergence of the social media, listeners can see and feel their loved gentlemen of the media. These include Àgídígbo FM 88.7, Ìbádàn, Mílíkì Fm Fans club 101.3, Bond FM , 92.9. University campus radio stations are also not relenting on their efforts in promoting the linguistic and cultural values of the Yorùbá language; as exemplified. by LASU (Lagos state university) Radio, 95.7 and UNILAG (University of Lagos) Radio. Another advantage of these Yorùbá news channels is the fact that Yorùbá speakers who are deficient in English language, especially those who do not have a good command of English can express themselves freely in their mother tongue. This can be seen in the hundreds and thousands of comments one gets under different news posts in BBC Yorùbá and other channels. For instance, BBC News Yorùbá has over three million followers.

On 27th of July, 2024, the BBC NEWs reported on the proposed protest by the Labour group. Both sides of the coin were presented representing the citizens and the minds of the governors Also, prayers, 'iwúre' are rendered on this channel in to their teeming followers. One of such is posted on Tuesday, 27th of February, 2024. It reads:

"Ààbò Olórùn tí yòò dájú lóri wa. God's unfailing protection on us
Ayò àti àlàáfíà ní a ó fi padà wolé lase Èdumàrè. We shall all return home with joy and peace by the grace of God.

These Yorùbá handle emphasised that comments should be sent in Yorùbá language and politely correct their friends who send their comments in English language. The aim of these social media to encourage more people writes in Yorùbá language. This post recorded 1.8k comments. This prayer is a relevant one at this period when the country is facing insecurity and citizens are paranoid.

Ogbón díẹ A little wisdom
Agọ díẹ a little folly

The right answer to complete this provide is 'lafì ní lo ilé ayé' is the way to life Over 500 comments were given with each person suggesting what should be the answer. However, a careful examination show that viewers at other times the same posted got fifteen eight (58) shares within six (6) hours of posting.

Òwè àti Èdè Yorùbá Pónbélé is an educative platform where Yorùbá proverbs are posted with the aim of expatiating the meaning to the audience. The platform is used not only to educate on Yorùbá language but also the culture of the Yorùbá. For instance, on Monday, 29th of July, 2024, the handler posted this message for people to comment.

It goes thus:

Ní ilẹ̀ Yorùbá, bí omọdẹ̀ tí kò jù bí omọ ọdún méré̀n sí ọdún mészà bá jẹ ọ̀nìjògbòn, ìyà rẹ̀ á ràn an niszé kí ilé lè simi. Iru isẹ wo ni?

Translated to mean:

In Yorùbá land, when a child between the ages of 4 to 6 years is always disturbing, the child can be sent on an errand so that there could be peace within the house/ what type of message is sent?

The answer is *Àródan*.

Several comments were received from their followers, while some gave only the answer, others went extra length in providing explanations.

Another post from this platform says:

'E kàààrò gbogbo ilé Good morning House
A kú imúra isẹ ọ̀nì Happy preparations for today's work
È bámi parí ọ̀wè yíi: Please, complete this proverb

...onilé ni kòní gbà fún un It is the owner of the house that will not allow it

This proverb is accompanied by a pictorial sample of a house drowned in flood. The onset of this proverb is:

‘àgbàrà òjò kò ní òun ò nílẹ́ é wó, onílẹ́ ní kòní gbà fún un.

The literal meaning is that the flood will not hesitate to demolish a house, but the owner will not allow it.

The metaphorical meaning of this proverb is that situations in life are ready to depress or wears one out, but the one going through the tough time must never give in to frustration. In other words, tough times don't last but tough people do. Yorùbá proverbs are wise sayings of the elders that convey deep meaning. Proverbs serve as the bedrock of Yorùbá philosophy and therefore encapsulate the socio-cultural background. This explains why there are several proverbs relating to different aspects of Yorùbá lifestyle; be it for encouragement, warming or inspiration. Proverbs are also employed in conflict management in Yorùbá societies. The platform is therefore, of great importance in sharing the ideals of the Yorùbá. This is one way the social media is being employed to disseminate and revitalise the Yorùbá language. The use of proverbs, idioms and others can be found in various Yorùbá Facebook platforms such as *Yorùbá Dún*, *Egbé Agbàsàgà parapò*, *Ìlú Fèyikógbón (omọ Yorùbá)*, *ewà èdè Yorùbá*, *omọ Yorùbá àtátà* among others.

The latest development in the attempt to promote the Yorùbá language on the social media is the popular quiz show, “*Màsòyìnbó*” translated to mean ‘do not speak English’, much like the English programme, *Who wants to be a millionaire*. This is because the highest scoring prize is one million naira. In this programme, the contestant is not allowed to utter a word in any other language except the Yorùbá language. Like other Yorùbá programmes, the presenter prepared ten questions for each participant, however, the test of Yorùbá begins right from the moment the contestant is seated, even in course of exchanging pleasantries, not a particle, grammatical element or word of another language because any mistake on the part of the contestant is a minus to his prize. So far, we have discussed the contributions of the indigenous Yoruba people in Nigeria.

The second category involves efforts by Yorùbá in the diaspora. Speakers of Yorùbá language who are outside the shores of their indigenous land have consistently made efforts to teach their children the Yorùbá language, in as much as language is an identity marker. It is evident that they have positive attitudes towards their heritage language, despite being miles away from home. Grenoble and Whaley (2013) posit that positive attitudes tend to strengthen the usage of heritage languages while negative attitudes weaken it. They argue that revitalisation efforts must confront negative attitudes and “the concomitant false belief that the endangered language is not a language, does not have a grammar, or it's simply not as good. As the language of the national government (p.797).

A careful examination of this aspect is a challenge to the Yorùbá people who are on their homeland. I will be taking samples from *Proudly Omọ Ilorin and Yorùbá Pikin* from Facebook

Omọ Ilorin /Proudly Yorùbá/German girl is a Facebook page owned by a Nigerian mother of two girls, with ages ten (10) and seven (7). The page, according to them is to educate and entertain their followers in Yorùbá language. The Facebook profile indicates that although they were born in Germany but they can speak Yorùbá, English and Dutch. They have over three thousand (3000) followers on Instagram. The presentations are mainly centred on language use in the home domain. Conversations are mainly concerned with activities such as helping out the with house chores, running errands in the home, interactions with one another and other issues that normally take place between mother and children. This paper commends the resourcefulness of the mother and her resilience in ensuring that these Yorùbá kids can communicate effectively in Yorùbá language in spite of being far away from their mother land. The child is encouraged to go shopping and her bargaining skill was tested by the mother. Their language use demonstrated some evidences of trials and errors sometimes as the girls struggle to find the right words and expressions. Sometimes, the use of loan words come to their rescue. In addition, the woman also uses the handle to address social issues, especially as they relate to Islam. For instance, in addressing the first /second wife relationship in polygamous house. The importance of family language policy is emphasised in Senayon (2017). Here, the researcher investigated the use of Ògú language in the home domain as a language maintenance strategy. She avers that language communities should encourage more interaction in indigenous languages. Family language policy also helps in the inter-generational transfer of indigenous languages and cultural values. ...asserts that when parents themselves are bi/multilingual those who do not have explicit family language policies (or strategies for addressing breaches of these policies by children keen to use the national language often find family interactions shifting to the national languages over time, regardless of their overarching attitudes towards the value of language maintenance Lambert, (2008) Willoughby, (Forthcoming)

Yorùbá pikin is a mixed family of a Polish mother and Yorùbá father, Adéwùmí Múfútáú. The father works tirelessly to teach the students the Yorùbá language and converse effortlessly, their linguistic proficiency is far better than most of the Yorùbá children based in Nigeria. Rehg and Campbell (2018, p.491) emphasised the importance of inter-generational transmission of the heritage language for the survival of indigenous languages. They remark that “it doesn't matter what the language is, where it is spoken, or how endangered it is. Languages can be saved only if they are acquired

by each generation of children, and that can happen only if particular linguistic conditions are met. Both the proudly *omọ Yorùbá* and *Yorùbá pikin* are Words such as '*àkòlùkògbà oko*' traffic, '*àpò iwé*', an envelope are rare words you find from children of their ages. According to their father, after an incident where he forgot the Yorùbá terminology for Yorùbá and where one of the younger boys reminded him, he remarked that 'this incident highlights why it is crucial to pass our linguistic heritage to the next generation'. In his interview with the Punch newspaper, he noted that he started speaking Yorùbá to the kids when they were still in the womb. As reported by Babátúndé Tungbobo. When they were born, I continued speaking Yorùbá to them, but some people tried to discourage me saying it cannot be done. Some people even mocked, saying I was jobless, and wasting my time trying to teach Yorùbá. Because of my experience, I began thinking of what I could do to motivate other parents in my position to make them believe that their children can speak their native languages and understand their culture. That when I started making videos to motivate other parents" Tungbogo Punch Newspaper, 10th July, 2022. I'm inspired by conservation of Yorùbá Culture--finland -based skit maker.

The importance of exposing children to their mother tongue at their early ages are discussed in O'Drady (2018). In this paper, he elucidates on the Children's need for extensive exposure to whatever language they are learning. The study of two psychologists, Betty Hart and Todd Risley (Hart and Risley 1995, 1999). Hart and Risley's investigation demonstrated the fact that the amount of language to which individual children were exposed will determine their proficiency in the language. One instance, children who were from more 'talkative families', who heard more than 7,000 utterances in a typical day-which amounts to about 2.5 million utterances in the course of a year, performed better than children from other homes where they speak less. In Gomez (2018), the researcher calls for a decolonial approach to language maintenance strategy. In his opinion, decolonial approach to family multilingualism takes a step towards redressing the extant underrepresentation of southern theories in sociolinguistics.

Family language policy refers to explicit and overt decisions parents make about using a particular language others in the home. (pg 54). The adoption of a heritage language as family language policy, will undoubtedly encourage and promote the use and status of the language in the home as well as other domains. Languages are also maintained through positive attitudes and loyalty. Strong language loyalty and ethnic identity foster language maintenance. Holmes (1992) maintains that positive attitudes support efforts to use the minority language in a variety of domains. This will facilitate resistance to the pressure from the majority group to use their

languages. In situations where the speakers are favourably disposed to their language and are emotionally attached to it, conscious efforts would be made to ensure inter-generational transfer of the language. The central point of this chapter is that language revitalization is possible only when the attitudes of the speakers are positive towards the language. The desire to maintain a distinct identity is a critical point in the ethnolinguistic vitality. Although the Yorùbá language is far from being considered safe according to UNESCO 2013 classification, it is important to commend these efforts by indigenes home and in diaspora to revitalize the Yorùbá language. If we consider the inter-generational transmission (Fishman as a factor and the positive attitudes of both the parents and the children, there is an assurance that the language will survive if more people adopt speaking Yorùbá as a family language policy. (Fishman, 2004) remarks that one of the stages intervention is the intergenerational transmission. According to Fishman, other domains and efforts are ineffective until the language finds functionality within the family. It is imperative that families adopt a family language policy such that although they speak the national or dominant language at official domains, the home should have the mother tongue as the exclusive language of the family.

CONCLUSION

This research was conducted to demonstrate Yorùbá language endangerment and attempts by the Yorùbá to ensure the continued existence of their language in spite of the predominance of English language through the social media. This is not an accidental achievement but one that was done through concerted and consistent efforts from speakers, linguists and community leaders both home and in diaspora. These efforts are targeted towards the acquisition and use of the languages especially among the younger generation. In addition, they help to preserve and revitalise the Yoruba language. The study revealed that the Yorùbá people possess a positive attitudes towards their language which they value highly as a mark of ethnic identity. This serves as motivation for language and cultural revivalism needed for language maintenance. They have engaged the social media to disseminate the rich linguistic and cultural Knowledge to educate, inform, encourage, entertain and challenge their viewers, assertion that the internet has become a great avenue for language maintenance and revitalization. He notes that "cultural and heritage institutions around the world have recognised the potential of the digital age to help them overcome many of the challenges they face. This study confirms Crystal's (2011) proposal for bridging the public awareness gap on endangerment. He proposes four major means of engaging the public on language endangerment, namely: the media, the arts, internet, and the school curriculum.

It is hoped that these can serve as models for speakers of endangered languages to work with. One or combinations of various methods discussed in this paper can be adopted for the survival of the language. Most importantly, heritage languages must be the language of the home to guarantee inter-generational transmission of the heritage language and culture.

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