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THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF YORUBA

by Prof. Adeboye-Babalola

University of Lagos, Nigeria

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## THE EXPRESSIVENESS OF AFRICAN LANGUAGES: THE CASE OF YORUBA

by Prof. Adeboye Babalola

The purpose of this paper is to place on record at this Colloquium the main facts on the expressiveness of the Yoruba language, as part of the exercise of expounding the qualities and potentialities of African languages at this Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture.

Our starting point is the injustice done to the expressiveness of the Yoruba language by the educated Yoruba today. The injustice is done when educated Yoruba boys and girls, men and women, speak in this language which is their mother tongue. They then mix several English words with virtually every utterance, thus giving the impression that the Yoruba language is not adequately expressive. This impression is a wrong impression and it constitutes injustice to the expressiveness of the Yoruba language. A pseudo-classic example of their utterances in Yoruba-cum-English is the following sentence:

Nígbàtí mo consider gbogbo circumstances t'ó surround case náà, mo conclude pé magistrate yẹn wà biased against client mi ní, for sure.

Such a sentence suggests to the foreigner that the Yoruba language probably lacks appropriate equivalents for 'consider'; 'circumstances'; 'magistrate'; 'biased'; 'against'; 'client' and 'for sure'. Whereas the truth of the matter is that the Yoruba

language has appropriate equivalent expressions for all these<sup>1</sup>, but that the average educated Yoruba person does not take the trouble to learn these equivalents and use them. He speaks his mother tongue carelessly, committing howlers in it with abandon.

I will now proceed to demonstrate the expressiveness of the Yoruba language by illustrating, in the language, the following:

- (a) expression of emotions;
- (b) expression of thoughts and ideas;
- (c) expression of points of view (opinions);
- (d) scientific and technological vocabulary.

#### EXPRESSION OF EMOTIONS in the Yoruba Language:

There is a super-abundant vocabulary in the Yoruba language for the expression of emotions. The illustration in this paper is confined to seven principal emotions: Sympathy (Fellow-feeling); Wonder; Fear; Anger; Amusement; Disgust; Eros (Romantic Love).

1. Sympathy (Fellow-feeling): Greetings in the Yoruba language are an excellent indicator of the expressiveness of the language with regard to fellow-feeling. The Yoruba have a distinct greeting for every distinct occasion. The word "kí" is almost invariably employed at the start of each greeting utterance. This is why

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<sup>1</sup>In good Yoruba, the sentence would be rendered as follows: Nígbàtí mo wo bí gbogbo ọ̀rọ̀ èjọ̀ náà tí ọ̀, mo wáá gbà pé adájọ̀ yẹn ti pinnu tẹ̀lẹ̀tẹ̀lẹ̀ láti dá ẹ̀lẹ̀jọ̀ mi lẹ̀bi; ẹ̀yẹn dájú.

some other peoples called them the "A kú people" in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

For merely passing the time of day with someone, there are the following greetings:

- (a) K'áàárò ! = Good morning !  
 (b) È k'áàrò !

Version (a) further expresses the fact that the addressee is younger than the speaker or that both are of about the same age.

Version (b) further expresses the fact that the addressee is older than or superior to the speaker.

- (a) Kú iyálèta ! = I greet you at this time of  
 (b) È kú iyálèta ! forenoon.

- K'áásán ! = Good day ! Good afternoon !  
 È k'áásán !

- Kú iròlè ! = I greet you at this time of  
 È kú iròlè ! early evening before nightfall.

- K'áalè ! = I greet you at this time of  
 È k'áalè ! evening after nightfall.

- K'áìsùn ! = I greet you at this time of night  
 È kú àìsùn ! when you are keeping a vigil whereas  
 it is bedtime.

For expressing condolence to someone, there is a special greeting for each type of sorrow. If A accidentally treads on B's foot, A may say, "È pèlè. È jòwọ o. Ó sèsi ni. È má bínú".

∩"I greet you. Please forgive me. It was by mistake. Please don't be annoyed"∩

If a married couple have just lost an infant, they will be greeted with utterances such as "Ẹ kú Ẹrọ́jú. Omi l'ó dàntù, akèhgbè ò fọ. Ọlórún yíó f'omọ rere rọpò. Ọlórún yíó mú èyí tí yíó pẹlú wa wá."∩"I greet you as you bear your loss. The water is spilt but the gourd is still intact. Cheer up. God shall give you a good child as a substitute. God shall bring you a child that will stay with us"∩.

If a family is bereft of a young man or woman, the members are greeted with expressions such as, "Ẹ kú Ẹrọ́jú. Ẹ kú àtẹ̀hìnkú. Olódùmarè yíó dáwọ́ ikú bẹ̀ẹ̀ dúró láàrin wa o. Ọlórún yíó foríji òkú; yíó sì de'le fún un o". ∩"I greet you as you bear your loss. I greet you on this occasion of someone dying prematurely out of turn. God shall prevent the recurrence of such death in our midst. God shall forgive the deceased and take good care of **him**".∩

If death has just taken away, from a family, a middle-aged man or woman whilst aged persons are still alive in the family, the condolence expressed to the bereaved is couched in words such as "Ẹ kú àfẹ̀kù. Ọjọ́ áá jìnnà síra o. Ọlórún yíó gbé òkú sí afẹ̀fẹ̀ rere. Èhìn rẹ̀ yíó dara. Ọlórún kò ní ẹ̀ é ní àkífà o." ∩"I greet you as you miss the dear departed. Dates of deaths for those left behind shall be widely staggered. God shall put the deceased in a good abode in heaven. The family's experiences after

his death shall be good. God shall prevent his death from being a ring in a chain." ]

Now, if it is an old man or woman that a family has lost, the greetings to the young people in the family amount to congratulations and benediction. They are told: "Háà ! È kí àṣẹhìndè ! Ọlórún yíó foríjì òkú o. Iwájú tí wón kojú sí yíó dara. Èhìn tí wón fi sílẹ̀ kò nífi bàjẹ̀. È kí ìnàwó ilé. Bàbá (Ìyá) yíó yà o." [ "Hurrah ! Congratulations on surviving Father (Mother)! I greet you as you look after the house in the old one's absence pending his (her) return. God shall forgive the deceased. His journey's destination to which he is heading shall be good. The family affairs he is leaving behind on earth shall not suffer regress. I greet you as you spend much money on this occasion. The dear departed father (mother) shall surely return to the family by reincarnation ! ]

2. Wonder: Yoruba invocations to the Supreme Being are a ready illustration of the expressiveness of the Yoruba language with regard to the emotion of wonder. The following is a typical pile of vocatives used in addressing God in prayer:

- |                                   |                                          |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Èlédá, Ọlójú-òní.                 | [Creator, Owner of this day]             |
| Ọba-Ọrun.                         | [King who dwells in the heavens]         |
| Ọgá-ògo.                          | [Master in resplendence]                 |
| Atéréreṣékáyé.                    | [Whose Being spreads over all the earth] |
| Ọba tí dandandan rẹ̀ kí í sẹ̀ lẹ̀ | [King whose Commands never fail.]        |



The country through which we had been travelling for days had an original beauty. The wide plains were diversified by stretches of hilly country with low passes. We often had to wade through swift-running ice-cold burns, but the weather was mainly fine and warm. It was long since we had seen a glacier, but as we were approaching the caravanserai at Barka, a chain of glaciers gleaming in the sunshine came into view. The landscape was dominated by the 25,000-foot peak of Gurla Mandhata; less striking, but more famous, was the sacred Mount Kailas, 3,000 feet lower, which stands in majestic isolation apart from the Himalayas range. When we first caught sight of it our Tibetans prostrated themselves and prayed. For Buddhists and Hindus, this mountain is the home of their gods and the dearest wish of all the pious is to visit it as pilgrims once in their lives. The faithful often travel thousands of miles to reach it and spend years on the pilgrimage.

For two whole days we had the glaciers to look at. We mountaineers were more strongly attracted to the majestic Gurla Mandhata, mirrored in the waters of Lake Manasarovar, than by the sacred mountain. We pitched our tents on the shore of the lake and feasted our eyes on the indescribably beautiful picture of this tremendous mountain, which seemed to grow out of the lake. This is certainly one of the loveliest spots on earth.



Igbèríko t'a ti òlákòjá fún ojú púpò yìí ní ẹwà àràbarà.

Láarin àwọn pètélẹ t'ó lo salalu, a rí àwọn òkè nìhìn àti lóhùn pẹlú àwọn aláfo mólòkan, t'ó súnmọ pètélẹ tí àwọn èrò lẹ gbà kojá. Ọ̀pọ̀lọ̀pọ̀ n'ìgbà t'a ní láti f'èsẹ wọ omi odd sọdà, omi tí n'şan yàáyàá, t'ó sì tutù bí yinyin; sùgbón ó fẹrẹ jẹ ìgbà gbogbo ní ojú-ọjó dára gan-an, t'òdrùn niran, t'ooru sì mí. Ó ti pé t'a ti rí odd-olómídidí gbèhìn, sùgbón b'a ti fẹrẹ dé ilé-èrò t'ó wà ní ilú tí njé Barka, a rí ọ̀pọ̀lọ̀pọ̀ odd-olómídidí tí n'wọ f'ara kan'ra tí àpápọ wọn sì dà bí ilẹ̀kẹ-ọ̀rùn; n'wọn níko mọ̀nà nínú ọ̀drùn. Ohun t'ó hàn gádàgbà gadagba ní gbogbo ìgbèríko níbẹ ní òkè sọ-rí-sọ kan tí njé Gurla Mandhata, tí giga rẹ jẹ ẹsẹ-batà egbèrún mẹ̀dédógbón. Níbẹ náà l'a gbé rí òkè tí njé Kailas, tí n'wọn mbo, tí giga rẹ fi egbèdógún ẹsẹ-batà dín sí tí Ịsàájú, t'ó sì dúró bí ọba l'àyè ọ̀tọ̀ jìnnà sí àwọn alásoyọ òkè jààntirere tí njé Himaláyà. Gbàrà tí a kọkọ f'ojú kàn án, àwọn Tìbẹ̀tani tí mba wa rìn dọ̀bálẹ̀ gbalaja n'wọn sì gbàdúra. Àwọn ẹ̀lẹ̀sìn Búúdá àti àwọn Hindu ní ìgbàgbọ̀ pé inú òkè yìí l'àwọn ọ̀rìşà wọn nígbé; ohun t'ó sì jẹ àniyàn pàtàkì jùlọ̀ fún gbogbo àwọn olufòkànsìn nínú wọn ní kí n'wọn ó ń lẹ̀ dé ẹ̀lẹ̀ òkè náà lẹ̀kẹ̀kan ní ìgbésí aiyó wọn. Àwọn olufòkànsìn náà sáà maa n'rin-àjọ̀ egbègbèrún máílí kí n'wọn ó tó dé ibẹ̀, n'wọn a sì ń ọ̀dún méjì tàbí mọ̀ta tàbí jù bẹ̀ẹ̀ lo lórí irin-àjọ̀ wọn.

Fún ojú méjì gbáko, à sì ní rí àwọn odd olómi-dídí náà. Ọ̀kàn àwà gòkègòkè fà gidigidi sí òkè tí njé Gurla Mandhata yẹn, bí ó ti dúró bí ọba, tí ọ̀jìjì rẹ̀ sì hàn nínú omi adágún tí njé Manasarófa. Ọ̀kàn wa kò fi bẹ̀ẹ̀ fà sí òkè tí n'wọn mbo yẹn. A pa àgọ̀ wa sẹ̀tí bẹ̀bẹ̀ adágún náà, a sì fi àwòrán òkè ní lá yìí, àwòrán t'ó dára t'ó kọ̀ròhìn, t'ó dà bí-ẹ̀ni-pé inú adágún yẹn l'ó ti hù jáde, a fi ń ọ̀n jẹ̀ àjẹ̀tẹ̀rún fún ojú wa. Láíşanlání, ẹ̀yí jẹ̀ ọ̀kan nínú àwọn ibi t'ó lẹ̀wà jùlọ̀ lórí ilẹ̀ aiyé.

3. Fear: I will illustrate the verbal expression of fear in Yoruba by translating the following excerpt from Shakespeare's Hamlet<sup>1</sup>.

Marcellus: Horatio says 'tis but our fantasy,  
And will not let belief take hold of him,  
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us.

Horatio: ..... it harrows me with fear and wonder.

Barnado: How now Horatio? you tremble and look pale:  
Is not this something more than fantasy?  
What think you on't?

Horatio: Before my God, I might not this believe  
Without the sensible and true avouch  
Of mine own eyes.

Marcellus: Thus twice before, and jump at this dead hour  
With martial stalk, hath he gone by our watch.

Horatio: In what particular thought to work, I know not:  
But in the gross and scope of my opinion,  
This bodes some strange eruption to our State.

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<sup>1</sup>Act I sc.i.

- Marcellus: Hòrészib ní a kàn n̄sìrànhrán ni.  
 Kò s̄i gbà pín-in gbò .  
 Nínú gbogbo ohun t'a wí  
 Nípa èm̄h̄ò yíi t'a ti f'ojú wa rí lẹ̀m̄ejì.
- Horatio: ..... Kí-h-la ! Èyí mà bà 'nià lẹ̀rú o.  
 Idí mi ti d'omi tán.
- Barnado: Hòrészib, è̀ewo l'è̀ewo báyíí ?  
 N̄se l'ò n̄gb̄on p̄p̄é, t'ojú r̄é s̄i rí f̄úw̄of̄úw̄ó.  
 N̄jé èyí kò kọ́já ìrànhrán ?  
 Kí'ò r̄ò ?
- Horatio: Ọ́lọ̀un rí mi, h̄g kò lè gb'èyí gbò  
 Afí n̄s̄is̄is̄iyíi tí mo ti f'ojú ara mi rí i  
 Gbangba-gbà-h-gbà, láísí tàbitàbí.
- Marcellus: Báyíí gan-an, lẹ̀m̄ejì, l'àájìn d̄ùnd̄ùn  
 L'ó f'è̀s̄ò r̄ìn bí olóógun kọ́já lẹ̀gb̄é wa  
 B'a ti n̄s'àìs̄ùn è̀s̄ò n̄h̄ìn.
- Horatio: Ng ò m̄ò'un tí mo lè t̄úm̄ò eléyíi sí gan-an.  
 S̄ùgb̄on ibi tí mo lè f'orí r̄é tí sí s̄á ni pé  
 Àp̄ēr̄é l'èyí pé ìrú̀k̄erú̀d̄d̄ t'a ò rí'rú'è rí  
 Yíó s̄èl̄è ní 'l̄ú wa láip̄é jòjò.

4. Anger: This emotion is given verbal expression in Yoruba in a multitude of abusive terms, many of which are unprintable. For the purpose of this paper, I have chosen an excerpt from a short story captioned 'Nothing so sweet' written by Phebean Itayemi<sup>1</sup>.

Some time later, when Èṣṣó appeared at the door of the room, the two women rose to go. I said that they should not go, and that if Èṣṣó came near me I should kill myself. I told Èṣṣó that he was getting into trouble by not letting me go with my parents, and sooner or later I would have the law on him for kidnapping me. Was not that enough trouble for him? I asked. Then I swore by the god of war, whom Èṣṣó worshipped, that I would kill myself if he did not leave me alone and go away. The women still stood in the room, listening.

"If the girl is giving trouble, two of us can come and help you subdue her," said one of Èṣṣó's kinsmen, showing his face at the door.

I felt hot all over. There I was, standing, looking defiantly at Èṣṣó, with two women and a man looking on.

"Why don't you want to be my wife?" Èṣṣó asked me in a conciliatory tone. "I am rich, and I can give you anything you want."

"I do not want your riches. I don't want to be your wife. Do you not yet have enough without me?"

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<sup>1</sup>See African New Writing, Lutterworth Press, 1947, pp.48-120.

"Oh ! but come," he said a trifle impatiently. "You're mine, you know, Your parents gave you to me and received a large sum as a dowry from me. If I let you go, where will they get the money to repay me ?"

"I don't know and I don't care," I said. He moved nearer.

"I tell you again, that if you come nearer, I will kill myself, and you will be tried and hanged for murder." I said violently.

"Better let me go," I said more quietly. "You know that European missionary who came to our school last year ? He and his wife, a doctor, made friends with me. I have written letters to them and they know all about you. They said if ever I was in trouble I was to let them know, wherever they were. If you keep me here, sooner or later they will come and help me get you into trouble for kidnapping me. Do you know that in Lagos and places where Europeans are, people are not allowed to take wives by force ?"

Kò pé lẹ̀hìnnà tí Ẹ̀sọ̀ yọ́jú l'enu-òná yààrá nàá, tí àwọn obìnrin méjèèjì sì dídè tí nwọ́n l'áwọn ńlọ́. Mo ní kí nwọ́n ó má lẹ́ àti pé bí Ẹ̀sọ̀ bá súnmọ́ mi pẹ̀rẹ́ nìşẹ́ nì ng ó p'ara mi. Mo denu kọ Ẹ̀sọ̀ mo sì wí fún u pé ọ̀ràn l'ó ńdà nìpa pé kò jẹ́ kí ng bá àwọn ọ̀bí mi lẹ́. Mo ní ó yá nì, ó pẹ́ nì, ng ó jẹ́ k'áwọn ọ̀lọ́pá ó wá mí u fún ẹ́jọ́ pé ó gbé mi sá lẹ́ bí gbómọgbómọ. Mo bí i pé şe ljàngbọ̀n ẹ̀yún-ùn kò tfi tó fún u nì.

Mo wá f'Ọ̀gún búra pé ng ó gbé nkan jẹ́ bí kò bá fi mi sílẹ́ k'ó sì máa bá tirẹ́ lẹ́. Àwọn obìnrin ẹ̀ẹ́kan sì dúró lójúkannàá nínú yààrá nìbẹ́, nwọ́n ńtẹ́tìsì ọ̀rọ́ mi.

Mo gbọ bí ọkúnrin kan lára àwọn ẹbí Èsọ ẹ se wí l'enu-òná pé,  
 "T'ẹ́ ẹ́ bá k'á 'jàngbò, ẹmi àt'ẹ̀nikan lè wá bá ọ kápá 'ẹ."

Lẹ́sẹ́kẹ́sẹ́ gbogbo ara mi gbóná bí ajere. Mo dúró gan-gan-gan,  
 mo sù 'jú pọ, mo sì ẹ̀'àyà gbààgbà sí Èsọ. Obìnrin méjì àti  
 ọkúnrin kan ní 'íwò 'ran wa.

Èsọ wá f'ohùn ẹ̀ròwẹ̀lẹ̀ bá mí sọ̀rò. Ó ní .

"È ẹ́ tiẹ́ ti rí t'ó ẹ́ fi fẹ́ ẹ se 'yàwó mi ? Mo lówó,  
 mo sì lè fún ọ l'òhunkóhun t'o bá fẹ́."

Mo dá a lómùn pé, "Ng ẹ́ ní nkan-kan f'owó 'ẹ ẹ se. Maa mú u.  
 Ng ẹ́ ní ọ f-fẹ́. Àwọn obìnrin t'o ti kójo kò t'í tó ọ ni ?"

Ó ní "Gbọ́ mi ná. Tilẹ́ jẹ́ k'á pa t'awàdà t'í. Ó ti di 'yàwó mi.  
 Àwọn bàbá àti 'yá ti fi ọ fún mi, nwọn sì ti gb'owó gọbọi lówó mi  
 nitori ẹ. T'o bá kọ mí, níbo n'nwọn ó ti r'owó san fún mi padà ?"

Mo fèsì pé, "Ng ẹ́ mọ. Ng ẹ́ sì fẹ́ f-mọ." Ó túnbò súnmọ mi.

Mo bú ramúramù pé, "Mo tún wí fún ọ o, mo wí fún ọ o, t'o bá  
 súnmọ mi sí i ng ó gbé nkan jẹ, o ó sì jẹbi ẹjọ apanlà ní Kòòtù,  
 nwọn ó sì f'okun so ọ lórùn pa."

Mo wá dẹ ohùn mi d'ẹ, mo ní, "O jẹ́ jẹ́ kí ng máa lọ. Ẹ́'o mọ  
 oyìnbó Oníşẹ́ Ọlórùn t'ó bẹ́ şukúu wa wò l'ésìn ? Dokita n'yàwó ẹ. Àwọn  
 méjèjèjì bá mi s'òrẹ́. Mo ti kọ létà sí wọn nípa ẹ, gbogbo  
 àşakáşà t'o ndá ni nwọn sì ti mọ báyii. Nwọn ní igbàkígba tí mo bá  
 fẹ́ irànwọ wọn ni kí ng ránşẹ́ s'áwọn, níbiyówù k'áwọn ó wà. T'ó bá dá  
 mi dúró síhìn, láipẹ́ jojo nwọn ó wá síbí, nwọn ó sì jẹ́ k'áwọn ọlópá  
 o pè ọ l'ẹ́jọ gbómogbómọ. Bóyá o ẹ́ mọ ni, pé l'Ekò àti níbòmíràn  
 gbogbo t'awọn èèbó gbé wà, ẹ́fin kò gb'ẹnikéni l'àyè láti fi  
 tipátipá gbé obìnrin ní'yàwo."

5. Amusement: For giving amusement in the Yoruba language, there is ample provision of appropriate vocabulary. A funny incident can be reported in full detail in the language without any loss of points. Here is a humorous passage from Jẹboda's novel Olówólaiyé<sup>1</sup>

Lẹhin ti ọga mi jade, emi na gbe onjẹ kalẹ lati jẹ. Ki ng to bu okele kan mo tun ranti bi aṣọ awọn ọga mi ti dara to. Mo fi onjẹ mi silẹ mo lọ si inu yara, mo gbe aṣọ ọga mi, mo tun nwo o bi o ti dara to. Bi mo si ti nyẹ ẹ wo, ng ko mọ igbati mo tu u ti emi nã bu u sara ti mo si nyẹ ara mi wo ninu digi. Ọga mi ni iwa kan ti mo fi nmọ bi o ba mbọ. Bi ko ba sufe, yio kọrin, bi ko ba kọrin yio ma fi ẹnu lu ilu. Bi mo ti nwo ara mi bi aṣọ na yẹ mi tabi ko yẹ mi, ni mo gbọ ti ọga mi nsufe bọ. Ẹru ba mi bi ẹni pe ki ilẹ la ẹnu ki o gbe mi mi. Mo yara bọ ẹwu ọrun mi mo sa gba ọna yara ki nyara ka a ki o to wọle ba mi ni idi rẹ. Bi mo ti nsare lọ, Ẹpo ọgẹde ti mo ji jẹ ki nto bu onjẹ yò mi gèrè, mo fi ori na tabili ti mo gbe onjẹ le, awo ọbẹ re lati ori tabili o da le mi lori, o si ba agbada ọga mi jẹ baṣabaṣa. Bi mo si ti didẹ ti mo nyẹ ẹ wo, ni ọga mi wọle de; ki ng to la ẹnu soro o ti fun mi ni igbaju aimoye. O ki ọgba mọlẹ, o na mi bi ẹnipe ki nku, o ta mi ni ipa titara-titara - wo o, bi o ba ri ada ni ọjọ na yio bẹ mi l'ori ni. Ọran na dun u wọ egungun nitori ko tilẹ ẹ igbọ ni. Ẹjọ di ọla, ẹkun pa ẹlẹri. Emi na nkigbe lohun rara pe 'ara ile, ero ọna ẹ gba mi o - ẹ jowo gba mi o; mo ti ku, a-a-ẹ nwo mi ni, ẹ gba mi o.' Ng ko tilẹ ri ẹnikan. Emi pẹlu ọga mi nja ijakadi; nigbati mo si jàjà ja ajabọ, ori ni mo fi rin jade. Emi na duro si okere, mo nwo ọga mi; oju rẹ pọn bi ẹyin ina, a ! inu bi ọga mi ni ọjọ yi.

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<sup>1</sup>JEBODA: Olówólaiyé, Longmans of Nigeria 1964, pp.12-14.

The passage in English

After my master had gone out, I placed my own meal on the table to eat. Before I took one morsel I again recollected how nice my master's new robe was. So I left my meal untouched, went into the bedroom, took my master's new robe and again feasted my eyes on its splendour. And as I was looking at it, I absent mindedly unfolded it and wore it; then I started to scrutinize myself as I appeared in a mirror. Now my master had a certain habit by which I used to know of his approaching the house from an outing. He would either whistle or sing or **drum beats** with his lips. As I was sizing up my appearance in the dress, to decide whether or not it fitted me, I heard my master's whistling. I took fright. I wished the floor would open and swallow me up. I quickly took off the robe, ran towards the bedroom with a view to quickly folding it up there and completing the job before my master entered the apartment. As I was running along, I slipped all of a sudden on the skin of the banana I had stolen and eaten before fetching my meal. I fell headlong against the dining table, the plate containing the stew and vegetable soup was pushed off the table and the contents were poured over my head, consequently staining my master's new agbádá robe very badly. It was as I got up and started to examine the robe that my master came in. Before I could say a word, he had given me innumerable slaps on the face. He got hold of a whip and flogged me repeatedly as if intent on killing me. He kicked me furiously - I tell you if he had got hold of a cutlass then he would have beheaded me. The matter cut



him deep right 'own to the bones; it was really unspeakable. Whilst tomorrow is the date fixed for a suit, a leopard has killed the key witness today. I for my part started to shout earnestly, "Inmates and passersby, please rescue me - please rescue me; I am virtually dead. Alas ! Don't just make a spectacle of me: Please save me."

I saw not a soul. My master and I engaged in a wrestling match. When I managed to free myself from his grip, I scrambled out of the house on my head. I stood at a distance and from there gazed at my master. His eyes were bloodshot, red as live coals of fire. Indeed ! My master really got angry on that day.

6. Disgust: In illustrating the expression of disgust in the Yoruba language, I wish to revert to the use of translation. I have chosen a passage from Jonathan Swift's novel Gulliver's Travels<sup>1</sup>.

These odious animals called Yahoos were absolute brutes. I once caught a young male about three years old, and endeavoured by all marks of tenderness to make it quiet; but the little imp fell a-squalling and scratching and biting with such violence, that I was forced to let it go.

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1. From "A Voyage to the Houyhnhms", Chapter VIII

I observed that the young animal's flesh smelled very rank, and the stink was somewhat between a weasel and a fox, but much more disagreeable. While I held the odious vermin in my hands, it voided its filthy excrements of a yellow liquid substance all over my clothes, but by good fortune there was a small brook hard by, where I washed myself as clean as I could.

By what I could discover, the Yahoos appear to be the most unteachable of all animals, their capacities never reaching higher than to draw or carry burdens. Yet I am of the opinion that this defect arises chiefly from a perverse, restive disposition. For they are cunning, malicious, treacherous and revengeful. They are strong and hardy, but of a cowardly spirit, and by consequence insolent, abject, and cruel. It is remarkable that the red-haired of both sexes are more libidinous and mischievous than the rest, whom yet they much exceed in strength and activity.

#### The passage in Yoruba

Awon eranko wonyi ti nje Yahuu ri enia lara patapata,  
alagbara-ma-mero si ni won bamubamu. Ni'jo kan, mo ri omo Yahuu  
kan gbe; ako ni; odun ori re ko ju meta tabi be lo. Mo ke e,  
mo ge e, ti ti, mo sa sa gbogbo ipa mi lati je k'o dake jeje,  
sugbon esu belake na kan bere si ke to ni, o nya mi leekana,  
o si nge mi je tagbaratagbara to be ti ng b fi m'oju ti mo fi  
jowo 'e silo.

Mo şakiyèsí pé dórùn ara omọ Yàhùfú nàà kò şe, kò şe ní; kò dára dùn; dórùn burúkú nàà jọ ti dbúko difẹ, ó sì tún jọ ti elẹbọtò difẹ, sùgbón ó rí ènià lára púpò jù t'awọn wònyí lọ. Bí mo ti gbé èmù arisátí nàà dání, ó gbònsẹ sí gbogbo aşọ ara mi; igbònsẹ nàà jẹ olómíşòrò, àwò rẹ sí pupa fòò bi ti gbẹgírí. Orí bá m'şe é, oò kékéré kan wà nífòsí ibẹ; níbẹ ni mo ti wẹ ara mi mọ tónítóní tí mo sí fò aşọ mi mọ.

B'emi şe rí wọn, ó jọ pé àwọn Yàhùfú wònyí kò lè gbà èkọ rá-fá-ráà ni; lààkàyè wọn kò kojá pé kí nwon ó wọ erù tàbí kí nwon ó rù ú. Bẹẹ ni mo sì rò pé ibi pàtàkí tí àbùkù wọn yíí ti bèrè ni ibi pé ó ti di ẹran ara fún wọn láti máa hù iwà ikà àti láti máa şe ghlèghlè kiri nígbogbo, bí àkọgbà. Nitorí pé, nwon ní iwà àrékérékè lówó; iwà abatènijé; iwà òdàlẹ àti iwà 'afi-bí-mo-gbèsan'. Nwon lágbára, ara wọn sì le koko, sùgbón èmí ojo ni nwon ní, èyí l'ó sì fà iwà àfojúdí, iwà elètàn àti iwà òşíkà tí nwon nhù. Arimásàirò ni ti pé gbogbo àwọn onirunpípónwèşé nínú wọn, àt'ako àt'abo, l'ó yá'dí t'ó sì fà 'jàngbòn jù àwọn yòkù lọ; síbẹsíbẹ èyí tí nwon fi jù àwọn yòkù yíí, ní agbára àti aayan, gbòòrògbòòrò bá yíí ni.

7. Eros (Romantic Love): In the traditional Yoruba way of life romantic love is expressed mostly in gestures and in acts of practical helpfulness; talking is not much resorted to. However, an oral poet, a minstrel, freely puts into poetic language his affectionate feelings for his beloved. The woman also sometimes sings the praises of her lover in solitude.

What I think needs to be said about the expressiveness of the Yoruba language with regard to the expression of romantic love is that all that can be said in the English language in a love letter by a Yoruba man or woman, boy or girl, can be fully expressed in Yoruba as well. Since quotations from Shakespeare's sonnets and from Shakespeare's play, The Tempest are the stock in trade of Yoruba teenagers writing love letters, I supply hereunder Yoruba verse translations of some of these quotations as well as quotations of some love letters in Yoruba from Fagunwa's novel Ìrèké-Oníbùdó<sup>1</sup>.

Ìfẹ̀pádé's Letter to Ìrèké-Oníbùdó

Ìrèké-oníbùdó tẹ̀mi pàápàá,

Ìrèké-oníbùdó mi, orúkọ rẹ̀ bá ìrèké lọ, sùgbón iwọ̀ pàápàá dùn ju ìrèké lọ. Iwọ̀ ni ìgbín, èmi ni ìkarawun, ìgbín kò lè ẹ̀ ẹ̀ àìrì ìkarawun, ìkarawun kò sì lè ẹ̀ ẹ̀ àìrì ìgbín, Àti ojú tí ọ̀ràn yíí tí sẹ̀lẹ̀ tí ng kò rí ọ̀, bí ayé ni mo wà bí ọ̀run ni ng kò lè sọ. Àti ìjẹta ni mo ti fi onjẹ si ẹ̀nu mi yíí mọ. Báwo ni ng ó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ jẹun

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<sup>1</sup>Fagunwa: Ìrèké Oníbùdó, Nelson, pp.90-91.

nígbàtí olùfẹ́ mi kò jẹ́ ? Báwo ni ng ó ẹ́ mu omi, nígbàtí olùfẹ́ mi kò mu ? Ọkàn mi ti dàrú bí omi eléḗrí, ayà mi kò balẹ́, Ìbànújẹ́ ni mo sì fi ẹ́ aṣọ nítòrí rẹ́. Taa ní lè dípò olùfẹ́ mi fún mi ? Taa ní lè ẹ́ bí olùfẹ́ mi ? Ìrèké-oníbùdó ti ta ọfà ìfẹ́ lù mí láti ọjọ́ pípẹ́, oró ọfà rẹ́ sì ti mú mi, olùfẹ́ mi dàbí ìtanná ewéko tútù olóòrùndíḍùn, tí nfa gbogbo èniyàn mọ́ra. Ìrèké-oníbùdó, má ẹ́ gbàgbé, ìfẹ́ dàbí onjẹ́ díḍùn ní oko, sùgbón ọ̀nà àti dé oko náà a máa kún fún ìṣòro; ìṣòro ọ̀kè, ìṣòro kòtò, ìṣòro ẹ̀gún, ìṣòro onírúurú igi gíga tí ó máa fúwó lu ojú ọ̀nà náà. Sùgbón ẹ̀niti ó bá le borí ìwọ̀nyí, tí ó dé oko, yíó ní àláfíà ayé, yíó ní t'òrun pèlú. Nítòrí náà jẹ́ kí á dárayá, ìwọ́ olùfẹ́ mi, mò nìbò wá rí ọ́ lálẹ́ ọ̀nì.

Èmi ni tírẹ́ tífí ayé,

Ìfẹ́pádé.

#### English Translation

My very own Ìrèké-oníbùdó,

My darling Ìrèké-oníbùdó, your name makes mention of the sugar-cane, but you yourself are sweeter than the sugar-cane. You are the snail, I am the snail's shell. The snail cannot do without seeing his shell and the snail's shell cannot do without seeing the snail. Since this matter began, and I have failed to set my eyes on you, I have been only semi-conscious, not knowing really whether I am on earth or in heaven. I have not eaten since the day before yesterday. How can I eat in the absence of my darling ? How can I drink water in the absence of my darling ?

My heart is unsettled just like dirty water containing particles in suspension. I am ill at ease and because of you, sorrow is the garment I am wearing. Who can be a substitute for my darling for me? Who can fill the vacancy created by my darling? Ìrèké-onfùdó shot the arrow of love at me and hit me a long time ago; I have been seized by the effect of the medicine on the arrow. My beloved is like a fresh, sweet-smelling flower which attracts everybody. Ìrèké-onfùdó, don't forget, love is like delicious food available at the farm. However, the path to the farm is usually strewn with difficulties: hills, holes, thorns, all sorts of difficulties; including trees liable to fall across the path. But the person who over-comes these and gets through to the farm will enjoy both the bliss of this world and also that of heaven. Therefore my darling, let us cheer up. I will pay you a visit this evening.

I am yours for ever,

Ìfẹ̀pàdẹ̀.

Ìrèké-Onfùdó's Letter to Ìfẹ̀pàdẹ̀<sup>1</sup>

Ìfẹ̀pàdẹ̀ mi ọ̀wọ̀n,

Bí ó ti sòro fun ọ̀mọ ọ̀jọ̀ mẹ́ta láti sọ یتان baba rẹ̀ ni ó sòro fún mi láti sọ bí inú mi ti dùn tó nígbàtí mo rí ìwé yín pẹ̀lú onjẹ̀ rẹ̀kẹ̀tẹ̀ ti ẹ̀ kó ránsẹ̀ sí mi. Mo fẹ́ kí ẹ̀ mọ̀ pé ọ̀ràn wa yíí kí í sẹ̀ ọ̀jú ayé rárá. Olódùmarè ni ó rán wa sí ara wa. Bí ẹ̀ bá sọ ibi tí

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<sup>1</sup>Fagunwa, Ìrèké-Onfùdó, Nelson, pp.78-79.

mo lè dúró lé lórí èmí yín, ng kí rò pé, síbè, ó tó bí ẹ ti jẹ  
 lórí èmí mi. Ẹ àkíyèsí, Ifépadé, ìjé bí èniyàn bá mú èmí  
 pépéyẹ kúrò lára pépéyẹ, pépéyẹ lè ẹ nkankan mó ndan ? Tàbí kí  
 èniyàn mú èmí àkùkọ kúrò lára àkùkọ, kíni yíó tùn kù sí i lára ?  
 Bákannáà ni ẹ jẹ sí mi; ènyin ni èmí mi èmi sí ni àkùkọ àti pépéyẹ.

Nitorínáà ng ó maa retí yín l'ákókò tí ẹ wí.

Emi ni tiyin, gan-an,

Ìrèké Oníbùdó.

English Translation

My dear Ifépadé,

As difficult as it is for a three-day old baby to tell the life story of his father, so difficult is it for me to say how glad I was when I received your letter which accompanied the numerous dishes of food that you sent to me. I want you to realize that this matter of ours is not of this world at all. The truth is that The Almighty Creator predestined us for each other. If you can say where exactly I may stand on your soul, I don't think that comes up to how you are placed on my own soul. Note this, Ifépadé. Suppose someone removes a duck's heart from a duck, can the duck carry out any further activities ? Or suppose one removes a cock's heart from a cock, what life would there be left in the cock ? Even so you are to me; you are my heart and I am a cock as well as a duck.

Therefore, I shall be expecting you at the time you have stated.

I am your very own,

Ifépadé.

Quotation from one of Shakespeare's sonnets

Let me not to the marriage of true minds  
Admit impediments. Love is not love  
Which alters when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove.  
O no; it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests, and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.



Yoruba Translation

Ìdínà kankan kò ní t'owòbò mi wá  
 Fún olóòótó òkúnrin àt'obínrin tí ìfẹ̀ dápò  
 Tí wón sì fẹ́ẹ̀ di tọ̀kọ̀taya.  
 Ó jọ ìfẹ̀ ni, kí í ẹ̀ ìfẹ̀ —  
 Ohun t'ó mú olólùfẹ̀ yí'wà padà  
 Nígbà ìṣòro dé f'ẹ̀n'títì kí ẹ̀ l'ólólùfẹ̀.  
 Tàbí 'un t'ó mú olólùfẹ̀ yapa  
 Láti bá owó sí kúrò l'òdò ẹ̀nikẹ̀jì rẹ̀,  
 Aní kúrò l'òdò ẹ̀n'tí ti kí ẹ̀ l'ólólùfẹ̀.  
 Àà ! Rára o ! Ìfẹ̀ kò rí báun.  
 Gbọ̀ningbọ̀nin n'tòkè òkè gbọ̀n-in-gbọ̀n-in.  
 Báylí ni t'ìfẹ̀ toótó.  
 Òkè tíf dúró gbọ̀n-in-gbọ̀n-in bí'jì kija .  
 Òkè tí í dúró gbọ̀n-in-gbọ̀n-in b'íná kija .  
 Ìràwọ̀ amọ̀nà n'ìfẹ̀ gidi gan-an .  
 Ìràwọ̀ amọ̀nà fún atukọ̀ lóju omi,  
 Ìràwọ̀ oniyebiye àwánáridí.  
 Tàa kàn lè fojúrí k'á sì fi ẹ̀'amọ̀nà.

Quotation from The Tempest

Admir'd Miranda !

Indeed the top of admiration; worth

What's dearest to the world !

.....

you, O you,

So perfect and so peerless, are created

Of every creature's best.

Yoruba Translation

Atinuké òpèré,

Atinuké eni èyẹ.

Atinuké àrírópínẹwà.

Ìşura oniyebiyé tẹmi l'ayé !

.....

Ìwọ, àní ìwọ nìkan l'ẹmí mò

T'ó pé pére pére.

Èlédá fi gbogbo iyí jínkílẹ̀ rẹ, Ó fi dárà,

Kò fààyẹ aláẹbù kankan sílẹ̀ láraa rẹ.

EXPRESSION OF THOUGHTS AND IDEAS IN THE YORUBA LANGUAGE

The only point I wish to make on this is that there is super-abundant provision of vocabulary in the language for the expression of any thought or idea that is within Yoruba culture. When educated Yoruba persons admix English words with those of their mother tongue when purportedly speaking in Yoruba, it is not because of inadequacy of vocabulary in the language. It is because of their ignorance of or their not bothering to use the appropriate vocabulary due to their not having studied the language properly and their contemptuous indifference to the language.

In fact, like many another African language, the Yoruba language is equipped with a certain class of words which is lacking in all European languages. I am referring to ideophones, phonaesthetic words, which are untranslatable into English, French etc. These phonaesthetic words are words which convey their meaning solely by their sound and they are quite different from the onomatopoeic words which imitate sounds in real life.

The onomatopoeic words in the following sentences in English have their counterparts in Yoruba as shown.

The booming of guns filled the air.

[Író ìbọ̀n gbà 'lú: kìmù, gbàù, kẹ̀m.]

Can you hear the buzzing of the bees ?

Şé ò ñgbó yunmuyunmu àwọ̀n oyin ?

We were disturbed by the clattering of horses' hoofs.

[Ariwo kútùpà kútùpà àwọm ẹşin dı wa lówó.]

The apple fell down with a thud.

[Ọsàn nàà bọ sílẹ̀ pọ.]

The phonaesthetic words in the following sentences in Yoruba have no counterparts in English, though their meaning can be put across in English:

Ọ dıde fúú

[He got up with a jerk]

Ọ rın dièdiè.

[He walked sluggishly]

Ọ rın kánmókánmó

[He walked quickly/hurriedly]

Ọ rın gólógóló/ginniginni

[He walked stealthily]

Ọ rın fiàfià

[He walked fast and roughly]

Ọ rın gbèndẹkẹ/fańda

[He walked at ease/in a leisurely manner]

Ọ rın şiaşia

[He walked roughly and nervously].

Thus, subtle differences between various notions are expressed in the Yoruba language by the use of phonaesthetic words. The chart below gives a fairly wide cross-section of phonaesthetic words in Yoruba:

ojú gbọọrọ (long face) ojú roboto (round face) ojú fẹ̀ẹ̀mọ̀ (broad face) ojú gbẹ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀ ( " " ) ojú rọ̀gòdò (bulging eyes) ràngàndàn ( " " ) ojú pátólá (slit-like) fíntínrín ( " " ) ojú kòhòbò (deep-set) kòtò ojú bàibàì (dim) ojú tóbòjẹ̀ (blood-shot) oju kànràndàn (protruding)	ẹ̀sẹ̀ tínrín } ẹ̀sẹ̀ tọ̀pálá } thin ẹ̀sẹ̀ tọ̀ósín } ẹ̀sẹ̀ tibiri } jàkùtẹ̀ } heavy ẹ̀sẹ̀ gírípà (strong muscular) ẹ̀sẹ̀ dáríkú (short) ẹ̀sẹ̀ tóbògbé (with turned down toes) ẹ̀sẹ̀ sàgílà (long)	ẹ̀nu doodo (protruding) ẹ̀nu bọ̀bọ̀kù (longated) ẹ̀nu kúmbọ̀ (snouty) ẹ̀nu jàwàlà (big) ẹ̀nu wọ̀jì (filthy) ẹ̀nu bọ̀untì (big) ẹ̀nu ẹ̀tì (bulging) ẹ̀nu róbótó (small and round)
orí págunpágun (knobby) orí fẹ̀gbé (small) bómbó orí pẹ̀tẹ̀ (flat) orí rìgìdì (round & heavy) ràpàtà orí roboto (spherical) orí jìgìdì (heavy) orí pẹ̀rẹ̀ (flat) orí jálúgbé (tiny) orí palaba (flat) orí kẹ̀sì (heavy)	etí kóróbójó (curled) etí fẹ̀rẹ̀ (broad) etí fẹ̀rẹ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀ (broad) etí fẹ̀lé (thin)	imú rùgùdù (spherical) imú rínbìntín (small) imú gbòòrò (wide) imú tọ̀pá (narrow) imú dọ̀tùnlà (big and flattened) imú tọ̀gìlà (ridge-like European) imú kòkò ( " " " imú bẹ̀rẹ̀ (bent nose).

owó kúírá (short)	àiyà díídí (bulging)	ikùn gbèhùdù (baggy)
owó kúítá (short)	àiyà gbààgbà (audacious)	ikùn háláhálá (ill-
owó gbòorò (long)		nourished bony,
owó gbògbògbò (very long)		skinny).

Ọ rìn kánmókánmó (quickly)  
 gólógóló (sluggishly)  
 flàflà (fast and roughly)  
 gínnígínní (stealthily)  
 gbèndèkẹ (at ease)  
 sààsà (roughly and nervously)  
 fanda (at ease)

Ọ yójú fín-fín (peep)  
 Ọ la'jú pépé (at ease)

Ọ nùwò dọp

sùn-ùn	suu suu (blankly)
dọrú	sii
kàn-ùn	fèfè
pàkò	mọ̀n̄mọ̀n̄

Ọ nùwò sùsù (blankly)  
 Ọ nùwò ó kẹ̀lúkẹ̀lú (wistfully)  
 Ọ nùwò wírí (like a thief)  
 Ọ nùwò gàn-ùn (like a wildman)

Ọ jókò taratara  
 jìwò  
 tẹ̀tẹ̀rẹ̀  
 wọ̀pẹ̀rẹ̀  
 jàbàtá  
 pàbà

Ọ ta sánsán  
 Ọ já kánmí  
 Ọ bà tíí

Ọ sùbú wògírà  
 wògàngàn gbaragada  
 kàbíàwò gbàràgàdà  
 jàpàlà kòlòbà  
 wòkòkò wòkòkò

Ọnà kọ̀lọ̀kọ̀lọ̀ (zig-zag)  
 tààrà (straight)  
 akọ̀rọ̀ (crescent)  
 tóóró (narrow)  
 rẹ̀ngbọ̀ndan (straight)

EXPRESSION OF POINTS OF VIEW IN THE YORUBA LANGUAGE

In the Yoruba language, there is a super-abundant reservoir of proverbs for the expression of points of view. The proverb actively exists as a figurative clarifier and parabolic summarizer, on the lines of the adage: Half a word is sufficient for the wise: Verbum sat sapienti. The proverb drives home the point being made, even in the most common place conversation of everyday life, so long as there arises a need for the expression of personal opinions.

Example:

"Ogbéni Onfibiyo, mo sàkiyèsí pé è mbi àwọn jànmọ̀bọ̀ lèèrè nipa irí sigá tí nwọn mú. Mo ní 'Á a, pèlu gbogbo 'un t'awọn dokita nwi nipa siga-mimu yii, èru o ba wọn lati tun maa mu siga'.  
Şe èyin alara kii mu siga?"

"Emi kii mu u o."

"Emi maa nmu u. Nitooto l'awọn dokita nsọ pe kò dára kò dára; şugbón àwọn baba wa ni nwọn maa npa a l'owe, nwọn ni "É dèè dún, é dèè dún. Ọwó t'Ègbá mú lẹ ẹnu, Ègbá ò mu u bọ. Àwọn oyinbó t'ó kó sigá wá, tí kò bá dára nwọn ò ní kó o wá."

(1)

"Kii şe gbogbo wọn l'ó mú u."

"Èn-èn kii şe gbogbo awa enia dudu l'ó mú ń bákannaa."

"Àwọn oyinbo tí mú u ní kábámọ̀. Èyin ò şe f'eyi kógbón?"

"Kò şe í-fi kógbón."

- "Şé ẹ rí ọrọ wọn àti àtidáhùn wọn nísisiyíi; ó dà bí ẹgbà tí  
 (2) enia tí nsare k'oun o má tẹ n'íkán, k'ó wá tẹ lórí 'ẹ tán, a máa  
sáré k'oun ó má kí. Ǫdí rẹ t'enu mi ẹ lẹ gb'ọrọ lórí ẹyí ní pé  
 (3) ó ẹ mi rí ọgbó 'dìẹ r'awòdì sá. Bì nkankan ba ẹ'ẹnikan, t'ó bá lọ  
 b'ẹnikẹjì rẹ pé k'ó f'oun ní ọgùn. Yio bẹ̀rẹ̀ pé ẹ'oun alára tí lẹ ó  
 rí t'ó sí bá a mu. T'ó bá jẹ bẹ̀ẹ̀ ní yio fi gbàgbọ.

- "Awọn méjèjì t'emi n'wò yíi, nipa sígá-mímu wọn, ẹn-ẹn  
 (4) b'enia tí wù ó lẹ kánjú d'óko tó, oko ní yio bá kùkùtẹ. Ẹ ẹ sí rí í  
 (5) pé b'enia tí wù ó lẹ hù 'wà ẹbàjẹ tó iwaju n'io b'Ọlọ́un. Mà máa mu ń  
 ní 'gbà kan t'ó jẹ pé ẹmi gan-an fẹ̀rẹ̀ di sígá. Ó tí lẹ l'ọdún mètálá  
 (6) bayii. Ọwẹ awọn ẹgbà ní pé kò s'ẹn't'ó mu'mi tó ẹn't'ó mu'mi kí  
s'ódb. Nígbà tí mo bẹ̀rẹ̀ sí mu sígá, ọkan l'ọjúmọ ní. Şùgbọ́n b'ó tí  
 (7) jẹ pé dífẹ̀dífẹ̀ l'ẹşin í-wó. Nigboóyá ó di pe mò nra 'gi méjì méta  
 (8) s'ápò, tí tí mo fi d'ẹn't'ó n'parí àdọ́ta l'ọjúmọ. Nitootọ fàfàrí  
aşejù nígbamíí oko olówó ní í-mú ní í-lọ. Awọn t'ó bá mò sígá í-mu,  
 bí ọrọ awọn olórin Ilórin, nwon kíí r'orín. Ọtí ní nwon í-mu. Bẹ̀ẹ̀  
 sí ní, nínú ohun gbogbo ounjẹ tí ńdà ẹnià l'ọkàn tí sí máa í-mú ọkàn  
 enia ẹ kùlúkùlú, sígá jẹ ọkan pàtàkì, f'ẹni t'ó bá mò ọ mu gidi.  
 Nitoripe t'ẹbi bá n'pa 'nià nísisiyíi, tí ko r'ounjẹ jẹ, nwon ní  
 (9) Nwon kíí r'ókù ebi ní tí tí. Oluwarẹ yio sá rí nkan jẹ tí kò fi ní  
 ká nitori ebi.

Mo kọ ọ sílẹ nígbẹ̀n gbẹ̀n pẹ̀lú àdúra àti ẹpinnu nígbat'ọ fẹ̀  
 pin mi l'ẹmi, tí n'rùn l'agbari mi. Fún sáà kan ibi pé mò níjì ara mi  
 ní'yọ pónlá ní. Ẹmi n'mo l'owó ara mi tí ng ó fi rà á o, ng ó sí  
 tún wá lọ sí kọrọ lọ rẹ & k'awọn enia t'ó mò mí ó má ba-à rí mi.



- (10) Nigbòdya, mo wa rí i wípe nwọn ní "Mò nwa nkan' kii j'enia o rí nkan ti babalawo fi f'odidi odun meta wa egbò lapałapa." Mo wá fi
- (11) lo awon ti nmu sigá pe mo fe kò ó sílẹ. Şe má rù ú l'odgun ert, b'enia bá rù ú yio pa 'lúwarè ni.

Şugbón mo kàn nwa ònà ni'bi tí kò sí ònà ni. Af'igbà tí Onişẹ Qlórun kan gbà mí niyànjú láti fi agbára Qlórun şe e nipa àdúra. Bayii ni mo şe ni işẹgun."

In this extract from a conversation, at least eleven proverbs crop up for the expression of points of view. The conversation is about cigarette-smoking.

Proverb 1: may be translated into English as follows: "It is n't pleasant. It isn't pleasant." Nevertheless the Egbá man swallows morsel after morsel of the food placed before him." The speaker uses this to drive home his point of view (you may think it silly) that since, even among the medical doctors who say that cigarette smoking is harmful there are heavy cigarette-smokers, it must be that cigarette-smoking is basically good and pleasant."

Proverb 2: may be translated into English as follows: "When a man has failed in his bid to avoid ignominy his new ambition is to escape premature death."

The speaker uses this proverb to introduce his personal reminiscence about how after becoming notorious as an extravagant heavy smoker of cigarettes he found himself face to face with serious ill-health and his new resolve was to save his good health by abandoning smoking.

Proverb 3: may be translated into English as follows: "I've experienced it before says a full-grown hen as she runs into hiding at the appearance of a kite."

The speaker uses this proverb to explain that it is as a result of his own personal experience that he has decided to eschew cigarette-smoking after becoming convinced of the great harm that tobacco does to heavy smokers.

Proverb 4: "No matter how early a farmer gets to his farm in the morning, the tree-stumps will be there ahead of him."

The speaker uses this proverb to assert clearly that his personal record as a heavy-smoker of cigarettes has not at all been approached by any of the other smokers present on the particular occasion.

Proverb 5: "No matter how unprincipled and wicked a man may be in his efforts to get on in life, when he thinks he has reached the top, he will still see God above him."

The speaker uses this proverb to re-iterate his point that often a man who thinks he is a record-holder finds that there are other records better than his.

Proverb 6: "He who drinks water most of all is he who drowns in consequence in a river."

The speaker uses this proverb to establish his point that since he nearly died of heavy smoking, his record in cigarette-smoking may be regarded as unbeatable.

Proverb 7: "A horse usually dies not of sudden ill health, but of the worst stages of protracted disease or senility."

The speaker uses this proverb to explain that he did not quickly become a heavy smoker endangering his own life; the process was gradual.

Proverb 8: "Extremes are errors which sometimes turn a previously well-off person into a debtor."

The speaker uses this proverb to make his point that sometimes heavy cigarette-smoking coupled with heavy drinking has made a bankrupt of a prosperous citizen.

Proverb 9: "Never is a dead person who has died because of hunger picked up in the streets."

The speaker uses this proverb to make his point that just as a hungry man seeks and finds some food to eat at all costs, so a cigarette addict seeks and finds cigarettes to smoke at all costs.

Proverb 10: "Vagueness in making enquiries prevents one from finding what one is after; hence a certain diviner priest in the olden days spent full three years in his quest for the roots of the common *jatropha curcas*."

The speaker uses this proverb to make his point that one reason why it took him many months to be able to stop smoking entirely was that he first sought remedies for headache, stomach-upset etc. instead of confessing that it was the will-power to stop smoking that he really needed.

Proverb 11: "The best way of avoiding the physical strain of being overburdened is to carry no burden at all."

The speaker uses the proverb to express his point of view that he had landed himself in the abyss of cigarette addiction through his failure to resist the attraction of cigarette-smoking right from the start.

It is interesting to note that Yoruba diplomacy (which has led to the Yoruba being considered essentially lacking in straight forwardness) thrives mainly on the use of proverbs often in such a way that in the same pleading speech a later proverb may cancel out the meaning of an earlier one.

**SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL VOCABULARY** in the Yoruba language.

The Yoruba language possesses wealth and resourcefulness in the formation of derivatives.

From Arabic, from Hausa and from English, the Yoruba language has already derived many words and is capable of deriving very many more words not only from these languages but from other languages as well. In particular, Yoruba vocabulary is yet to be built up for thoughts on scientific, technological, political, economic, sociological, philosophical, linguistic and cultural matters. And the language is quite adaptable for this purpose. The agglutinative quality of the language enables it to produce new words for new objects, new words which are brief descriptions of the objects or their characteristics. The Yorubanizing of the foreign names of the new objects is another way by which the vocabulary of the language is expanded to cope with scientific and technological developments in Yoruba culture. If given the opportunity to develop, the Yoruba language can be developed to cope adequately with scientific and technological discourses even of the most intricate and sophisticated type.

The lists below provide examples of Yoruba scientific and technological terms already in common use among the people.

Vehicles

okò òfurufú	}	aeroplane
bàlufu		
aropléńí		
mótò	}	motor-car
okò ayókéjé		

lórí	}	lorry
okò ilẹ̀		
bọ̀pọ̀sì	-	bus
bọ̀lugi	-	landrover/jeep
alùpùpù	-	motorcycle
básíkùlù	}	bicycle
kẹ̀kẹ̀		
bẹ̀tíròb	}	petrol
epo mọ̀tò		
ọ̀lìlì	}	engine oil
epo rọ̀bì		

Household utensils/equipment

àtùpà	-	lantern
lẹ̀ntíríkì	-	electricity
rédíò	-	radio box
tẹ̀lífisọ̀n	-	television
gààsì	-	gas
ẹ̀rọ̀ amúlétura	-	air-conditioner
fríjìjì	-	refrigerator
sítòòfù	-	stove
karosínlínlì	}	kerosene
epo òyìnbó		
fóòmù	-	telephone

Health Science Terms

tínfintínní	}	germ
kòkòrò àrùn		
abéré	}	injection
àjéára		
gótà	-	drain, gutter
ilé-ìwòsàn	-	hospital
nòṣì	-	nurse
dókítà	-	doctor
káádì	-	card
òksíjèní	-	oxygen
dàyòksàídì kábònú	-	carbondioxide
kóró oḡùn	-	tablets
pirotínní	-	protein
káraóle	-	vitamins
kaboháídréètí	-	carbohydrate
táaṣì	-	starch
ajílẹ̀	-	manure/fertiliser.