

## YORUBA LANGUAGE IN CYBERSPACE: ISSUES AND VIABLE OPTIONS FOR VITALITY

### SİBER UZAYDA YORUBÁ DİLİ: ZORLUKLAR VE CANLILIK İÇİN UYGULANABİLİR SEÇENEKLER

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#### Abstract

Despite its widespread informal usage and vast data repository, Yorùbá remains a low-resource language, and most digital platforms do not meet the linguistic needs of its diverse speakers. This study examined the determinants of the dominant use of the English language and the continuous displacement of the Yorùbá language in digital spaces. It employed a descriptive quantitative research design and a purposive sampling technique to elicit data from 500 randomly selected netizens across the Yorùbá-speaking states of Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti. The study is anchored on Kachru's (1985) Model of the three concentric circles of English. The findings indicate that while not thriving, the Yorùbá language is considered suitable to interpret technical and scientific thoughts (67.8%), but its usage is grossly deficient because social capital is associated with English, Nigeria's most dominant foreign and participants' professed language of upward mobility (93.4%). Overall, the study reinforces extant studies' concerns regarding digital colonialism and the shifts towards a monolingual society where linguistic diversity and low-resourced languages are excluded, particularly in the digital landscape. The conclusion emphasised that sustained initiatives and user-driven technological innovation, policy support, and digital engagement are crucial in addressing Yorùbá language displacement in particular and advancing the sustainability of indigenous languages in the digital age in general.

**Keywords:** English language, Digital spaces, Language dominance, Language displacement, Yorùbá language.

**Öz**

Yaygın gayri resmi kullanımı ve geniş veri deposuna rağmen, Yorùbá dili hâlâ düşük kaynaklı bir dil olarak kalmakta ve çoğu dijital platform, çeşitli konuşucularının dil ihtiyaçlarını karşılamamaktadır. Bu çalışma, İngilizce dilinin baskın kullanımının ve Yorùbá dilinin dijital alanlarda sürekli yer değiştirmesinin belirleyicilerini incelemiştir. Çalışmada tanımlayıcı niceliksel araştırma tasarımı ve amaçlı örnekleme tekniği kullanılarak, Yorùbá dilinin konuşulduğu Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun ve Ekiti eyaletlerinden rastgele seçilen 500 internet kullanıcılarından veri toplanmıştır. Çalışma, Kachru'nun (1985) İngilizce'nin üç konsantrik dairesi modeli üzerine temellendirilmiştir. Bulgular, Yorùbá dilinin gelişmeye de teknik ve bilimsel düşünceleri yorumlamak için uygun görüldüğünü (yüzde 67,8) göstermektedir; ancak sosyal sermaye İngilizce ile ilişkilendirildiği ve İngilizce, Nijerya'nın en baskın yabancı dili ve katılımcıların yukarı doğru sosyal hareketlilik için tercih ettikleri dil olduğu için kullanımı ciddi şekilde yetersizdir (yüzde 93,4). Genel olarak, çalışma mevcut araştırmaların dijital sömürgecilik ve dil çeşitliliğinin, düşük kaynaklı dillerin özellikle dijitalleşen ortamda ciddi şekilde dışlandığı mono lingual (tek dilli) bir topluma dönüşümle ilgili endişelerini güçlendirmektedir. Çalışma, sürdürülebilir yerel dillerin dijital çağda korunması ve özellikle Yorùbá dilinin yer değiştirmesinin azaltılması için devamlı girişimler, kullanıcı yapımı teknolojik yenilikler, politika desteği ve dijital katılımın kritik olduğunu sonucuna varmıştır.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** İngilizce dili, Dijital alanlar, Dil baskınlığı, Dil yer değiştirmesi, Yorùbá dili.

**STRUCTURED ABSTRACT**

Notwithstanding concerted efforts and continued attempts to develop African languages, languages such as English have become a dominant force in global communication, with up-to-date data revealing that the English language, in particular, accounts for approximately 52% of web content. This digital language divide is a significant concern because only 10 languages make up 82% of the internet content, and many languages, including Yorùbá, which is facing a decline in digital spaces and usefulness due to the supremacy of English, are being left behind. This phenomenon has not only aggravated the dominance of English, predominantly among youths, but has also contributed to the erosion of indigenous knowledge and languages. From all indications, the trend is largely intensified by the widespread use of English in government, education, media and business within the broader context of multilingualism in Nigeria and correspondingly creates a language hierarchy that promotes linguistic diversity but endangers Nigerian languages, solidifying the dominant status of English.

This study investigates the determinants of the dominant use of English in online spaces and contributes to the overall development of Yorùbá and potentially other endangered languages. Kachru's (1985) Model of the three concentric circles of English provides a theoretical framework for understanding the spread of English in the study context. Nigeria falls within the "Outer Circle", where English serves as a second language used for social integration and economic benefits at the international level. The study used a quantitative research design. A purposive sampling technique was employed to select 500 participants from the Southwest region of Nigeria, specifically from Yorùbá-speaking states. Data were collected online using a 36-item questionnaire, and participants' rights were ensured through informed consent. The elicited data were analysed using frequency counts and SPSS version 25.0, while the results were presented in tables using simple percentages and descriptive statistics.

The study revealed a range of significant findings that shed light on the language preferences and behaviours of the sampled netizens in the southwest region of Nigeria. The majority of respondents (67.8%) deemed Yorùbá and other indigenous languages capable of conveying complex ideas in digital spaces. However, a striking dominance of English, with an overwhelming 98.2% of participants citing it as their favourite language on social media platforms, was recorded. In stark contrast, only 1.8% preferred Yorùbá as their favourite language on social media platforms. Furthermore, the study examined the impact of location on language choice, revealing that urban dwellers were more inclined to prefer English, while their rural counterparts were more likely to opt for local languages. The reasons underlying this preference were multifaceted, with personal interest, class symbol/prestige, and the perception of English as Nigeria's official language being cited as primary motivations.

It was deduced from the findings that Yorùbá is a low-resource language with limited digital resources, despite its extensive offline use and vast repository. Specifically, the study attributes the limited presence of Yorùbá in digital spaces to gaps in translation, orthography, and the lack of exposure to programs and modern electronic forms. The paper contends, therefore, that the imposition of English as the language of international communication and its widespread use in administration, education, media, and other domains constrained the use of Yorùbá in digital spaces. Overall, the study's findings highlight the pressing need to promote and preserve indigenous languages like Yorùbá in the face of English language dominance in digital spaces. It emphasises the urgent need for digital onboarding of indigenous languages like Yorùbá to empower them and enhance user engagement. While acknowledging the efforts of speakers, linguists, and community leaders towards the revitalisation of Yorùbá, the study notes that the language requires digital support in areas like translation, search engine services, and availability in operating systems. The study recommends promoting digital education in local languages and increasing funding to preserve endangered languages online and localised software.

## 1. Introduction

The widespread use of the English language is a topical linguistic phenomenon of our era. Recent data by Petrosyan (2024) showed that as of January 2024, English alone accounted for approximately 52% of web content. Spanish and German were next in line but far behind, with 5.5% and 4.8% of web content, respectively. Ekpe (2020) consequently noted that the dominance of the English language in recent times has reached an unbearable peak with the increasing impact of technology and the globalised world economy. Like Ekpe, Obondo (2007), Igboanusi (2017), Akujobi (2019), Oluwadoro (2020), Patel and Patel (2021) and Ikotun, Komolafe and Afolabi (2023) all acknowledged the superiority of English over indigenous languages in significant domains, especially in communication media.

In the Nigerian context, the gap between the exoglossic language and the endoglossic languages and its dominant status finds expression in Crystal's (2003) remark that English is a global language. Akindele and Adegbite (2005) corroborated this claim, noting that English is the means of acquiring a formal education in Nigeria. Therefore, it is the language of the ruling elite and, apparently, the educated. Furthermore, since the presence of social media platforms such as Instagram, Tik Tok, Facebook, YouTube and WhatsApp has created online communities where people share as much personal information as they like with other members, it is likely for users to employ a global language.

Interactions within online communities are often problematic due to language barriers, especially for those living in remote areas with less contact with speakers of other languages. As Sonaiya (2007) observed, what continues to be of great concern to many in Africa is the fact that even after independence not only are the European languages still being maintained within the educational system and other domains, but very little is done to develop African languages which had suffered over a century of neglect. To this end, even though online communities largely constitute an outer circle of language use within the study context, there is not enough justification for the increasing neglect of indigenous languages in digital spaces. Against this backdrop, this study investigates the determinants of the dominant use of English and the surviving possibilities of the language Yorùbá in online spaces to ultimately contribute to the development of the potentially endangered language.

## 2. Literature Review

With the rapid growth of digital technology and the availability of sophisticated communication tools such as new media, especially online forums and podcasts, the domains of language use have undergone a fundamental transformation. The digital landscape and space are critical constituents of this transformation, and perhaps the most intriguing of all, which is too significant to be ignored. As a matter of fact, for millions

of Nigerians, digital devices and services are entwined within the fabric of everyday life. The internet and other technological supplies are used as primary means not only to access information but also to boost learning experiences, conduct financial interactions and facilitate income generation. However, this fondness for technology, as reported by Mapunda and Rosendal (2021), amplifies the appeal and dominance of the English language, predominantly among youth. Therefore, the English language, notwithstanding its huge barrier-breaking benefits, now plays a fundamental role in the sociopolitical processes of imperialism and neocolonialism (Yóò & Namkung, 2012). As a consequence, indigenous knowledge is eroded in favour of the dominant language (Afolabi & Igboanus, 2024; Ikotun, Olowo & Afolabi, 2024) and discourteous expressions are simply hooted and seen as nothing serious.

Furthermore, Meital and Jason (2022) remarked that the decline in the use of minority languages on the internet is a result of low linguistic diversity found in digital settings. But beyond that, the outright neglect and omission of hundreds of indigenous languages reinforce English's supremacy online. This is the case with the Yorùbá language, which also accounts for why its online exposure and usefulness are increasingly a cause for concern. For instance, Adedimeji (2004) examined the use of English as an element of national development in Nigeria. He observed that the continuous use of the foreign language perpetuates colonialism, but there is no alternative indigenous language with the kind of grip and spread it has. This does not come as a surprise because, at the moment, there are only approximately 29 languages with digital vitality globally, and even X, formerly Twitter, supports only 34 languages, and Yorùbá is missing from the list (Simons et al., 2017). Moreover, according to Young (2014), the observed digital language divide is disturbing as only 10 languages make up 82% of the Internet out of the over 6,000 languages in the world and those who do not speak any of the dominant and featured languages fall even further behind on the lagging side of the digital divide.

While it is worth mentioning that digital spaces allow for dynamism in language use, innovations in spelling and meaning negotiation (Thurlow, 2017), the linguistic hierarchy generated by the widespread use of the English language in media, education, business and government is nothing short of a threat to linguistic diversity and a major peril for Nigerian languages, especially Yorùbá (Ajepe & Ademowo, 2016; Akujobi, 2024). For example, Yusuff, Adétòmíwá and Adédèjí (2020) interrogated the influence of digital communication on the development of the Yorùbá language. The study provides an argument supported by data for the endangerment of Yorùbá. The lapses observed are grounded in translation errors, orthography and the fact that the Yorùbá language dataset is not exposed on a larger scale to programs like Natural Language Tool Kit and modern electronic form, which will make it readily accessible at any time of need.

From a theoretical perspective, one of the most prominent models of the historical spread of English around the world is Kachru's (1985) Model of the three concentric circles of English. This model diffuses English into three phases, namely: the "Inner Circle", the "Outer Circle" and the "Expanding Circle". The circles are linked to the differences in the spread, acquisition, and domains in which English is used (Kachru, 1985; Mohammed, 2020). In the Inner Circle, the historical basis for the spread of English is explained and comprises regions in which English is the first or native language of the majority of the population. The Outer Circle is recorded through colonisation by the inner circle countries and is therefore composed of all former British Colonies like Nigeria, Hong Kong, India, Singapore, Ghana, etc. Here, English is predominantly used as a second language. Meanwhile, the expanding circle focuses on the spread of English as a language of international acceptability. Relating Kachru's model to the Nigerian context, where Yorùbá language is spoken as the native tongue and first language among its people (Mohammad, 2019), it can be said that Yorùbá is an inner circle language. However, the peculiarities of the "Outer Circle" and the "Expanding Circle" spread of English are prominently seen in Nigeria, dominantly in digital spaces, as Nigerians continue to use the English language more and seek "international acceptability" at the expense of their language and rich culture. The concerns over the status of the English language as an "Outer" and "Expanding" language with a far-reaching impact on the Yorùbá language, an Inner Circle

language for that matter, underscore this work and form the thrust of the study.

### 3. Method and materials

This study employed a quantitative research design. The design is descriptive, and a purposive sampling technique was used to elicit data from 500 randomly selected netizens across the southwest region, specifically from Yorùbá-speaking states of Lagos, Oyo, Ogun, Ondo, Osun, and Ekiti. The research instrument was distributed online and guaranteed the participants' rights to willingly partake in the study or decline with a clearly stated assurance that responses were solely for research purposes. Frequency counts and Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 25.0) were used to analyse the elicited data to get a nuanced understanding of the demographic information and responses to the 36-item questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into categories that collected respondents' socio-demographic characteristics and featured questions on the reasons behind the dominant use of English in digital spaces. As follows, the collated data are presented in tables and critically interrogated using simple percentages and descriptive statistics.

### 4. Data presentation

**Table 1:** Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Response range</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
Age	18-24	133	26.6
	25-34	63	12.6
	35-44	139	27.8
	45 and above	165	33.0
Sex	Female	192	38.4
	Male	308	61.6
State of Origin	Ekiti State	40	8.0
	Lagos State	183	36.6
	Ogun State	75	15.0
	Ondo State	64	12.8
	Osun State	50	10.0
	Oyo State	88	17.6
Location	Rural	91	18.2
	Urban	409	81.8
Educational level	HND/First Degree	225	45.0
	Masters/Ph.D. degrees	191	38.2
	ND/NCE	84	16.8
Languages spoken	One	13	2.6
	Three or more	87	17.4
	Two	400	80.0
Native language	Hausa	6	1.2
	Igbo	27	5.4
	Others	8	1.6
	Yorùbá	459	91.8

**Note:** HND = Higher National Diploma; ND = National Diploma; NCE = Nigeria Certificate in Education.

**Table 2:** Responses on the Reason for the Dominant Use of English in Digital Spaces

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
What is your favourite language on social media platforms?	English	491	98.2
	Yorùbá	9	1.8
If your choice is English, enunciate the reason:	A matter of personal interest	55	11.2
	English is associated with class symbol /prestige	60	12.2
	English is the official language in Nigeria	376	76.6
The dominant use of English has eased Nigerians of global communication problem on social media platforms.	No	20	4.0
	Yes	480	96.0
English is commonly used by Nigerian netizens online to facilitate global communication and opportunities	No	4	8
	Yes	496	99.2
Do social media platforms enhance the dominant use of English?	No	27	5.4
	Yes	473	94.6

**Table 3:** Responses on the Surviving Possibility of the Yorùbá Language and Other Indigenous Languages in Online Spaces

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Do you, by any means, code-switch/code-mix while on social media platforms?	No	172	34.4
	Yes	328	65.6
Do you need your native language to express certain ideas on social media platforms?	No	20	4.0
	Yes	480	96.0
Social media platforms connect the whole world at a single node through the use of English	No	33	6.6
	Yes	467	93.4

Local languages' value in the global market can be compared to the English language.	Agree	161	32.2
	Disagree	31	6.2
	Neutral	23	4.6
	Strongly Agree	241	48.2
	Strongly Disagree	44	8.8
Local languages may be suitable for interpreting technical and scientific thoughts.	Agree	226	45.2
	Disagree	88	17.6
	Neutral	32	6.4
	Strongly Agree	113	22.6
	Strongly Disagree	41	8.2

**Table 4:** Direct Impact of Location (Rural and Urban Dwellers) on Language Choice on Social Media Platforms

Variables	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
Are you comfortable with the use of the English language on social media platforms?	No	70	14.0
	Yes	430	86.0
If your answer is no, what would have been your most preferred language on social media Platforms?	Hausa	1	1.4
	Igbo	6	8.6
	Others	15	21.4
	Yorùbá	48	68.6
English is a language to be reckoned with while communicating with other netizens on social media platforms	No	20	4 .0
	Yes	480	96.0
The English language is commonly used by netizens in urban areas more than by netizens in rural areas	No	73	14.6
	Yes	427	85.4
Location has a direct impact on language choice on social media platforms.	No	110	22.0
	Yes	390	78.0

#### 4.1 Discussion of findings

The socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants are presented in Table 1. The result indicated that about one-third (n=165, 33%), representing the majority, were 45 years and above, 133 (26.6%) were aged 18-24 years, 63 (12.6%) were within the ages 25- 34 years, while 139 (27.8%) were aged 35- 44 years. The bulk of the study participants (n=308, 61.6%) were male, while 192 (38.4%) constituted the female sample. Most respondents, 183 (36.6%) were drawn from Lagos State, closely followed by Oyo State (17.6%), Ogun State (15%), Ondo State (12.8%), and Osun State (10%) while Ekiti State (8%) was the least in the ranking order. More than three-quarters of the study participants (n=409, 81.8%) were urban dwellers, while the remaining 91 (18.2%) constituted the rural dwellers. Distribution of respondents according to educational level revealed that less than half of the total respondents (n=225, 45%) were holders of HND/First Degree, 191 (38.2%) had Master's/Ph.D. degrees, while 84 (16.8%) had ND/NCE. Regarding the number of languages spoken by the study participants, 400 (80%) respondents could speak two languages, while 13 (2.6%) and 87 (17.4%) indicated one and three or more languages, respectively. With regards to the native language of the study participants, 459 (91.8%) respondents, representing the majority, indicated Yorùbá, closely followed by Igbo (5.4%) and other languages (1.6%), while Hausa (1.2%) was the least in the ranking order. It was clear from the demographic information that the majority of the respondents were from Lagos, the most populated state in the study region. It was also indicated that the majority of the study participants are also educated, urban dwellers and had Yorùbá as their native language.

Furthermore, Table 2 presents the reasons for the dominant use of English in digital spaces. The result showed that more than three-quarters of the respondents (n=491; 98.2%) indicated English Language as their favourite language on social media platforms, while only 9 (1.8%) reported Yorùbá as their favourite language on social media platforms. Those who reported English Language as their favourite language linked their justifications to: personal interest (11.2%), class symbol /prestige (12.2%) and the belief that English is the official language in Nigeria (76.6%). Also, more than three-quarters of the total sample (96%) agreed that the dominant use of English has eased Nigerians' global communication problem on social media platforms, while 20 (4%) disagreed. On whether or not many netizens in Nigeria use the English language to relate to the global community and facilitate opportunities, nearly all the respondents (99.2%) agreed, while less than 1% disagreed. As a follow-up to the above, 473 (94.6%) respondents agreed that social media platforms enhance the dominant use of English, while 27 (5.4%) disagreed.

Additionally, Table 3 presents the surviving possibility of the Yorùbá language and other indigenous languages in the digital landscape. The results showed that about two-thirds (65.6%) of the study participants code-switch/code-mix while on social media platforms. On whether the dominant use of the English language enables netizens to reach a wider audience, the majority of the respondents (96%) agreed, while 4% respondents disagreed. The majority of the study participants (n=467, 93.4%) also agreed that social media platforms connect the whole world at a single node through the use of English, while only 33 (6.6%) responded differently. On whether local languages' value in the global market can be compared to the English language, almost half of the total sample (48.2%) strongly agreed, 161 (32.2%) agreed, 31 (6.2%) disagreed, 44 (8.8%) strongly disagreed while 23 (4.6%) were indifferent. Regarding the suitability of local languages to interpret technical and scientific thoughts, 113 (22.6%) of the study participants strongly agreed, 226 (45.2%) respondents agreed, 88 (17.6%) disagreed, 41 (8.2%) strongly disagreed, while 32 (6.4%) were indifferent.

More so, Table 4 presents the direct impact of location (rural and urban dwellers) on language choice in digital places. The result showed that 430 (86%) of the total sample were comfortable with the use of the English language on social media platforms, while 70 (14%) responded otherwise. The few 70 respondents, who had no preference for the use of the English language on social media platforms, also indicated the following alternative language preference: Hausa (1.4%), Igbo (8.6%), Others (21.4%) and

Yorùbá (68.6%). Meanwhile, most of the respondents (n=480, 96%) further reported that English is a language to be reckoned with while communicating with other netizens on social media platforms, while 20 (4%) disagreed. More than three-quarters (85.4%) of the total sample agreed that the English language is commonly used by netizens in urban areas than by netizens in rural areas, while 73 (14.6%) disagreed. Also, 390 (78%) respondents agreed that location has a direct impact on language choice on social media platforms, while 110 (22%) disagreed.

Ultimately, the above findings offer interesting perspectives on the determinants of English language dominance and Yorùbá language displacement in digital spaces and indicate an urgent need for value reorientation and extended efforts towards Yorùbá language preservation. The survey echoed a hierarchy of language dominance and overwhelming preferences for English as the favoured language on social media platforms (98.2%), confirming Afolyan (2018), Christison and Murray (2014) and Onadipe-Shalom's (2024) assertions that English is the major medium of communication in digital spaces and that it is rendering indigenous languages in danger of extinction. The observation of Crystal (2011) that English has become the predominant language of social media and the internet is also reinforced by this outcome. However, since the internet is the most technologically advanced medium of communication and English is no doubt the language of upward mobility, concerted efforts must rather be put in place to accelerate the snail-pace integration of the Yorùbá language in digital spaces and maximise its use by the native speakers against all odds and notwithstanding the towering impact of the English language - to ensure the continued vitality of the indigenous language (Fishman, 1991; Grenoble, 2013; Awonusi & Adebileje, 2019).

Meanwhile, insights from the above findings and secondary data from the reviewed literature also showed that the dominant use of the English language and the displacement of the Yorùbá language are inspired by several factors. The problem is not only due to the restricted access or outright exclusion of Yorùbá language option in the digital landscape. The contradiction regarding the belief that English is the official language in Nigeria, without due consideration of the fact that the language is not the only official language in Nigeria, also worsens the matter and underlines the need for attitudinal change and language preservation awareness. By the same token, the influx of people from rural areas to urban areas or cities where diverse individuals from different linguistic backgrounds are present also encourages language shift and the use of the English language for convergence. This linguistic practice is carried on into online communities, where minority languages are further excluded in favour of the majority ones, and software and applications are developed for the so-called majority Language (Meital & Jason, 2022).

Then again, the selection of Yorùbá as a preferred language by a small minority of the participants is not unexpected since the study was conducted in the South-western region of Nigeria, where Yorùbá is the dominant language. It is worth noting that the snail-pace presence and hope for improved vitality of the Yorùbá language in digital spaces are acknowledged by 65.6% of the study participants who code-switch/code-mix, and 67.8% who considered Yorùbá and other indigenous languages suitable to interpret technical and scientific thoughts online. This could be further leveraged to rekindle the consciousness of the speakers regarding the riches of the language. In the words of Grenoble and Whaley (2013, in Onadipe-Shalom, 2014), it is the kind of positive attitudes that tend to reinforce the usage of heritage languages while negative attitudes diminish it.

## 5. Conclusion and recommendations

The significance of English in the digital landscape is echoed in Odebunmi (2020). The linguistic dimension where minority languages are excluded in favour of the majority cannot be brushed aside in the overall interest of linguistic diversity and indigenous language preservation. Against this backdrop, the determinants of the susceptibility of the Yorùbá language and the dominance of the English language in digital spaces were explored and scholarly interrogated in this study. Yorùbá is found to be a low-resource

language, for which limited digital resources exist despite its extensive offline use and vast repository (Megerdooian & Parvaz, 2008). As noted earlier, scholars like Yusuff, Adétómíwá and Adédèji (2020) posited that this is due to the lapses in translation errors, orthography and the fact that the Yorùbá language dataset is not exposed on a larger scale to programs and modern electronic form which will make it readily accessible at any time of need.

Insights from the examined data point to high consideration for English as the language of international communication and a limited presence or outright neglect of the indigenous languages in cyberspace in southwest Nigeria. The use of English as the language of high-level administration, education, media and other significant domains may not be unconnected to this constrained usage of the Yorùbá language in the digital landscape. On account of the study findings, this work agrees with Meital and Jason (2022) and concludes that digital onboarding of indigenous or currently excluded languages like Yorùbá is urgently required to empower the languages and enhance user engagement.

To conclude, the study submits that while the concerted efforts by some speakers, linguists, and community leaders towards the continued existence and revitalisation of the Yorùbá language are noted, the attitude of the majority towards the language in online spaces leaves so much to be desired. Yet, positive language attitude remains the ultimate key for language and cultural revitalisation (Opeibi, 2016). Besides, the language must enjoy some level of digital support in areas of translation, search engine services, availability in operating systems, etc. It was in this regard that Wikipedia pages are made available in Ethiopian's five official government working languages (Meital & Jason, 2022) but this kind of intentional effort is grossly lacking in Nigeria and cannot be said of the Yorùbá language despite its status as one of the working languages in Nigeria (Eleanya, 2019). In all, this study recommends the promotion of digital education in local languages and improved funding to preserve endangered languages online and localise software. Furthermore, future studies can delve deeper into how the challenges of translation errors, orthography and digital onboarding of the Yorùbá language can be fixed and how the potential of the language offline and online can be fully put to use and sustained.

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## 120 | Julianah Akindede, Ismail Afolabi, Christiana Olasunkanmi

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