ISLAMICS, SCHOLARSHIP AND SERVICE TO SOCIETY:

A FESTSCHRIFT FOR IS-HAQ OLANREWAJU OLOYEDE



Editors
Mahfouz A. Adedimeji
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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to the memory of the source:

Shaykh Liadi Akanbi Oloyede
and
Hajia Sherifat Abioye Oloyede

"...My Lord! Be merciful to them as they raised me when I was young" (Q17:24).

FOREWORD

When I was approached to write the foreword to this *magnum opus*, ***Islamics, Scholarship and Service to Society*** written in honour of one of Nigeria's finest academics, administrators and erudite Professor of Islamics, Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede, Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), I jumped at it for numerous reasons among which are: the focus of the book, the person in whose name it is written and the platform that inspired the compilation.

The focus traverses all areas of knowledge as it encapsulates scholarship which has no boundary either in science, technology, humanities and even emerging trends. This has been justified with the 70 Chapters spanning five main sections touching virtually all major areas of study: environment, religion, arts, science, higher education, social change, mass communication, artificial intelligence, law and order, security, mentorship, economics, governance, sustainable development to mention just a few.

The person who is being honoured with this book is another reason for jumping at writing the foreword. He is a highly detribalised Nigerian - forthright, incorruptible and very selfless. He is worthy of this publication. On reading the book and the second volume of tributes, *Glimpses into the Giant*, my position is further confirmed.

Thirdly, the platform that is championing the book publication, our Consortium of Universities in Kwara State (KU8+), is also a very credible platform for this great initiative because it has shown in less than two years of its existence that collaboration is the future of higher education.

There was a real challenge at the initial stage because how do you write foreword to a book you have not read? On getting the manuscript, the challenge became more daunting because it ran into almost a thousand pages, competing with the Ph. D. thesis of Prof. Is-haqOloyede. One of the very significant things that I discovered is that it is a 70-chapter book which I think the editors deliberately decided on, and that in itself speaks volumes about the book.

Rummaging through the book, it is obvious that the contributors are equally deliberate to accurately represent the honoree because they demonstrate in-depth analysis of the various subjects covered. For instance, Chapter Three discusses, *in extenso*, theissue of leadership in higher education exploring the leadership style of Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede. And if this is juxtaposed with the contribution in Chapter Forty-Five that deals with 'From Paper to Pixels', the quintessential Oloyede is properly captured and this is further exemplified in Chapter Fifty-Two detailing his exploits on the transformational approach to education with the evolution of Information Communication and Technology (ICT).

The authors equally provide very rich materials which will serve as a veritable source of information for future research. No doubt, the book will continue to be relevant in the various areas which it covers as well as provide a golden opportunity for researchers to have a glimpse into the academic endeavours of the thorough-bred academic, highly cerebral and uncommon administrator of no mean repute, Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede, CON.

On the whole, this book is a must read for all lovers of knowledge; all policy makers; academics willing to know more about their disciplines; students who want to be better grounded in their studies; religious leaders and scholars who aspire to lead with fear of God; people involved in higher education; and indeed all Nigerians who truly love and believe in the Nigerian project.

Prof. Wahab Olasupo Egbewole, SAN
Vice-Chancellor, University of Ilorin, Ilorin
Chairman, Consortium of Universities in Kwara State (KU8+)
22nd September, 2024

PREFACE

When the idea of embarking on this project was mooted at a meeting of the Consortium of Universities in Kwara State (KU8+) Vice-Chancellors a few months ago, it was received by acclamation by all members. The sentiment expressed at the meeting was that apart from being the Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Consortium, Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede is a towering academic figure that honouring him itself would be an honour to the Consortium, one of the most dynamic consortia of its type despite being less than two years old.

Then, the burden of leading the project from the starting point to the finish line, on behalf of the Consortium, was placed on Mahfouz Adedimeji by the Chairman and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin, the amiable Prof.WahabOlasupoEgbewole, SAN, and he took it with pleasure as a badge of honour. One of the earliest decisions reached at the point of releasing the call for paper flier is that Prof.Oloyede is an elephantine personality or a big feast that would require many people with diverse cutlery. So, we differentiated between this festschrift, which is purely academic, and the book of tributes, *Glimpses into the Giant: A Tapestry of Tributes to Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede at 70,* with the latter being more general. The work started almost immediatelyon the festschrift with Dr AbdulGafarFahm, a vibrant young scholar, with the support of the Consortium, especially the Chairman, Prof.WahabEgbewole, SAN, and the Secretary-General, Prof. Francisca Oladipo.

The publication of *Islamics, Scholarship and Service to Society: A Festschrift for Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede* is both a tribute and a testament to the enduring impact of Prof.Oloyede's multifaceted contributions to the academe, public service, the Islamic community and the larger society, in its micro and macro phyla. The volume is conceived not merely as a collection of academic essays but as a celebration of a remarkable journey of intellectual pursuit, selfless service and visionary leadership demonstrated by the phenomenal personality being honoured. The breadth of topics covered and the depth of scholarship reflected in these pages are a fitting and befitting homage to a scholar whose work transcends the boundaries of disciplines and whose influence reverberates across multiple spheres of the society.

Prof.Oloyede's career exemplifies a synthesis of rigorous academic scholarship and dedicated service to humanity, particularly within the contexts of Islamic studies, interfaith dialogue and academic leadership. As a scholar, his contributions to the study of Islam are profound and enduring. His works have provided nuanced insights into the complexities of Islamic jurisprudence, theology and cultural practices. He has engaged critically with contemporary issues in Islamic thought, addressing the challenges posed by modernity while remaining rooted in the tradition. His scholarship is characterised by a meticulous approach to sources, a balanced and thoughtful interpretation of contentious issues and an unwavering commitment to intellectual honesty. This commitment is not only evident in his published works but also in his engagement with students and colleagues, whom he has mentored and guided with inimitable generosity and uncommon wisdom.

In addition to his academic achievements, Prof.Oloyede's contributions to public service are noteworthy. His tenure as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ilorin was marked by significant transformations that enhanced the reputation of the university as a foremost centre of excellence in teaching and research in Nigeria. His leadership was instrumental to fostering an environment that prioritises academic integrity, infrastructural development and innovation in pedagogy, which has been sustained over the years. Under his stewardship, the university experienced unprecedented growth, both in physical infrastructure and academic reputation, becoming one of Nigeria's globally acclaimed leading institutions of higher learning.

Moreover, Prof.Oloyede's service extends beyond the confines of the university. As a prominent figure in interfaith dialogue in Nigeria and a strong advocate for peaceful coexistence, he has played a pivotal role in promoting mutual understanding and respect among different religious communities. His work with various religious and civic organisations has been driven by

a vision of a society where diversity is celebrated and conflicts are resolved through dialogue and cooperation. He has consistently advocated for education as a tool for social transformation, believing that informed and critical engagement with religious and cultural differences is essential to building a just and harmonious society.

This festschrift is thus an acknowledgement of Prof.Oloyede's enduring legacy in these various fields. The chapters reflect the diversity of his interests and the broad scope of his influence. They encompass a wide range of topics, from detailed analyses of Islamic jurisprudence and theology to discussions on the role of education in societal development, from reflections on leadership in academic institutions to explorations of the dynamics of interfaith dialogue. The contributors to this volume, themselves fledgling and distinguished scholars and professionals, have engaged with themes that resonate precisely or tangentially with Prof.Oloyede's own scholarly and professional pursuits. Their contributions are not only a recognition of his work and worth but also a continuation of the cross-currents of intellectual conversations he has stirred and fostered throughout his career.

It is important to note that this volume is not a retrospective look at Prof.Oloyede's achievements; it is an invitation to reflect on the ongoing relevance of the values he embodies: a commitment to scholarship that is both rigorous and relevant, a dedication to service that is both principled and pragmatic, and a vision of leadership that is both inclusive and transformative. These values are becoming increasingly critical in a world that is grappling with complex challenges, from the need for educational reform and the promotion of social cohesion to the urgent task of fostering intercultural/interreligious understanding and international cooperation.

The essays in this book also serve as a reminder of the critical role that scholars and intellectuals play in shaping the discourse around pressing societal issues. Prof.Oloyede's work demonstrates that scholarship is not an isolated or purely academic endeavour but a form of engagement with the world that can have profound and practical implications. His ability to bridge the gap between the theoretical and the practical, between the personal and the public, between the modern and the traditional as well as between the scholarly and the social, is one of the hallmarks of his career. This is a legacy that the contributors to this festschrift, and indeed all who have been influenced by his work, seek to uphold and perpetuate.

As we present this volume to readers, we are mindful of the fact that it represents just a small portion of the vast body of work and the extensive influence of Prof.Oloyede. The scope of his contributions defies easy categorisation, and any single volume can only capture a fragment of his impact on the fields of Islamic studies, higher education and public service. Nevertheless, we hope that this festschrift will serve as a meaningful tribute to his remarkable career and as a source of inspiration for future scholars and leaders who seek to follow in his footsteps. And rather than produce his curriculum vitae, as it is common with works of this hue, we decided on providing his citation as his full CV is a book on its own.

In compiling this festschrift, we and the entire KU8+ have been guided by a deep sense of gratitude to and admiration for Prof.Oloyede. His intellectual rigour, ethical, charismatic and visionary leadership, compassionate service and selfless personality have left an indelible mark on those who have had the privilege of working with and learning from him. We are also grateful to the contributors, who have offered their insights and reflections in a spirit of collegiality and respect. Their willingness to engage with the themes and issues that have been central to Prof.Oloyede's work is a testament to the high regard in which he is held by the authors and those for whom they stand proxy.

Meanwhile, we equally express our appreciation to all those who have supported the production of this volume. From the KU8+ Vice-Chancellors and vibrant team of reviewers who worked diligently with us to the authors themselves who responded to the issues deserving their attention, we are grateful. We also acknowledge and appreciate those contributors whose submissions could not ultimately appear in this volume. Some of the several articles that cannot be included here are not actually lacking in quality but the thematic number (70) that we imposed

on ourselves and size are critical issues that guided our editorial decisions. It is our fervent hope, it is worth reiterating, that this festschrift will not only honour Prof.Oloyede's achievements but also contribute to the ongoing conversation about the role of scholarship and service in the society.

Finally, as readers engage with the essays in this volume, we invite them to reflect on the values and principles that have guided Prof.Oloyede's life and work. In an era where the pursuit of knowledge and the commitment to public service are often seen as separate, if not contradictory, endeavours, Prof.Oloyede's example reminds us of the profound impact that can be achieved when these two paths are pursued in tandem. His life's work is a powerful affirmation of the idea that true scholarship is not just about the accumulation of knowledge, but about its application to the service of humanity, and that genuine leadership is not about the exercise of power, but about empowering others to achieve their fullest potential.

It is with these thoughts in mind that we present this festschrift to the scholars and the public on behalf of KU8+. May it serve as a beacon of the enduring relevance of scholarly inquiry, servant leadership, and compassionate service to humanity and society. May it inspire future generations to strive for excellence in their fields, to engage with the world in meaningful and impactful ways, and to carry forward the legacy of scholars like Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede, who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of knowledge and the betterment of society.

Prof. Mahfouz A. Adedimeji
Dr AbdulGafar O. Fahm

September 22, 2024

CITATION

PROFESSOR IS-HAQ O.OLOYEDE: A MAN OF ALL MOMENTS

Mahfouz A. Adedimeji, Ph.D.

The saying goes that a man of success achieves his goals but a man of significance changes his world. If there are people who understand the difference between the two, Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede, Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), is at the forefront among them.

Prof.Oloyede's ascension to prominence was not a matter of coincidence; it was rather a product a clear vision, a sense of mission propelled by the keen passion to excel. In other words, here is a man who has internalized five d's as the operational blueprint for making a difference. He is a man with a *d*ream, who then develops a *d*rive to achieve it. With single-minded *d*etermination, remarkable *d*iscipline, this three-in-one man (*okunrinmeta*) sets out to achieve his goal with *d*edication.

To Prof.Oloyede, whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well and in time. This is why he is seen as a workaholic, a man who electrifies his surroundings with an inimitable sense of duty, a man of action and guts. As Dan Gable once said, "Gold medals aren't really made of gold. They are made of sweat, determination, and a hard-to-find alloy called guts."

So, wherever Prof.Oloyede finds himself, whether in the classroom or podium as a lecturer, or at the National Political Reform Conference as Co-Secretary, or as Chairman of the Committee of Directors of Academic Planning in Nigerian Universities, or as National Coordinator/ Executive Secretary of the Nigeria Inter-religious Council (NIREC) or as Secretary General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs (NSCIA) under the transformational leadership of the royals' royal, the Sultan of Sokoto, His Eminence, Alhaji Muhammad Sa'adAbubakar, CFR, mni, or in several other capacities he has functioned or still functions, he is renowned for being extra-ordinary and first class.

A talented scholar and cerebral intellectual, Prof.Oloyede is an academic genius and administrative guru, who dominates his world with well-reasoned arguments and visionary ideas. A shrewd judge of men and matters, this man who accepts no half measures smashes reputations and sets records with his sterling qualities and impeccable credentials. A man of unconquerable will and a restless questing spirit, the former Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of Council, Fountain University, Osogbo, is the proverbial goldfish that has no hiding place. With a Spartan commitment to duty, easy and amiable mien, Prof.Oloyede has remained a raving phenomenon to friends and foes alike with his honesty, simplicity, humility, loyalty, generosity and single-minded belief in service to Allah and humanity.

To tell a peacock a story of bright colours is to sing empty and discordant tunes to a care-free bird, yet the Qu'ran tells us, "And proclaim the Grace of your Lord" (Q.93:11). Though Oloyede does not see himself as special, this infectiously simple and rare Nigerian is a man of many firsts, a special gift of God to humanity, right from the classroom to the boardroom. Due to limited time, perhaps ten of his firsts (as he was born on the tenth day of the tenth month) would make a sample, viz: first First Class graduate of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ilorin (1981); first Unilorin alumnus to bag a Ph.D. from his alma mater (1991); first alumnus President in the Governing Council of the University of Ilorin; first Uniloringraduand to become a Professor (1995); first academic Director of Academic Planning, Unilorin; first Unilorin product to ever become a Deputy Vice-Chancellor; first Unilorin alumnus to become a Vice-Chancellor of a University in the world; first Secretary-General of the Association of West Africa Universities; first Nigerian to become President of the Association of African Universities and first JAMB Registrar to remit about N60 billion to the coffers of the Federal Government of Nigeria!

Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede was on October 10, 1954 ushered into the world through the family of the late ShaykhLiadiAkanbi and HajiaSherifahAbioyeOloyede in Abeokuta, Ogun state. He started his formal education at Ta'limul Islam Ahmadiya Primary School in 1961 after which he proceeded to Progress Institute, Agege, where he bagged his 1st School Leaving Certificate with Distinction in 1969. He perfected his training as an Arabist at the famous Arabic Training Centre (Markaz) between 1973 and 1976. His insatiable quest for knowledge took him to the University of Ibadan, where he bagged a Certificate in Arabic and Islamic Studies while his passion for higher learning brought him to the University of Ilorin in 1978, where he graduated as Best Graduating Student in 1981. The University of Ilorin scrupulously engaged him as Assistant Lecturer in 1982 and he subsequently obtained his higher degrees in 1985 and 1991, rising through the ranks in the process till he became a Professor in 1995.

A true scholar to the core, Prof.Oloyede is a keen advocate of training and in this respect, he leads by example as the prodigy is never ashamed of being a student. He obtained his Postgraduate Diploma in Education just in 2003 and became a Certified Teacher by the Teachers' Registration Council of Nigeria in 2005. Between 1994 and 1995, he received Special Proficiency Training on Information and Communication Technology at the International Centre for Communication Art and capped his ICT proficiency with a Certificate in Advanced Digital Appreciation Programme – Tertiary (ADAPT) at the International Centre for Communication Studies and Digital Bridge Institute, Abuja, in 2007.

This man of unimpeachable integrity has received several awards and honours in his dazzling and inspiring career and he is a member of many professional bodies. He is a recipient of the Arab League Prize for the Best Certificate Student in Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Ibadan; recipient of Merit Award by Islamic Mission of Africa, proprietors of Crescent University, Abeokuta; Fellow, Islamic Academy of Cambridge, United Kingdom; Fellow, Academy of Religion; Fellow, Society for Peace Studies and Practice; Fellow, Academy for Entrepreneurial Studies, Nigeria; Fellow, Nigerian Institute of Management; and Fellow, Nigerian Academy of Letters and many more.

Prof.Oloyede has been a long-time member of the Nigerian Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS), Professors World Peace Academy of Nigeria and the Nigerian Association for the Study and Teaching of Religion and the Natural Sciences. He is a Board Member of the African Center for Religions and the Sciences and representative of Unilorin Local Societies Initiative at the Metanexus Institute of Science and Religion, Philadelphia, USA, and several others. He has won the Federal Government Scholarship, University of Ilorin Merit Scholarship and several national awards, including the National Productivity Order of Merit (NPOM), Commander of the Niger (CON) and Officer of the Federal Republic (OFR).

This distinguished gentleman has served the University of Ilorin, Kwara and Ogun States and indeed the Federal Republic of Nigeria in several capacities. His achievements, including as a prominent leader of the Muslim Students Society of Nigeria (MSSN) in his days, are so many and etched on stone that recounting them will fill several pages. Yet, it would be unfair to the University of Ilorin and its alumni if it is not mentioned that when this illustrious graduate of the University was the Vice-Chancellor, the University was taken to such an Olympian height that Vice-Chancellors of other universities visited him regularly to understudy him. Within a period of five years, this great man of honour took the University of Ilorin from being an unranked university to one of the best 20 in Africa, according to international ranking agencies.

Not only did Prof.Oloyede take the University of Ilorin to its apogee, he also electrified the global university system with his sterling leadership qualities and high-octane administrative acumen. No other Nigerian Vice-Chancellor has arguably achieved being Chairman of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors (CVC)/ Association of Vice-Chancellors of Nigerian Universities (AVCNU), President of the Association of African Universities (AAU), Board Member of both the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and International Association of

Universities (IAU) within a tenure of five years, apart from being the initiator of the Association of West Africa Universities (AWAU) through the Ilorin Declaration.

As a prolific author and astute academic, his hundreds of research works have appeared in scores of national and international journals. Prof.Oloyede has written, co-written and co-edited books and papers published in many outlets in Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, Switzerland, United Kingdom, India, Pakistan, USA, among others. A most sought-after speaker at conferences, seminars and events, he has presented academic papers in conferences all over Nigeria and across the world.

Prof.Oloyede's versatility is not limited to books. It was St. Augustine who observed that "the world is a book, and those who do not travel read only one page" and the JAMB Registrar has read several pages of the world book. He has been to the thirty-six states of Nigeria and Abuja and he has visited all the world continents, at one time or the other, for academic purposes. He has been to the United States of America, United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Spain, France, The Netherlands, Georgia, Ghana, South Africa, Mali, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Malawi, China, Malaysia, Morocco, Kenya, Switzerland, Italy, Hong Kong, Australia, Cameroun, India, Turkey, Belgium, Qatar, Morocco, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Rwanda, Senegal, Senegal, Uganda and many more. This partly explains why he is always setting global standards for himself and the institutions he is affiliated with.

Little wonder that awards and recognitions have been swarming him but the self-effacing Oloyede has been driving them away. Nevertheless, he was on Saturday, November 27, 2017 garlanded by the well respected *New Telegraph* newspaper as the "Most Outstanding Public Servant of the Year". As the blind can see and the deaf can hear, Prof.Oloyede stands tall today as one of the greatest symbols of anti-corruption crusade. It was therefore not surprising that when the Presidency released a statement on December 30, 2017 to showcase the achievements of the Federal Government then, JAMB's name was conspicuous in it. Subsequently, when a former Minister of Information and National Orientation made an intervention in response to a statement, JAMB under Prof.Oloyede still featured prominently as a major achievement of the Federal Government of Nigeria.

Known for saying his mind without minding whose ox is gored, Prof.Oloyede is not unmindful of the fact that maggots would detest sanitary inspectors. In his frenetic pace for standard and excellence wherever the combination of hard work and good luck puts him, he steps on toes with integrity. So, one would agree with *The Punch* in its editorial of January 8, 2018 that "a leadership with integrity is critical....It is a fact that the Registrar of the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board, Is-haqOloyede, showed with the N7.8 billion his agency remitted, against 3 million annually remitted by his predecessors." Perhaps, part of his inspiration for being who he is lies in the words of Bill Cosby: "I don't know the secret of success but the secret of failure is trying to please everybody".

A no-nonsense man of super-abundant physical and mental energy, Prof.Oloyede loathes corruption so much that corruption too loathes him in kind. At a personal level, it was through him that I learnt that it is not a shame to be broke. Sixteen years ago, as Vice-Chancellor, he needed to send me on an errand and he told his son, now a medical consultant, to withdraw money from his account. He was told there was no money there. He mentioned another account and he was informed the last money there had been withdrawn under his directive. We had to wait till his next salary was paid. I learnt to assure myself since then that being broke is normal, after all, the Vice-Chancellor was broke!

A versatile scholar, a masterful manager of men, money and materials, Prof.Oloyede is a family man, happily married to the woman of his dream, a supportive, devoted, caring and enduring Dr (Mrs) Raheemah O. Oloyede, and the marriage is blessed with children, including a set of male twins, and an expanding clan of grandchildren!

It is my singular honour to present to you the man of the moment, and indeed the man of all moments; a preeminent professor, astute administrator, exceptional scholar, academic mentor,

redoubtable Registrar, dynamic Chief Executive, prolific writer, incorruptible leader, marvelous manager, inimitable consultant, wonderful Fellow, intellectual juggernaut, inter-religious activist, compulsive communicator and outstanding Muslim personality, *okunrintakuntakun,* Prof. Is-haqOlanrewajuOloyede, CON, OFR, NPOM, FNAL, FNIM, FIAC, FAR, fspsp, etc!

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THE SIGNIFICANCE OF YORÙBÁ ORAL POETRY IN LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

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Abstract
Language acquisition involves more than conventional methods of instruction; it encompasses cultural and linguistic nuances. This article examined the significance of Yorùbá oral poetry in language acquisition. The objectives of the paper were to explore unique characteristics of Yorùbá oral poetry and its importance in language learning. The paper also analysed the cultural depth and linguistic richness of Yorùbá oral poetry, the purpose and functions it serves, and the messages it communicates. This is a qualitative research. The data were gathered from primary and secondary sources to ensure the reliability of its findings. The data collection involved a direct-method approach and participant observation. The researchers supplemented this observation with their existing knowledge to provide relevant lullabies for the study. Furthermore, secondary data were collected from written texts. The songs were subjected to textual analysis that facilitated the finding that Yorùbá oral poetry helps in language acquisition. The study celebrates the linguistic diversity and cultural identity of the people, while displaying the flexibility and creativity inherent in the Yorùbá language. The paper concluded that Yorùbá oral poetry contribute to the unique fabric of Yorùbá communication, giving learners insights into the cultural tapestry of the Yorùbá people.Therefore, the study suggests that as we continue to explore diverse methods of language acquisition, we should not overlook the invaluable contributions of Yorùbá oral poetry to this noble endeavour.

Introduction

Language acquisition is a multifaceted process that extends beyond conventional methods of instruction, encompassing cultural and linguistic nuances that shape one's understanding of a language. The Yorùbá people of the South-west Nigeria have long recognised the profound impact of oral poetry as a potent tool in language acquisition. They are renowned for their unique and vibrant cultural heritage. They have a long-standing tradition of passing down their rich linguistic and artistic knowledge, wisdom, and cultural values through oral means. This oral tradition encompasses various forms, including drama, prose and, most prominently, poetry.

Yorùbá oral poetry serves as a linguistic playground, where phonetics and pronunciation take centre stage. The rhythmic patterns and tonal variations inherent in oral poetry not only enhance the beauty of the language but also provide learners with a unique opportunity to fine-tune their auditory discrimination skills. The melodic quality of Yorùbá poetry aids the accurate reproduction of sounds, ensuring a more authentic and nuanced language acquisition experience.

The Yorùbá people are very sociable. They entertain and are willing to be entertained at joyous occasions (Olútóyè, 1995, p. 69). Their oral poetry stands as a captivating and culturally rich form of expression within the Yorùbá community, serving not only as a means of artistic communication but also as a valuable linguistic tool. In this context, Yorùbá oral poetry not only serves as a repository of cultural heritage but also plays a pivotal role in facilitating language learning and comprehension.

The Dynamics of Oral Poetry

The definition of poetry has been a subject of extensive exploration by scholars of language and literature. Yanni (1998) characterises poetry as an art form that condenses and implies meaning while concentrating feeling. Similarly, Akporobaro (2001) emphasises poetry as a universal medium for artistic self-expression. Within the context of Yorùbá culture, oral poetry encompasses a diverse array of forms, including divination poetry (ewì yẹ́ńwò), praise poetry (oríkì), hunting poetry (Ìjálá), proverbs (òwe), chants (ìsàré), and songs (orin). Each form serves distinct purposes within the community, such as honouring individuals, imparting moral lessons, or celebrating cultural events. Fundamentally, these definitions converge on the idea that poetry is expressive and arises from the creative arrangement of words to convey profound feelings and meanings.

Yorùbá oral poetry emerges as a multifaceted art form, integrating rhythm, melody, and performance. It showcases linguistic complexities, metaphors, and rhythmic patterns that captivate both the intellect and the senses (Olúnládé T. , 2009, p. 450). Rooted deeply in cultures worldwide, oral poetry transcends written literature, relying on spoken words to transmit narratives, cultural heritage, and collective memory (Lord, 1960, p. 7). Scholars have long been intrigued by the dynamics of oral poetry, examining its performance aspects, transmission methods, and socio-cultural significance. Lord's seminal work demonstrated how oral poetry operates within frameworks of formulas and themes, enabling performers to creatively adapt narratives while preserving essential elements (Lord, 1960, p. 10). Additionally, scholars like Ong (1982) have highlighted the unique cognitive processes involved in oral composition and transmission, contrasting them with textual modes prevalent in literate societies.

Works such as Foley's "The Theory of Oral Composition" (1988) underscore the communal nature of oral poetry, suggesting that it fosters shared experiences and a sense of belonging among participants (Foley, 1988, p. 23). Researchers like Finnegan (1970) have elucidated the political implications of oral poetry, demonstrating its capacity to challenge power structures and hegemonic ideologies through subtle rhetorical strategies. Thus, oral poetry not only serves as a testament to human creativity but also functions as a dynamic force in shaping cultural landscapes and promoting social cohesion.

Multifaceted Nature of Language Acquisition

Ativie (2009) eloquently delineates the symbiotic relationship between language and culture, highlighting language's role as a reflective mirror of societal intricacies. Balogun (2009) further emphasises language's pivotal function in facilitating social interactions, enabling individuals to connect and share experiences within their cultural framework. Eze (2007) underscores the omnipresence of language in daily life activities and interpersonal communication, elucidating its fundamental significance in human existence.

Language acquisition is a multifaceted process intricately woven into human culture, social dynamics, and cognitive growth. The phenomenon of language acquisition encompasses innate human capacities to perceive, produce, and utilise language for communication. Rooted in early childhood, language acquisition involves the development of various linguistic competencies, including comprehension, production of spoken and written words, and mastery of grammatical structures and language conventions.

First Language Acquisition (FLA) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) represent distinct pathways through which individuals attain linguistic proficiency. FLA occurs effortlessly during childhood, as children absorb their native language(s) through exposure to linguistic stimuli in their environment and interactions with caregivers and peers. Conversely, SLA involves acquiring additional languages subsequent to mastering one's first language. This process occurs through diverse modalities such as formal instruction, immersion experiences, or self-directed learning. The age at which individuals embark on SLA significantly influences the ease and proficiency of language acquisition, with younger learners often demonstrating greater aptitude for native-like fluency.

The efficacy of Yorùbá oral poetry in language acquisition underscores the interplay between language learning, cultural expression, and aesthetic appreciation. Yorùbá oral traditions provide immersive platforms for learners to engage with the language authentically, fostering linguistic proficiency and cultural understanding. Through oral poetry, learners not only acquire linguistic skills but also delve into the cultural heritage embedded within the Yorùbá linguistic landscape.

In summary, language acquisition extends beyond mere linguistic competence, encompassing cultural, social, and cognitive dimensions. The integration of diverse perspectives elucidates the dynamic nature of language as a vehicle for human expression and interaction. Furthermore, the exploration of FLA and SLA delineates distinct trajectories through which individuals navigate the intricate terrain of language acquisition. This paper demonstrates the role of oral poetry in shaping linguistic proficiency by analysing selected Yorùbá children poetry.

Language Acquisition Theories

A review of literatures shows oneprominent theory, the nativist perspective, proposed by Noam Chomsky in the 1950s, posits that humans are born with an innate language acquisition device (LAD), facilitating rapid and effortless language learning (Chomsky, 1959, p. 28). This innate capacity forms the basis for universal grammar, a set of linguistic principles shared by all human languages.

Support for the nativist perspective stems from studies of language development in infants. Pinker (1994) suggests that children exhibit a natural inclination for language learning, evidenced by their rapid acquisition of complex grammatical structures in early life. Neuroimaging studies have further identified specific brain regions associated with language processing, bolstering the concept of innate language mechanisms (Dehaene-Lambertz, et al., 2002, p. 7589). However, the nativist perspective faces criticism, with some researchers highlighting the significance of environmental factors in language development. The socio-cultural theory, proposed by Lev Vygotsky, emphasizes the role of social interaction and cultural context in language acquisition (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 25). According to this theory, language learning occurs through interactions with more knowledgeable others, such as parents, caregivers, and peers.

Research supporting the socio-cultural heory underscores the influence of social interaction on language development, shedding light on the interplay between biological predispositions and environmental influences. For instance, studies have shown that children raised in bilingual or multilingual environments exhibit enhanced language abilities compared to monolinguals (Bialystok, 2001, p. 45). The concept of scaffolding, whereby adults provide support to facilitate a child's language learning, further highlights the importance of social interaction in language acquisition (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976, p. 101).

In summary, language acquisition is a complex process influenced by both innate predispositions and environmental factors. While the nativist perspective emphasizes universal grammar and innate language mechanisms, the socio-cultural theory underscores the significance of social interaction and cultural context. This makes the performance

theory relevant in the analysis of the significance of Yorùbá oral poetry in language acquisition.

Methodology and Theoretical Framework

This qualitative research study utilised data gathered from primary and secondary sources to ensure the reliability of its findings. The data collection involved a direct-method approach and participant observation, emphasising the exploration of meanings and in-depth analysis of collected data. Ten songs were meticulously selected to facilitate the study's findings and textual analysis. The researchers observed a small group of nursing mothers engaging in Yoruba oral poetry while interacting with their children. The researchers supplemented this observation with their existing knowledge to provide relevant lullabies for the study. Furthermore, secondary data were collected from written texts to enrich the research findings.

Performance Theory

Performance theory focuses on the performative aspects of literature, emphasising the role of oral traditions, rituals, and cultural performances in shaping meaning and identity within a community (Fischer-Lichte, 2002). The theory acknowledges the transformative power of live performance, highlighting how the embodied experience of language acquisition through oral poetry transcends mere linguistic comprehension to encompass cultural immersion and identity formation. In the context of Yorùbá oral poetry, performance theory provides a framework for understanding how the live enactment of poetic forms contributes to language acquisition and cultural transmission.

Yorùbá oral poetry is deeply rooted in performance, where the oral tradition is not merely a static text but a dynamic and interactive process of communication. Through performance, Yorùbá oral poets engage with their audience, incorporating rhythm, melody, and gesture to convey meaning and evoke emotional responses. The theory also underscores the communal aspect of Yorùbá oral poetry, emphasising its role in fostering social cohesion and transmitting cultural knowledge across generations. The participatory nature of oral performances encourages active engagement and dialogue, creating spaces for collective interpretation and negotiation of meaning. As learners participate in the performance of Yorùbá oral poetry, they not only acquire language skills but also become active participants in the cultural heritage of the Yorùbá people. Performance theory offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the significance of Yorùbá oral poetry in language acquisition. By emphasising the performative aspects of oral tradition, this theory highlights the dynamic interplay between language, culture, and identity within the context of Yorùbá oral poetry.

Analysis

The Transformative Power of Yorùbá Oral Poetry in Language Acquisition and Cultural Transmission

One of the unique aspects of Yorùbá oral poetry is its reliance on rhythm and melody. These elements not only make the poetry aesthetically pleasing but also serve as powerful aids in language acquisition. The rhythmic patterns help learners internalise the linguistic structures and nuances of the Yorùbá language. Research suggests that exposure to oral poetry has cognitive benefits, especially in language acquisition. The rhythmic and melodic elements of Yorùbá oral poetry stimulate various cognitive processes, including memory retention, pattern recognition, and auditory processing. As learners actively engage with the oral tradition, they exercise multiple cognitive functions, contributing to a more comprehensive language acquisition experience.

Yorùbá oral poetry acts as a reservoir of rich vocabulary, replete with words and expressions that carry cultural weight. The poetry introduces learners to unique terms and idioms, enriching their linguistic repertoire beyond standard textbooks. The cultural context embedded in these words provides a deeper understanding of the Yorúbá worldview, fostering not just language proficiency but also cultural competence.

Adìẹ mi, èyí tí mo rà
My hen, the one I bought
Lọ́sàn án ọjọ́ kan
On a faithful afternoon
Èmi kò mọ̀ pé ó ti jẹ ọ
I did not know it has gone in search of food.
Ó bọ́ sí kòtò òjò sì pa á
It fell into a ditch, and it was drenched by rain
Bàbá bá mi gbé e
Father helped me to carry it
Mo tọ́jú rẹ̀, ó sì dàgbà
I took care of it, and it grew up
Ó yẹyín mẹ́wàá
It laid ten eggs.
Ó pa mẹ́sàn án
It hatched nine from them.
Ó fikan delé
It left one unhatched.

Bọ́mọdé ò kú
If young do not die.
Àgbà ló ń dà
He/she shall grow.

In the context of the song above, it will be observed that the intricacies of Yorùbá grammar come to life in the structures of oral poetry. The deliberate use of syntax; selection of subjects, verbs and objects in the simple sentences, as well as the adjectives that serve as qualifiers serve the purpose of empowering the children with basic linguistic and artistic knowledge. The employment of numerical language, and the strategic placement of words contribute to a heightened awareness of grammatical structures.

Yorùbá oral poetry is deeply intertwined with the cultural fabric of the community. Through poetic expression, the Yorùbá people preserve and transmit their cultural heritage, reinforcing the importance of language in preserving identity. The oral tradition serves as a living repository of Yorùbá history, traditions, and values. Yorùbá oral literature is the store house of cultural values and moral codes of the Yorùbá society (Adeyemi, 2013, p. 35).

The words we choose and the way we use language can influence perceptions and attitudes. Language can be a powerful tool in shaping public opinion, conveying emotions, and framing discussions. It can inspire, persuade, and evoke a range of responses. When Yorùbá people observe that someone around them is idle or indolent, they would render various songs to warn such individual of the dare consequence of his or her actions, one of such songs is as render below:

Bébi bá ń pọ̀lẹ ẹ jẹ́ o kú o
If a sluggard is hungry, let him starve to death
Bébi bá ń pọ̀lẹ ẹ jẹ́ ó kú
If a sluggard is hungry, let him starve to death

Kíkú tàìkú ọ̀lẹ ò wúlò o
Death or survival of a sluggard is of no importance.
Bébi bá ń pọ̀lẹ ẹ jẹ́ ó kú.
If a sluggard is hungry, let him starve to death

The above excerpt epitomises an important cultural virtue of the Yorùbá people which is having a sustainable means of livelihood. Yorùbá people frown at an adult person staying idle. Hence, the saying *Bọ́mọ bá tó ó lọ́kọ́, í í lọ́kọ́ ní, bọ́mọ́ sì tó ó láàdá, í í láàdá ni* (When it is time for a child to possess a hoe, he must have it, and when it is time for a child to possess a cutlass, he should have one) and also *ìdí iṣẹ́ ẹni là ń mọni lọ́lẹ* (it is only at a workman's duty post that his laziness can be identified) This shows that at every point, every able body Yorùbá person must be hard working. The Yorùbá people are known for different traditional occupations which include farming; fishing; hunting, black smithing, weaving and creative work. An individual must be engaged in any of these occupations or combine two or more of them as a means of providing for his daily needs and for his family.

The Yorùbá people have a unique approach to introducing language to a child from the cradle, especially when the child is unable to interact verbally with parents and those around them. This is achieved with various songs and lullabies. Although the child may not comprehend the meaning of these songs, they have a soothing effect. The excerpts below are some of the songs on how Yorùbá oral poetry has been used to transmit historical events and cultural practices:

(a)Yéékéọmọ o — Stop crying, child
Ọmọ mi yéékéé — My child, stop crying
Yéékéé ọmọ o — Stop crying. child
Ọmọ mi yéékéé — My child, stop crying
Ṣé mi ni bàbá rẹ — I am your father
Èmi ló ń gbọ́ bùkáta lórí mọ́ọ́dà rẹ o — I am the one taking care of your mother
Yéékéé ọmọ o — Stop crying, child
Ọmọ mi yéékéé — My child, stop crying

Sunkún bọ́ ọ́ sunkún — Cry if you want to cry
Ṣeré bọ́ ọ́ ṣeré — Play if you want to play
Bọ́mọ bá n sukún ìyá là ń pè — When a child cries, we call on the mother

Ará àdúgbò a sọ pé ó tó — The neighbours will say it is alright
Ó tó ọmọ olójú lami tóóró — It is enough the baby with eyes full of tears
Ẹlẹ́èké dìgbì — The one that possess a big cheek
Dákẹ́ ìwọ nìkan kí mo bí
Keep quiet, you are not the only child I bore

Bọ́lá ń kọ́? — Where is Bọ́lá?
Ó wà nílé o — She is at home
Kó má ṣu púpọ̀ — May she not have diarrhea
Kó má ṣàìsu — May she defecate in a moderate manner
Kó má gbóná janjan — May she not run a fever
Kó má tutù rinrin — May she not be as;cc!d
bí ọbẹ̀ àná o — Like yesterday's soup
Ó sùn jaburata — She is having a sound sleep
Sí yàrá o — Inside the room

The excerpts above reflect the Yorùbá cultural belief system regarding the most effective way to communicate with a child, particularly when the child is crying and requires the attention of their mother. Yorùbá oral poetry serves as a vehicle for the transmission of cultural values, norms and identity. As learners engage with the poetry, they are not merely acquiring language skills but immersing themselves in the cultural ethos of the Yorùbá people. This holistic approach fosters a deeper connection between language and cultural identity, promoting a more profound and authentic understanding.Central to the Yorùbá cultural identity is the Yorùbá language, which belongs to the Niger-Congo language family. This tonal language is known for its complex linguistic structure, comprising three primary tones that significantly impact meaning. The Yorùbá language is not merely a means of communication but serves as a vessel for the expression of profound cultural concepts and values.

Yorùbá oral poetry serves as a gateway to cultural immersion. Through the exploration of diverse poetic genres like praise poetry (Oríkì), which celebrates personal and family identity, learners, this immersion goes beyond words, enabling learners to embody the ethos of the language they are acquiring.

Yorùbá oral poets skilfully employ symbolism and vivid imagery to convey their messages. Metaphors, allegories, and symbolic language are used to communicate deeper meanings, often drawing on cultural symbols, nature, and mythology to enhance the aesthetic quality of the poetry as encapsulated in the excerpts below:

Wòrú o	Oh Wòrú
Wòrú oko	Wòrú of the farm
Wòrú o	Oh Wòrú
Wòrú odò	

Wòrú of the river	
Wòrú gúnyán fẹyẹ jẹ	Wòrú prepared pounded yam for the birds to eat.
Wòrú pakà fẹ́yẹ jẹ	Wòrú harvested maize for the birds to eat.
Mo delé morò fún baba	I returned home to report to father.
Baba na wòrú jọjọ	Father whipped Wòrú severely
Lábẹ́ ọ̀gẹ̀dẹ̀, lábẹ́ òroǹbó	Under the banana, under the orange
O ti ṣe dábẹ́ ata	How did you plunge under the pepper tree?
Idẹ wẹ́wẹ́ ni t'Ọ̀ṣun	Small brass is for the Ọ̀ṣun deity
Òjé gùdùgbà ni t'Òṣà	A very big lead is for the deity
Ṣẹ̀kẹ́ṣẹ̀kẹ̀ ni tÒgún	Chain belongs to Ògún deity
Ẹ bá mi ṣìpẹ̀ fún Baálẹ̀	Help me appeal to the Baálẹ̀
Kó fún wa lódòdó pakájà	To give us flower to tie across our shoulders
Gbogbo wa lògún jọbí o	We are all the offspring of Ògún
Yéèèpà!	Alas!
Wòrú dà?	Where is Wòrú?
Ẹyẹ ti gbe lọ	The bird has carried it away
Wòrú dà	Where is Wòrú?
Ẹyẹ ti gbe lọ	The bird has carried it away

The above excerpt passes knowledge about renowned Yorùbá traditional occupation, food, and religious beliefs. It reflects the community's aesthetic sensibilities and contribute to the preservation of their cultural heritage. The poetry serves as vital conduits for the transmission of knowledge. Their artistic expressions teach historical and moral lessons.

The significance of Yorùbá oral poetry in language acquisition extends beyond its cultural aspects. In educational settings, incorporating this oral tradition can enhance language learning outcomes. The interactive and engaging nature of Yorùbá oral poetry provides a dynamic platform for language learners to immerse themselves in the linguistic nuances of the Yorùbá language.

Proficiency in language is a cornerstone of academic achievement. Language acquisition is essential for effective learning, as it underpins the development of reading, writing, and comprehension skills. A strong foundation in language equips individuals to excel in various educational pursuits. An example of this can be found in different poems used in preparing the child for dialogue or interpersonal communication:

Pàńke	Pàńke
Díẹ̀díẹ̀ lọmọ ó pe bàbá	Gradually, a child will call father
Pàńke	Pàńke
Díẹ̀díẹ̀ lọmọ ó pe bàbá	Gradually, a child will call father

The above excerpt reveals that for a child to communicate effectively, it is crucial for elders to use clear and unambiguous repetitive words. *Ìmọ́ Búbú* is another form of oral poetry that teach the children the act of questioning and answering in a clear and unambiguous manner.

The next poetry shows the Yorùbá children learn basic arithmetic in a subtle manner. They get acquainted with the counting system in a play way method. This is encapsulated in the next excerpts:

Ení bí ení	One by one
lọmọdé ń kawó	Children account for money
Èjì bí èjì	Two by two
òhun làgbà ń tayò	Elders play ayò game.
Ẹ̀ta bí ẹ̀ta	Three by three
Ẹ jẹ́ ká tara wa lọ́rẹ́	Let us honour ourselves.
Ẹ́rin bí ẹ̀rin	Four by four
Ẹ jẹ́ ká rẹ́rìn-ín síra wa	Let us laugh with one another.
Àrún bí àrún	Five by five
Ọba má ṣe wá lárungún	May the Lord not make us a wasteful people.
Ẹ̀fà bí ẹ̀fà	Six by six
ẹ jẹ́ ká fara wa mọ́ra	Let us embrace one another.
Èje bí èje	Seven by seven
Olúgbọ́n ṣorò ó kìje	Ọlúgbọ́n paid homage to orò deity, and he lasted seven days.
Ẹ̀jọ bí ẹ̀jọ	Eight by eight
ẹni bíni làá jọ	It is whoever bore us that we look alike.
Ẹ̀sán bí ẹ̀sán	Nine by nine
Ọba jálẹ́ ó san wa	May the Lord grant us a good ending.
Ẹ̀wá bí ẹ̀wá	Ten by ten
Ọba má wàhálà wa.	May God prevent us from trouble.

In the above poem, the children learn how to think while also building their vocabularies and appreciating things around them through various prayer request made at the end of each number. This shows that Yorùbá oral poetry holds immense pedagogical potential. Educators can leverage this rich cultural resource to create immersive and engaging learning

experiences. Integrating oral poetry into language curricula provides learners with a dynamic and interactive platform, enhancing their language skills while fostering an appreciation for the cultural context. An illustrative example is cited as follows:

Ẹkùn mẹ́ẹ́ran	The tiger captures an animal
Ìmẹ́-ẹ́-ẹ́	Mẹ́ẹ́ẹ́
Ó torí bọ gbó	It dives into the forest
Ìmẹ́-ẹ́-ẹ́	Mẹ́ẹ́ẹ́
Ó tọrùn bọjù	It dives into the bush
Ìmẹ́-ẹ́-ẹ́	Mẹ́ẹ́ẹ́
Ó ó fẹ́ mu	It is very anxious to capture it
Ìmẹ́-ẹ́-ẹ́	Méẹ́ẹ́
Kò mà le mu o	But it cannot capture it
Ojú ẹkùn ń pọ́n	The eyes of the tiger are inflamed
Ìrù ẹkùn ń le	The tail of the tiger are taut

Challenges and Future Considerations:

While recognising the significance of Yorùbá oral poetry in language acquisition, it is essential to address potential challenges and consider future implications. Rapid modernisation, globalisation, and technological advancements pose threats to the preservation of oral traditions. Efforts must be made to strike a balance between traditional oral practices and contemporary educational methodologies. In the face of modernisation and changing communication trends, the preservation of Yorùbá oral poetry becomes crucial. Stakeholders in the teaching and learning of oral tradition must know that while written literature play significant roles, they must adopt and adapt technology to ensure its continued relevance in contemporary society.

Conclusion and Suggestions

The paper has provided an insight into the significance of Yorùbá oral poetry as a bridge between the linguistic and cultural realms, offering a unique and effective approach to language learning. The findings reveal that oral poetry plays a significant role in language acquisition among the Yorùbá people of Nigeria. It does not only enhance language acquisition, but it also celebrates the linguistic diversity and cultural identity of the people. It helps not only in mastering the rules of language, but also appreciating the flexibility and creativity inherent in the Yorùbá language. The study also revealed that learners are not just acquiring language skills but also gaining insights into the cultural tapestry of the Yorùbá people. The paper concluded that Yorùbá oral poetry contribute to the unique fabric of Yorùbá communication and expression. Its linguistics nature aids comprehension and language acquisition. It provides learners the unique opportunity to fine-tune their auditory discrimination skills. Therefore, the study suggests that as we continue to explore diverse methods of language acquisition, we should not overlook the invaluable contributions of Yorùbá oral poetry to this noble endeavour. By recognising and embracing the unique attributes of oral poetry, we not only enhance language acquisition but also contribute to the preservation and celebration of linguistic diversity and cultural identity. Since our identity lies in the traditional past, it is desirable to utilize modern technology to record and document the oral poetry to make acquisition of Yorùbá poetic language easy for future generations.

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