

Oral Poetry as Remnant of Yorùbá Cultural Heritage: Prospects and Challenges

Ayodele Solomon Oyewale

Department of Linguistics, African & Asian Studies

University of Lagos, Nigeria

asoyewale@unilag.edu.ng

Abstract

Modernity, environmental shifts, and foreign religions have challenged the traditional relevance and acceptance of Yorùbá oral poetry. This study examines the heritage's decline—often fuelled by cultural disconnection and the misconception that these forms are obsolete or "fetishist"—while exploring its deep philosophical roots within the Ifá corpus, proverbs, and diverse dialects. Despite these hurdles, innovative youth and contemporary Afrobeat artists are revitalizing the craft through social media and modern music. These digital platforms not only preserve the art form but also create economic opportunities and address unemployment. Ultimately, Yorùbá oral poetry remains an authoritative, transformative resource that continues to shape the performances of traditional musicians and contemporary artists alike.

Keywords: *Yorùbá Oral Poetry, Contemporary Yorùbá society, Cultural heritage, Identity, Creativity and ingenuity*

1. Introduction

From philosophical and socio-cultural perspectives, the Yorùbá worldview is primarily inscribed within oral poetry, representing the foundational etymology of human communication. This tradition utilizes both inclusive and exclusive techniques for socio-political engagement, ethical discourse, and aesthetic expression. As Yorùbá society undergoes monumental transformations driven by civilization and globalization, it becomes essential to examine these communicative modes across time and space. Historically,

the preferred settings for these performances were communal spaces like the *Gbàgede-abúlé* (village square) or *Ojúde-Obá* (palace frontage), where figurative diction, professional dance, and acrobatics were employed to engage the audience. Through linguistic dexterity, poets utilize satire and irony to criticize societal vices, thereby imparting ethical values and reinforcing communal norms across various Yorùbá dialects, including Òyó, Ìjébú, Èkiti, and Ègbá.

Olátúnjí (1984), citing Gbàdàmósí (1959), asserts that Yorùbá poetry is classified not by content or structure, but by the social group of the reciter and the specific techniques employed. These are broadly categorized into chanting modes, feature types, and songs. While many oral arts serve as evening recreation for the general public, certain genres involve restrictive exclusions. For instance, initiation and burial rites such as *Wíwogbódù* (Ifá priest's initiation) and *Irèmòjé* (hunters' burial rites) are strictly reserved for initiates. Conversely, the *Ìjúbà* (homage) remains a public prerequisite for all oral performances. As Olátúnjí notes, Yorùbá oral poetry frequently employs archaic or esoteric lexical forms that transcend ordinary conversation. This specialized vocabulary reflects the physical and social environment, demonstrating a profound awareness of and interaction with the geographic landscape (Ójó, 1966).

2. Objectives and Methodology

The objectives of this study include defining and redefining Yorùbá oral poetry within the context of modernity while highlighting its inherent socio-cultural values. Furthermore, the research discusses the significance of this oral tradition in both ancient and modern times as it applies to accomplished personalities and critically contextualizes modernity's role in preserving these arts for future generations. The study also explains how the term "remnant" applies to various categories of individuals engaging in Yorùbá oral poetry for socio-economic purposes and cultural propagation. Finally, the research highlights the prospects available to youth who utilize social media to explore and promote these poetic forms.

For the research methodology, we employed a mixed-methods approach incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. We integrate both qualitative and quantitative approaches to ensure a comprehensive analysis. Primary data was gathered through structured oral interviews with three University of Lagos students: Morénikéjì Olówóyotán, Oládayò Azeezat, and Àlàmú Dámilólá. These interviews explored the diverse inspirations behind their adoption of Yorùbá prose and specific chanting modes like Èsà Egúngún and Èkún Ìyàwó. This primary evidence was supplemented by field observations of live performances, conducted with strict adherence to professional ethics. To provide a broader context, secondary data was systematically collected from academic literature, digital archives, and related scholarly publications. By linking these specific case studies of young female performers to the broader objectives, we demonstrate how "remnant" practitioners are utilizing modern tools to sustain ancient Yoruba traditions.

3 Literature Review

Early scholars of African literature have carried out quite a lot of research on oral poetry and oral narratives that are peculiarly indigenous to Africa. African literature, in general, is performative, including oral poetry and oral narratives," (See Ògúndèjì, 2000:1). But very little has been done on the prospects and challenges in Yorùbá bedeviling oral poetry, especially in the context of modernity, and at a comparative level. We intend to fill this critical gap, which is somehow a universal problem, with our research findings. The Yorùbá oral poetry, which is a legendary creativity of unschooled but cultured people, is a generic name and an expression that refers to the totality of the people's cultural heritage and identity for several decades. In a somewhat similar opinion, Karpeles (1965:109-110) affirms:

The primitive folk ballad was the literary product of an unlettered people, just as the folk tune was the musical output of the unskilled musician. It was addressed to the ear, not to the eye. It was composed in the head, and it lived in

the minds and memories of those who recited it for generations before it was committed to paper.

The excerpt reveals a linkage between poetry and how it emotionally affects the human senses, first to the poet in question and his or her audience. The feeling of poetry, to those who understand, appreciate, and value it, has a way by which it touches the human's heart and bone marrow, which the Yorùbá people call "*akinyemí-ara*." Yorùbá oral poems are so powerful a motivation for human emotional therapy as loss of loved ones, a feeling of elevation, relief for grief, "anti-depression natural medication." Each Yorùbá profession or association has oral poetry that, consciously or unconsciously, boosts the morale of the members. Therefore, for a deeper and well-thought-out study of the socio-economic aspect of these oral poems, we want to examine the prospects and challenges in them in this age of technological advancement.

In this age of great unemployment, when "*Jápa Syndrome*" legally or illegally seems to be counterproductive with unprecedented repatriation of some immigrants, there is a need for youths to begin to think outside the box on how to be self-employed. Yorùbá oral poetry could, just like most youth, "playfully" engage in professional dancing in university campuses, easily generate "employment opportunities" or cater to the mental and emotional needs. The youth who venture into oral poetry and find it worthwhile as a source of income could rise to celebrity if the passion and drive are sustained.

Further curious point to note is that some modern youth who are seasoned hip-hop and Afro-beat artists and Yorùbá by birth do, consciously or unconsciously, employ Yorùbá oral poetry and prose narrative forms to enrich the lyrics of their songs. Worthy of mention with their names and stage names are: Ségun Akinlolú (*Beautiful Nubia*), Bísádé Ológundé (*Lágbájá*), Alexander Àbòlòrè (*9ice*), Bùkólá Elémídé (*Àṣá*), and David Adédèjì Adélékè (*Davido*). Furthermore, others that are using Yorùbá oral genres are: Ahmed Olóládé (*Àṣàké*), Tiwátópé Savage-Balógun (*Tiwa Savage*), Olámidé Adédèjì (*Badoo*), Olúshégún Òsáníyì (*Lord of Àjásà*), among others.³ Despite their respective socio-cultural backgrounds, they

show a measure of appreciation of the Yorùbá oral genres. These innovative ideas and creativity, in no small measure, add aesthetics and credence to their music. Vasina (1965:2), affirms, “Among peoples without writing, oral tradition continues to exist at the heart of the environment that gave rise to it. It has not yet been supplanted, nor had its main functions taken over, by written documents, as it is the case where writing has taken pride of place.” Despite that Yorùbá language has been reduced into writing, the seemingly “remnant” tradition, as applicable to the Yorùbá oral poetry is still waxing stronger. Crowther1968:11 & 13) laments and rightly affirms:

The view of Africa as a continent without history gained almost universal currency in the colonial period. Such a view was clearly useful justification for the European occupation of Africa, for a people characterized as one without history or culture, indulging in abhorrent practices such as human sacrifice and cannibalism, were clearly in need of European tutelage...Once it came to be realised that Africa was not in fact all primitive jungle, the need for colonial rule would be less obvious, the role of the missionary less necessary.

What else can we say? “The stone that the builders have rejected has now become the cornerstone of a house,” (Matthew chapter 21 verse 42). The Yorùbá oral poetry, though, appears to be a “remnant” of the Yorùbá cultural heritage; its significance and relevance are still very strong in virtually all spheres of life. These Jújú maestros, Sunday Adéníyì Adégeyè (*King Sunny Ade*) and Chief Ebenezer Rèmílékún Olásùpò Obey (*Bàbá Commander*) employed the Yorùbá myths “*ítàn-iwáṣé*” prose narrative “*ítàn-áṛòṣò olórò geere*,” praise-poetry “*Oríkì*, and the Yorùbá philosophy “*imò-èrò-ijìnlè*” in their respective songs. The poetic renditions of incantations “*Ofò*” in the sophisticated lyrics of Àpàlà music of Àyìnlá Omowúrà, (*Eégúnmogají*), Haruna Ìshòlá (*Bàbá-Ń-Gàní-Àgbà*), as well as in Fújì music of Late Síkírù Àyìndé Barrister (*Alhaji Àgbà*) and Kóláwolé Àyìnlá (*Bàbá Alátiká*), among others are evidence of the significance and relevance of the Yorùbá verbal art, generally.

Akíndolírè (1999:1) corroborates, "The origin of literature can hardly be said to be the exclusive preserve of any single tribe, race, culture or people. It is an expression of the feelings, passions, emotions, views, cultures, events, and experiences of different peoples of the world." Of all the hip-hop artists listed above, Ségun Akinlolú, known by the stage name *Beautiful Nubia*, is exceptionally brilliant and different in his symbolic-style approach to composition and renditions. Akinlolú is a poet, songwriter, composer, arranger, and bandleader. He is known for his contemporary folk and roots music, which blends Yorùbá traditional percussion with modern instrumentation and is sung in Yorùbá and English. He is also the founder of the Roots Renaissance Band and the *Eni-Obanké* Music Festival (EMUfest).³ The efforts of these Yorùbá modern artists are similar to what Okoh (2008: vii) refers to as "practicals of oral literature." This phenomenon represents cases of interpolation, which indicates "borrowing" worthwhile features and what is considered as aesthetics to embellish creativity from Indigenous knowledge and natural sources for the wider audience's pleasure.

4. Yorùbá Oral Poetry as Cultural Heritage

For centuries, the Yorùbá have remained keen observers of natural and supernatural phenomena, a trait reflected in the works of their oral poets who engage deeply with topical issues and critical historical shifts. Whether documenting moments of elation or catastrophe, these poets explore their environment through a systematic application of ethical and metaphysical inquiry rooted in critical thinking. Traditionally, the Yorùbá historian (Asòtàn) possessed a profound understanding of this cultural heritage; however, this knowledge has been increasingly distorted by the forces of colonization and modern civilization. Consequently, preserving Yorùbá oral poetry as a vital "remnant" of this cultural legacy has become imperative.

Functioning as a system of checks and balances, Yorùbá oral poets caution humanity across religious and political divides. The absence of such poets—acting as activists against social menace—often results in modern recklessness and political impunity. Influential "disc poets" like Láñrewájú Adépójù and Kúnlé Ológunídú demonstrate the potential relevance of this art form today, provided they maintain their integrity and refuse to be

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bankrolled by political interests. The power of this tradition is captured in the proverb, “Ó kù dèdè ká gbéwì d’Óyòó, Oba Jáayín térí gbaṣo,” which recalls how a satirical poem once drove a king to suicide, illustrating the poet’s role in communal sanitization. Ultimately, the presence of oral poets within communal settings and the corridors of power remains essential. Regarding Yorùbá royal poetry, Akínyemí (2007) elucidates:

Royal poetry is one of the most developed and elaborate oral poetic genres in Africa. It is a specialized form of praise poetry directed publicly, or in private to kings and their chiefs. This ambitious and elaborate poetry is composed and recited by professional bards attached to the king’s court and palaces.

Yorùbá oral poets fulfill delicate and sensitive roles by eulogizing traditional rulers to motivate them or cautioning them against the abuse of power. The legacy of Yorùbá oral poetry is traced to Ilé-Ifè, the ancestral home of the Yorùbá race, from which populations migrated globally due to various mythological and historical factors. Paradoxically, the Yorùbá diaspora—including those in the Republic of Benin and descendants of enslaved populations in Latin America, Cuba, Brazil, and Trinidad and Tobago—continues to celebrate the “remnants” of this heritage through elaborate cultural and dramatic performances.

While these traditions may not be as deeply rooted as those practiced in Nigeria, the passion with which the diaspora engages in Yorùbá festivals is remarkable. These celebrations emphasize ethical values and aesthetic displays of costumes and materials, particularly during the appeasement of deities through oríkì (praise-poetry). Olátúnjí (1984) asserts that oríkì is the most popular Yorùbá oral poetic genre, featuring prominently in the performances of all chanters as they address their audience. This study further explores the etymology of Ìjálá, a genre linked to Ògún, the Yorùbá divinity of iron. Historically, hunters have employed Ìjálá to praise and appreciate Ògún, as noted by Yemitan (1982), and Babalolá (1981) further affirms:

Ìjálá artists, that is, persons who chant ijálá poems of Yorùbá spoken art, fall into two categories. The first consists of the Ológun beggars, mostly female, from certain specified descent groups who perform individually on nay day designated by the Ifá oracle...Ìjálá is described as *aré ọdẹ* (hunters' entertainment) and the ijálá artists are called *àwọn aláré-ọdẹ* (those who perform for hunters' entertainment).

In prehistoric times, Ògún established Ìjálá as his signature chant for pleasure and self-motivation during farming and hunting expeditions. Today, his devotees continue to honor him by chanting these melodies, preserving his self-motivated content and diverse themes. During dramatic and hilarious performances of Ìjálá or Ìrèmòjé, the chanter draws inspiration from Ògún's godlike personality. However, this does not equate the chanter to the deity; rather, it serves as a form of homage where Ògún's honor and power are fully respected.

According to Yorùbá belief, the fear of Ògún—who is renowned for his forthright justice—is the beginning of wisdom. He is an incorruptible judge who does not tolerate lewd jokes, false statements, or perjury. His instantaneous and uncompromising judgment is vividly depicted in his praise-poetry. Furthermore, while certain Yorùbá prose narratives appear in prose form, works such as “Oláshégbá ilú Ìlalà,” “Pàtákì Niyàwó,” and “Òkèlè Àgbà” contain significant poetic elements (Ajibáde & Rájí, 2014). Regarding the poetic nature of Àrò jíjá, Àjùwòn (1986) affirms:

The first feature that distinguishes *àrò* poetry from the other types of Yorùbá narratives is its plot structure. It consists of a chain of poetic episodic events, running to five, six, seven, and sometimes up to ten, with one starting where the other ends. These episodes are usually punctuated by the listeners' verbalized doubts about the claims made in the episodes, or by the narrator's statement which cues the subsequent episodic narrative. As the listeners cast doubt

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upon the claims made, they also call the narrator various names, such as a liar (Oníró); one who sells lies like yam flour. (A-túró-tà-bí-èlùbó).

We have utilized Ìjálá and the prose-poetic narrative Àrò to underscore the significance of these genres in educating children and adults on the human environment, Yorùbá taboos, native intelligence, and ethical values. It is argued that colonialism, through Western education and foreign religions, has fragmented the objective Yorùbá worldview traditionally entrenched in their cultural heritage. Consequently, modernity has fostered distorted perceptions that disrupt logical reasoning and obscure the communal relevance of these traditions. Notably, UNESCO recognizes the annual Òṣun Òṣogbo Festival as a significant historical tourist site that projects Yorùbá heritage through oral poetry and dramatic performances, meeting global standards of cultural preservation. In a similar account, Olúwolé (2007) affirms:

As African thinkers being aged peasants, Socrates was a paradigmatic example of this. History has it that he wore only one cloak all his life and never wore shoes. Socrates is still venerated today as the Father of (Western) philosophy, despite the fact that he was an aged fetish priest. The veneration is not of his age, or poverty or religious belief; but exclusively from the richness of his mind.

While some struggle to comprehend the essence and relevance of African Yorùbá traditions, Olúwolé (2007) logically justifies that the philosophy of African thinkers remains indisputable. This perspective suggests that the intellectual standing of African sages is comparable to that of prominent Greek philosophers like Socrates. Despite his significant influence, Socrates received little formal education due to his lower social rank; he was trained as a stonemason like his father, and his mother was a midwife. His background initially prevented access to elite Athenian tutoring, yet he rose to philosophical prominence through critical inquiry. According to Socrates, "Education means bringing out the idea of universal validity which is latent in the mind of every man."⁴

5. Yorùbá Cultural Values in Oral Poetry Performance

In the Yorùbá oral tradition, styles of worship, poetic rendition, and dramatic performance may differ; however, no ideological divide exists. This unity stems from the cultural belief that all Yorùbá are descendants of Odùduwà and worship the same Creator, Olódùmarè, to whom they remain accountable as mortals in a mysterious world. As in other cultures, Yorùbá poetry is all-encompassing, integrating dramatology, storytelling, and cinematography. While initially distinguished as àròfò and ewì, Ìṣòlá (1978) affirms that both terms are logically synonymous.

Scholars consistently associate Yorùbá oral poetry with the people's total way of life, arguing it is never merely "poetry for poetry's sake." It serves as a symbolic representation of Yorùbá philosophy, while its embedded ethics and aesthetics provide the foundation for societal sanity and interpersonal relationships. Ultimately, it reflects a uniquely African expression of human ingenuity, communalism, and pragmatic cultural heritage. On this note, Ojaide (2014) posits:

Since poetry is a literary genre and literature is a cultural production, the performance or reading of poetry has its cultural dimension. I have personally observed from readings or performances of poets from different parts of the world a diversity of reading or performing modes...African poets are very demonstrative compared to poets of other cultural groups. Western readers of European and North American origin tend to read in a rather conventional reading manner without much demonstrativeness. However, poets of countries of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia tend to declaim their poetry and thus make their articulated poetry far livelier than poetry read by poets of other parts of the West as in Britain, Canada, and the United States...Thus, there are various literary, especially poetry writing, and performance traditions that are informed by cultural implications.

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Ojaide's submission aptly describes the essence of Yorùbá poetic rendition. The beauty of this art form lies in both its oral performance and its written expression; however, full appreciation requires linguistic mastery and an ear for the language's tonal nuances. Without these, understanding the multifaceted layers of Yorùbá oral poetry remains a significant challenge.

Figures such as Ifáyemí Èlébuìbọn, Adébáyò Fálétí, Láñrewájú Adépójù, Olátúbósún Oládàpò, Ògúndáre Fóyámu, Àlàbí Ògúndépò, and Àrèmú Ayílárá have been pivotal in the Yorùbá oral poetry landscape. Similarly, artists like Alhaji Dáúdà Àkànmú and Odòløyé Àrèmú utilized Àwúrèbe and Dadakúàdà modes, respectively, to deliver their messages. Historically, Yorùbá society has denounced idleness, encouraging parents to supplement home training by enrolling children in poetic apprenticeships to acquire professional skills and business acumen. Regarding this tradition of skill acquisition, Ajíkòbi (2007) asserts:

If we are really determined to flourish in the global village, we must plant our feet more firmly in our inherited heritage, the central core of which is verbal art. Verbal art should be the most valued and adored here where it is best known ...The fact is that African verbal art is the only ancient art that never grows old because of its oralness, which is based on our intellectual life and living...Let it be permitted to affirm and confirm that the African intellectual dexterity runs through the conduit of verbal art, despite the racist stand of people like Karl Marx, Voltaire and their ilk.

Ajíkòbi (2007) asserts that Yorùbá oral poets and stakeholders must proactively salvage the "remnants" of this oral tradition to ensure its continuity. Modern society should not ignorantly dismiss these efforts as mere "vernacular noise-making." This misunderstanding is captured in the Yorùbá phraseology, "Èni tí kò gbó tenu ègà ni yó sọ pé ó ní pàátó," which suggests that those who do not understand the weaver bird's song mistake its communication for meaningless noise. Indeed, the lack of appreciation for the embedded significance of Yorùbá oral poetry remains its most significant contemporary challenge.

6. Challenges of Yorùbá Oral Poetry in Modern Society

One cannot help but express concern regarding the indifferent attitude prevalent in modern society toward Yorùbá oral poetry. A primary challenge facing the tradition is the need for youth to engage in the evolutionary reconstruction of these arts for personal and societal development. This phenomenon is not unique to Africa; as Minniyakhmetova (2007) laments:

Ritual is a symbolic reflex of people's religious views and notions. The disappearance of religion is not caused by people's unwillingness to have faith but by the pressure of different circumstances and reasons...After Christianization, the next period to have a significant impact came at the end of the 1920s and the beginning of the 1930s. This was the period of collectivization in the Soviet Union when the whole traditional economic and social system of the people collapsed...The actuality of religion and pious way of life among the people did not vanish completely but it changed its forms. The ritual life of the people was minimized and curtailed to a large degree and all popular religious events in communities such as organizing the praying ceremonies, sacrifices and offerings to the gods and spirits, ancestors, etc. were considerably diminished.

Yorùbá society has grappled with the survival of its cultural "remnants" amidst the transformative pressures of globalization. This struggle is aptly captured by the irony in the proverb: "Ení tó mọ Ọfà, kò mọ Ifá; ení tó sì mọ Ifá kò mọ Ọfà; bẹ́ ni Ifá tā l'Ọfà." This translates to the observation that those who reside in the town of Ọfà may not understand the art of Ifá divination, while skilled Ifá practitioners may not know the town of Ọfà, despite the craft being highly lucrative there. This irony highlights the disconnect between the geographical origins of a culture and the specialized knowledge required to sustain its value.

7. Prospects and Entrepreneurship of Yorùbá Oral Poetry in Modern Society

The significance of Yorùbá oral poetry transcends ancient times, and its impenetrable impact ensures its continued influence on future generations. Among the "remnants" of Yorùbá heritage, oral poetry remains fundamental. The exclusive parlance, "A jí ṣe bí Ọyó là á rí, Ọyó ò ṣe bí i baba ẹníkan," suggests that many emulate the cultural heritage of Ọyó rather than the reverse, affirming the continuity of palace verbal arts and other traditions peculiar to the Ọyó Aláàfin and broader Yorùbá communities. For instance, the son of the accomplished court poet Fálétí adopted traditional techniques as a model to conduct "searching probes into the artistic, social, philosophical, moral, and later on, political and economic life of the people" (Oláníyan, 1988).

Yorùbá oral poetry naturally inspires individuals and communities through creative, informative, and dramatic melodies known as ọgbón-àtinúdá. Diligent contemporary youth who possess passion and an unbiased perspective can excel by tapping into these artistic heritages. By "repackaging" and demystifying traditional forms, young people can utilize their technological expertise to present African innovation to a global audience. Documenting Yorùbá oral poetry on social media platforms serves both as a means of cultural preservation and a source of regular income. Furthermore, this digital archiving provides a veritable source of knowledge to correct misinformation presented by those uninformed about Yorùbá language and culture. To this end, Ajíkòbi (2007) observes:

We equally observe that even seasoned researchers in African studies who more often than not, benefit by tapping from our oral devices to buttress their "research findings" flagrantly display 'the feelings of anomie' about the essence of the African oral traditions and techniques." At the best, they display a crossing-sweeper approach to it. And few who feign to appreciate the import of this treasured hall see it as crumbs of African original life and knowledge.

Western interest in Yorùbá language and literature remains significant, supported by substantial grants from global NGOs, corporate bodies, and research institutions. Scholars such as Abraham (1958) and Finnegan (1977) serve as foundational reference points for Yorùbá studies by non-native speakers. Furthermore, the proactive and vibrant performances of Dr. Adéolá Fáléyé (Yèyéadéàbéké) at Obafémi Awolówò University exemplify a powerful legacy in traditional poetic chanting.

Yorùbá oral poetry possesses strong prospects for survival that transcend current stereotypes. Through self-discovery and empowerment, youth like Azezat Oládayò (Òṣùpá Akéwì) and Àlámú Dámilólá (Adéolá Akéwì) are gaining prominence through live performances and digital platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook. Our findings suggest that women are more deeply involved in projecting this positive cultural image than men, perhaps due to a natural inclination toward orality, fashion, and social entertainment.

Ultimately, universities should serve as pragmatic environments where talented youth can discover and harness their potential beyond theoretical academic knowledge. Regarding this role of the academic institution, Yáì (1986) succinctly asserts:

It is also obvious that the University environment cannot be a privileged context for the oral criticism of oral poetry. But since oral poetry is cultivated elsewhere, the University can at least examine the conditions of its survival and self-renewal. The criticism of oral poetry is most robust in a context of primary orality. It has been impaired everywhere by mercantilist civilization with its inequalities written boldly, the emergence of new social classes, a crazy urbanization, and cultural alienation. The new bourgeoisies. Consequently, they are also an aspect of the calligraphic tradition. Thus, they use that miraculous and fetishist war implement of the whiteman to rout the spoken form wherever they come across it, calling it savage... the need as much of oral poetry as they are aware that city life is cruel and inhuman. A killer of languages!

The analysis underscores the necessity of robust collaboration between the "Town and Gown," advocating for a transition from purely theoretical scholarship to active, practical ventures. By fostering an enabling environment for talented young oral artists, these collaborative efforts can create avenues for self-employment and economic self-reliance while further projecting Yorùbá cultural heritage.

8. Conclusion

In conclusion, this paper has established that the utilitarian relevance of Yorùbá oral poetry transcends age, status, gender, and race. While ancient traditions have primarily emphasized professional prowess and have often exclude youth ideologies, contemporary shifts suggest a revitalization of the craft. Creative youth and adults increasingly leverage social media as a lucrative platform to transform Yoruba verbal arts—such as *oríkì* (praise-poetry), *ekún iyàwó* (nuptial cry), *ijálá*, and *èṣà pípé*—into sustainable livelihoods that have projected Yorùbá cultural heritage globally. The continuity of these traditions has been further secured by *iṣé àjogúnbá* (hereditary vocation), where children have received training through both formal instruction and intuition. Furthermore, the sustained interest of Western scholars and the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) have offered promising avenues for the documentation and digital preservation of these arts. Because these prospects have been strategically explored and maintained, the potential for Yorùbá oral poetry to thrive in a globalized world has far outweighed its current challenges, ensuring its survival for future generations.

Notes

1. <https://www.google.com/search?q=what+is+the+meaning+of+cultural+heritage&oq=what+is+the+meaning+of+cultural+heritage&gs> (Accessed on 26/1/2025)
2. Nairaland.com – Nigerian-music-artiste-real (Accessed on 18/10/2024).
3. <https://www.google.com/search?q=What+are+the+real+name+and+stage+name+of+Beautiful+Nubia+-+nigerian+hip-hop+artistes> (Accessed on 20/10/2024).
4. <https://www.google.com/search?q=Was+Socrates+had+formal+education&oq=Was+Socrates+had+formal+education>. (Accessed on 9/2/2025).

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