

Blindspots in the Study of Automated Yoruba Names: Implications for the Next Generation of Learners

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Abstract

The increasing demand for automated processing of Yoruba names has led to a surge in research focused on developing algorithms and models for Yoruba name analysis. However, this research has overlooked critical blindspots that can significantly impact the accuracy and cultural sensitivity of these systems. The data were extracted from the five schools in The Federal polytechnic Ilaro which consist of the school of Management, the school of Engineering, the school of communication, the school of Environmental studies and school of pure and applied science respectively. This paper identifies and discusses these blindspots, highlighting their implications for the next generation of learners. It is argued that addressing these blindspots is crucial for developing inclusive and culturally responsive automated systems that cater to the needs of Yoruba language speakers.

Keywords: Blindspots, Automated, Yoruba names Next generation, Learners

Introduction

The Yoruba language, spoken by millions worldwide, is a vital part of Nigerian culture and identity. The Yorubá gives serious attention to names which is one of the major thing in every culture and tribe in the Nigeria which talks more about each culture and helps to keeps the history of the cultures. Since names have imparted on the moral conduct and future of their children, according to Yorubá belief in particular (Ekundayo, 1977). Apart from using names as a mark of identity, names are also used among Yoruba. The rise of automated processing techniques has led researchers to focus on developing systems for Yoruba name analysis. While this research aims to enhance efficiency and accuracy, it has neglected essential aspects of Yoruba names and culture.

Name plays an important role in Yorubá society. Yorubá does not bear names without considering some Factors because of its future consequences. Although, name is for identification, it also serves as a source of Honour and pride, especially for those who are born from heroic and warrior families. People love identifying With such names by bearing the names of the heroes or warriors. These names have been reduced to Surnames today. Other names are praise namely Amọ̀kẹ̀, Arinpe, Amó, Alání, Akanke, and Abeke. These Names are

regarded as archaic today and nobody reckon with them anymore. It is dismal that these names And many others that are associated with deities are gradually going into extinction owing to modern Religions. This forms the discussion of this paper.

Yorubá pays a serious attention to names. Since names have imparted on the moral conduct and future of their children, according to Yorubá belief, they are careful at giving names to their children. Names with a positive connotation are adopted while the names with a negative connotation are frowned at (Ekundayo, 1977). Among the Yoruba, the time of year, profession/trade, and royal affiliation among others can influence the choice of personal names. Thus, the name Abidemi derives from a situation where a pregnant woman gives birth while the husband (or a close relative) is away. A name like Babarimisa (pronounced Babarinsa, which literally can mean father passed at my birth, or shortly after it) reminds of bereavement as it carries through life message about the sad experience, a source of grief to the family. Ogunwale (2012) reports that such factors as parental expectations, home, spiritual, birth and prevailing conditions of the household influence name choices among the Yoruba.

Literature Review

The concept of name in Yorùbá goes beyond a means of identification. It has different connotations in Yorùbá Society (Adeoye 1972). The following Yorùbá proverbs confirm it; “Ilélańwòkíá tósomólórúkò” (the home is considered before giving a child name); “Orúkòomòni ìjǎnu Ọmọ” (the child's name controls his or her actions); “Orúkòrere sǎn ju wúraati fadákàlò” (a good name is preferred to silver and gold) (Bada 1985). The implication of these proverbs is that the name given to a child has control over the child's conduct, hence, an average Yorùbá child usually avoids anything that would tarnish his or her name in the public. Due to this, Yorùbá are careful in giving names to their children because of the future implication (Ajiboye 2009). Ajiboye's (2009) submission is in consonance with Ekundayo (1977) who is of the opinion that names with a positive connotation are adopted while names with a negative connotation are abhorred. Akinnaso (1980) opines that names are drawn from the home contexts. Personal names with negative and unpleasant connotations are avoided because a child's name plays an important role in their development and future career. That being the case, a child's destiny may react to a name that has a negative social implication in future. Aside from this, the issues of name and naming in Yorùbá have generated lots of reactions among the Yorùbá scholars. For instance, Ajiboye (2009) opines that names are used among the Yorùbá people to demonstrate their loyalty and honour to their deities and progenitors who were at the forefront of the worship of these deities. Ajiboye (2009) further expresses his displeasure with name modification and change. He explains that it violates God's law and also highlights its consequences on Yorùbá Society. Ikotun and Aladesanmi (2012) have a contrary opinion, they explain that name modification and change have their origin from the Bible and it does not violate God's law and it is unavoidable when there is acculturation. Akintoye (2016) reacts to Ajiboye (2009) by saying that anglicizing Yorùbá names causes havoc to the Yorùbá

language. Akintoye and Ojo (2020:131) opine that name is a source of honour and pride, especially for those who are born from heroic and warrior families. People love identifying with such names by bearing the names of the heroic and warriors.

Adeoye and Akintoye (2021) point attention to another name adoption that is common among the elites today. This is the compounding of the families' and personal names as surnames among men and the compounding of the maiden and husbands' families' names as matrimonial names. They highlight the reasons for adopting this practice, parts of which are; to identify with their fathers so as to use their fathers' political and business influences to achieve their political goals or to promote their businesses, and for Facebook use so that they would not lose the contacts of those that do not aware that they are already married. Adeoye and Akintoye (2021) also point to another practice trending among the elites which is adopting name initials as appellations.

Blindspots

A critical study of the works of these scholars shows that although, many issues have been discussed about naming in Yorùbá, attention has not been paid to the fact that Yorùbá names are endangered; the arbitrary modifications of Yorùbá surnames and avoidance of some Yorùbá names regarded as archaic may lead to Yorùbá original names going into extinction in the nearest future.

1. **Linguistic Complexity**: Yoruba names often carry deep linguistic and cultural significance, which automated systems overlook. The language's tonal nature, grammatical structure, and dialectal variations are frequently disregarded.
2. **Cultural Context**: Yoruba names are deeply rooted in culture and tradition. Automated systems fail to consider the cultural context, leading to misinterpretation and misrepresentation of names.
3. **Orthographic Variations**: Yoruba names exhibit various spellings and orthographic variations, which automated systems often

struggle to accommodate.

4. **Gender and Social Dynamics**: Yoruba names carry gender and social connotations, which are frequently neglected in automated processing.

Implications For Next Generation Learners

According to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (1995:52), appellation is a name or title. It is a name or title which does not refer to the original name that a person bears. Abiodun (1997) explains that appellation is a title used to avoid calling a person his or her original name. This submission is corroborated by Oladipupo (2014) who says that appellation is a nickname or a title given to the bearer after the observation of certain characteristics that are unique to the person. He says further that appellation is not given immediately after the child is born, it is usually added to the other names already given to the child later in life. In most cases, people usually drop all other names and call and address the person only with such a nickname. According to Abiodun (1997), the appellation is a common practice in Yorubá setting, and it is adopted based on power, wealth, age, status, education, social position or interaction, physical appearances and habits. He says further that appellation can be given by oneself, housewives to their in-laws because Yorubá culture forbids the housewife to call their brother and sisters-in-law by names, especially, those that were born before they were married to those families. Adeoye and Akintoye (2021) also say that appellation is also given by friends or associates, students, drivers, touts, political thugs and co-workers as demonstrated below:

- Tenny – Teni
- Topsy – Tope
- Dupsy – Dupe
- Adeshow – Adewale
- Cultural Misrepresentation: Automated systems may perpetuate cultural misrepresentation, potentially leading to cultural insensitivity and misappropriation.
- Language Inaccuracy: Neglecting

linguistic complexity may result in inaccurate name analysis, undermining language learning and cultural understanding.

- Limited Inclusivity: Overlooking orthographic variations and cultural context may exclude individuals with diverse backgrounds and identities.

Methodology

The data for the paper were drawn from texts and journals on Yorubá names and the informants who are from Yoruba. Their ages ranged between 70 and 75 years. They were selected because aged people value names, unlike the youths who bear names without minding the meanings and the implications. The data showed that the date of birth of students entering into Nigerian Universities nowadays falls between 1999 and 2007 and that the personal names adopted by majority of these students were modified. In the sense that the subjects of the names were modified to suit their parents' new religion while the Verb Phrases were retained. An interview was also conducted among twenty students who are Yorubá native speakers. These students were randomly picked to know their views on why the youths of today do not like to adopt the praise names. There were divergent reactions from these students. Twelve of these students were of the opinion that the names have become old fashion (old school, in their own language). Three saw the names as supplementary given to the children by their old grand-parents which the children may decide not to adopt if they grow old. Two of the students commented that the names are adopted by the people from the local areas. Two of them also said that they liked the names and they would be happy if people called them so. The remaining one student did not see anything wrong with the names only that they did not blend with the modern trends. The outcome of the interview shows that there is a drastic departure from Yorubá original names and praise names by the present generation.

Results

The following are the customized Yoruba name and their correct Yoruba spellings gotten from the various schools in The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro.

- School of Management
 - Horluwardamilare-Oluwadamilare
 - Horhlaawhunmie - Olawunmi
 - Hartorhbatele - Atobatele
 - Holuwa - Oluwa
 - Horlar - Ola
 - Harikeh – Arike
 - Hajokeh – Ajoke
 - Haryo - Ayo
 - Hardekola - Adekola
 - Hiseouluwah - Iseoluwa
 - Hadissah - Adisa
 - Haryourjudey - Ayojide
 - Horluwatimilehin – Olutimehin
 - Harkinbo - Akinbo
 - Teeteelurpeh - Titilope
 - Haryourmhie - Ayomide
- School of Communication
 - Haryourbarimi - Ayobami
 - Haryourjemiyo - Ayojemi
 - Holuhwarpehlumi - Olupelumi
 - Horpeyermhi - Opeyemi
 - Harikeh - Arike
 - Hadeyjoke - Adejoke
 - Hadeshinah - Adeshina
 - Thithilahyor - Titilope
- School of Engineering
 - Thithi - Titi
 - Habefe - Abefe
 - Hakanke – Akanke
 - Hakande - Akande
 - Hadeshewa - Adeshewa
 - Horlamhidey - Olamide
 - Horpeyemi - Opeyemi
 - Harbeedemie - Abidemi
 - Harbeordun - Abiodun
- School of Applied and Pure Science
 - Hardeysholar - Adeshola
 - Hardeyjokeh - Adejokeh
 - Harlor – Ola
 - Horlartunji - Olatunji
 - Horlarmide - Olamide

- Haryomide - Ayomide
- Holardipuphor - Oladipupo
- Hardenike - Adenike
- Harbimbhorla - Abimbola
- Hardeniji - Adeniji
- Harkinpelu - Adekinpelu
- Hardeleke - Adeleke
- Hardephireyo - Adefireyo
- Hartoke - Atoke
- Harnike - Adenike
- Harshabi - Adeshabi
- Harbimpe - Adebimpe
- School of Agriculture
 - Hardewuyi – Adewuyi
 - Hardeholar – Adeola
 - Hardegoke - Adegoke
 - Bolhar - Bola
 - Hilesanmhi - Ilesanmi
 - Hifeoluwha – Ifeoluwa
 - Boluwhartife - Bolutife
 - Harbosede - Abosede
 - Kahshimhawo - kashimwo
 - Kolaharphor - Kolayo
 - Hargbhorlarhun - Agbolahun
 - Horlarunleke - Olarileke
 - Hardunhorla - Adunola
 - Horpeyemi – Opeyemi
 - Hardeysholar – Adeshola
 - Hardeyjokeh – Adejokeh
 - Horlartunji – Olátúnjì
 - Hardenike – Adejoke
 - Harkinpelu – Akinpelu
 - Holarnike – Olanike
 - Harshabi – Ashabi
 - Harbimpe – Abimpe
 - Hardehola – Adéolá

Findings and Discussion

This section discusses the blindspots, implications and significance of names to the future generations in Yoruba society. This will enable the readers to see the reason why research works must tend towards naming to forestall Yoruba original names going into extinction. The primary function of naming is for identification purpose. Without names, there will be misrepresentation among human beings (Ogunbowale, 1966). Naming goes beyond

identification of individuals; clans, families, communities and things generally are recognized by their names. Names are also a source of honor and pride to the owners. People delight to associate with the popular figures in the society by giving their children the names of these figures with the belief that their children will excel like them. The popularity may be in terms of wealth, academic achievement, and gallant performance in the battle field, political exploit, and royal status. All tribes have these popular figure, for instance, some people bear *Abiṣṣalá* because of June 12th incident, *Tinubú* after the heroine, late *Madam Èfúnroyè Tinubú*. Some even go to the extent of bearing foreign names such as *Obama*, being the first African man to become an American President, *Osama Bin Laden*, and the Islamic notorious terrorist. The families of aforementioned names are highly respected and they occupy prominent positions in the Federal and States. What their generations enjoy and they will continue to enjoy are the names that their Fore-fathers have built a long time ago.

The peculiarity of the names in examples above lies on dialectical perspective, for instance, *Ìkálẹ̀* and *Ìlájẹ̀* names are philosophical, in the sense that they showcase Yorubá concepts in *omo* (child), *ikú* (death), *oro* (word), and *ìwà/ìsẹ̀* (habit). Another examples are Yorubá attach a strong importance to child such that nothing can be substituted for it as shown in *Èhuúwayijọ̀ mọ̀* (there is no habit that is greater than a child), *Omọ̀júlówó* (a child is better than money), and *Ìwàijọ̀mọ̀* (no habit is greater than a child). No matter how much some women suffer in their matrimonial homes, they may endure it and not pack out just for the sake of their children as shown in *Tomomẹghò* (I consider the children) and *Ìyàomọ̀lẹ̀rẹ̀* (suffering on the children is rewarding). These differences make names to be a tool of origin tracing. No matter how long a person or a group of people stays in a particular area, if their names differ from the names common to the immediate neighbors, their origin can be easily traced and they will be regarded as sojourners. They cannot have a sense of belonging in that area neither can

they hold traditional chieftaincy titles.

This section focuses on the reasons for name modification and name avoidance and the consequences in Yorubá society. A plethora of research has shown that language endangerment is of a serious concern to scholars. All scholars are using their research to look for solutions on how to preserve the endangered languages from going into extinction. Although, if a language dies will affect culture, the concern that the scholars have for the endangered indigenous languages, like Yorubá, has not allowed attention to be drawn to the fact that Yorubá clan and praise names with *Orúkọ̀amútò runwá* (natural names) are also endangered. The reasons are because of the arbitrary name change and modifications to suit religious affection and avoidance of some names regarded as archaic.

People that modify names because of their religious beliefs and demonstration of allegiance to God or avoiding some names in order to flow with the trends of modernization may think that they are justified for that development. Whatever their reasons, the fact remains that the demerits it has on the future of Yorubá society are more than its merits. Apart from the semantic ambiguity noted by *Ajiboye (2009)*, name modifications and avoidance can lead to a complete elimination of the family religious history in the sense that the generations to come will not know the original religions of their progenitors since their fathers did not bother to tell them due to a wrong perception about the family religion. In addition, name modifications can cause confusion in the family; while one part of the family bears the modified names and the other part bears the family original names, it may be difficult for the third party to link the part that adopts modified names to the part that maintains the family's original names.

Conclusion

To develop inclusive and culturally responsive automated systems for Yoruba name analysis, it is crucial to address these blindspots. By incorporating linguistic complexity, cultural context, orthographic variations, and gender and

social dynamics, we can ensure that next-generation learners benefit from accurate and culturally sensitive language processing. Our paper urges researchers to acknowledge and address these blindspots, paving the way for more comprehensive and inclusive automated systems that honor the richness of Yoruba language and culture. This paper has considered the dangers and implications of Yoruba names on the future of Yoruba true identity. The paper explained that it is not only Yoruba language that is endangered, Yoruba names are also endangered. The paper stated the attributes of Yoruba names in Yoruba society and the claims of the religious fanatics and the name avoiders for that development. The various demerits of name change, modifications and avoidance in Yoruba land were highlighted in the paper. There is a need for Yoruba scholars to use their research works to protect Yoruba names from going into extinction.

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