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A Review of Fẹ̀hìntọ́lá Mosádomi's *Yorùbá Yé Mi: A Beginning Yorùbá Textbook*

<i>Publisher-</i>	The University of Texas at Austin
<i>Year of Publication-</i>	2011
<i>Page Extent-</i>	328 pages
<i>Place of Publication-</i>	United States of America
<i>Reviewer-</i>	Dr. Adeyemi Adeyinka

Yorùbá Yé mi: A Beginning Yorùbá Textbook, is a comprehensive course book for starters in Yorùbá language. It is written by Fẹ̀hìntọ́lá Mosádomi and was first published in 2011 (330 pages) and in 2012 a new edition (328 pages) was released. The title, published by The University of Texas at Austin, is a multi-media publication that makes learning easy by effectively incorporating the four basic language skills viz: listening, speaking, reading and writing. It is the first edition of the first part of a two-part series. *Yorùbá Yé Mi* is a highly interactive and communicative introductory Yorùbá program which has an open access multi-media website at <http://www.coerll.utexas.edu/Yemi>. The book is fortified with a CD ROM and a flash drive which contain the soft-copy of the title. It is a fountain of resources for the learner not only on Yorùbá language but also on culture, custom and institution of

the Yorùbá language speaking people of South-Western Nigeria. Effective methodology and user-friendly approaches to teaching and learning Yorùbá are adopted.

The contents of *Yorùbá Yé Mi* consist of an introduction, twelve chapters of lessons and an appendix.

The introduction is quite broad. It has four different maps that are of relevance to the world of the publication. These are the map of Africa (page 9) showing all the African states with an emphasis on Nigeria; map of Nigeria (page 10) with the thirty six states of the federation and the Federal Capital Territory (F.C.T); map of Yorùbá land (page 11) which shows some Yorùbá cities; and map of Yorùbá world (page 12) which clearly indicates where the Yorùbá people are found in the globe namely South Carolina (USA), Cuba, Trinidad, Sierra Leone, Brazil, Republic of Benin and Nigeria. The geographical segment of the introduction is followed by Yorùbá Alphabets showing the twenty five consonants, the seven oral vowels (fáwẹ̀lì àránmúpè) and the five nasal vowels (fáwẹ̀lì àránmúpè). The Yorùbá tones: High(/), Mid() and Low(\) succeed the alphabets while *Titles in Yorùbá culture*, *Yorùbá names* and *Communication in class* complete the introduction in that order respectively.



There are twelve distinct chapters in *Yorùbá Yé Mi*. Each Chapter (*orí*) has four lessons (*Èkọ́*) tagged *Èkọ́ Kììní*, *Èkọ́ Kejì*, *Èkọ́ Kẹta* and *Èkọ́ Kẹrin* respectively. Each of the lessons treats a different but related topic to advance the content of the publication.

It is important to note that each of the four lessons under each of the twelve themed chapters is based upon either a culture theme or associated grammatical structures. Therefore the aspect of culture and language are deeply treated in the book. Apart from this, each chapter also provides a list of vocabulary from the texts. There are some chapters that consist of cultural vignettes which give added opportunity for more cultural elements for the benefit of the learners. The texts are composed in form of monologue, dialogue or comprehension passage. In all cases, adequate skill-building interactive exercises and activities (*Iṣẹ́ Sísẹ́*) are provided to develop the learners. Songs and proverbs are also used as varieties to enrich the lessons on culture.

One other notable and unique feature of the *Yorùbá Yé Mi* is the use of illustrations. The texts of the lessons are interspersed with relevant pictures and drawings to amplify the textual messages. Illustrations are graphical elements meant to enhance and intensify textual messages. According to Fọlárànmí

in Akínyemí and Fálólá (2008:115), “illustrations are pictorial materials appearing with a text, amplifying or enhancing it”. Beautiful, relevant and complimentary illustrations adorn the pages of the book, rightfully employed as visual amplification to the textual messages conveyed. This method, no doubt, aids the learning and comprehension of the learners.

Chapter 1 (*Orí Kììní*) is titled Greetings (*Ìkìni*). Like all the vocabulary where nouns, noun phrases, verbs, verb phrases, conjunctions and interrogatives are listed. This is then followed by lessons 1 titled Greetings; Lesson 2- Verbs, Lesson 3 Subject pronoun and lesson 4- Interrogatives “*Ki ni?*” and “*Ṣe?*”. The Chapter opens with the picture of a man prostrating to greet an elderly man who sits on a chair. This illustration depicts culture and amplifies the teaching on Greetings.

Chapter 2 (*Orí Kejì*) begins also with a list of words that are germane to the Lessons in the Chapter. *Èkọ́ Kììní* to *Èkọ́ Kẹrin* treat possessive pronouns, the plural marker *àwọn*; *Nínú kíláàsì* (in the classroom) and *Nọ́nbà* (Number) respectively. The Chapter is a build-up on the vocabulary of the readers. It also exposes the reader to exercises on word classes and how to engage in conversation. The reader is introduced to numbers 0-40 in *Yorùbá* numerals.



Chapter 3 begins with the continuation of Yorùbá numerals in Lesson 1. Numbers 40-100 is treated. Three exercises on numeration system in Yorùbá follow this Lesson 2 treats the *Future Tense Maa* while Lessons 3 and 4 centre on the *Yorùbá Calendar (Days of the Week)* and *The Yorùbá Calendar (Kàlẹ̀ńdà Yorùbá) Months of the Year* respectively. Five exercises are given to test the knowledge of the reader on the Yorùbá calendar system.

In Chapter 4, the reader is introduced to expression of quantity using *The Interogative Mèlòò* in Èkó Kìíní. The author explains the use of cardinals in Yorùbá that they act as adjectives and follow the noun they describe. In Èkó Kejí, *Aago Mèlòò ni ó lù* (what time is it?) different times of the day and expressions relating to time generally are discussed. The lesson is equally qualified with dialog (*Ìsọ̀rọ̀ngbèsì*) between Jimí and Fẹ̀yí on the time concept. Ten different exercises are given to aid the readers understanding and amplify the topic. The topic of Èkó Kẹ̀ta is *Asking for Age* while that of Èkó Kẹ̀rin is *Àwọ̀n Àwọ̀* (Colors). Lesson 3 is amplified with four exercises and Lesson 4 with two.

Òrí Karúnín (Chapter 5) is titled *My Family Tree*. Lesson 1 is on *The verbs “jẹ” “to be” and “ni” “to have”*, Lesson 2 is on *The Interrogative “Ta ni”*, Lesson 3 is on *Ebí ní Ìpele Méta (Three Generations of a Family)* and Lesson 4 is on

Describing people. Lesson 1 treats the verb 'jẹ' in details with examples and also discusses 'jẹ'+ negation *kì í* and the verb *ní* and its negation *kò* to test the reader's understanding. *The Interrogative 'Ta ní'* in Lesson 2 is treated under a dialogue (*isòròngbèsì*), a *cultural Vignette: Àpònlé* is also presented as a comprehension passages to test the reading skill of the reader. Lesson 3 on *Ìran Mèta ti Ìdilé Kan* treats three generations of a family; seventeen different exercises are given on this lesson. Lesson 4 describes different outlook of people: fat, slim, tall, short, big and small. These outlooks are amply illustrated to aid comprehension while two are given to cap Chapter 5.

In Chapter 6 *Èkò' Kínlí* is on *Interrogation: Eélòó*. The use of *Eélòó* especially in haggling is emphasised and intensified with three exercises. *Èkò' Kejì* treats different prefixes – *Alá*, *Elé*, and *Ọlọ* as derivatives of *Oní*. *Èkò' Kẹta* is on *Níná ọjà* (haggling). Its methodology mode is *Ìsòròngbèsì* (dialogue) in a market situation that entails selling and buying. Advertisement of different articles such as boiled maize (*àgbàdo*), cooked beans (*ẹwà*), cooked yam (*ìṣu*), pap (*ògì*) and *awùsá* etc are given. Songs on different items are also employed for teaching in this lesson. Lesson 4 is on *Yorùbá Numerals*. It centres on counting from 100-3000. The four lessons have befitting exercises for the reader.

The objectives of Chapter 7 are to teach reader: how to express hunger and thirst, about food in the market, about daily meals, and how to order food in a restaurant. Their objectives are tested under *Verbs 'fẹ' 'fẹràn'* in Lesson 1, *Àwọn óúnjẹ òdòjọ* (Daily meals) in Lesson 2, *In the market* in Lesson 3 and *Ríra óúnjẹ nínú búkà tàbí ilé itàjà óúnjẹ (ordering food in a restaurant)* in Lesson 4. The method of dialogue is employed to teach Lesson 1 which is followed by three exercises. In Lesson 2, different types of daily meals such as *mọ́nmọ́n àti ògì, àkàrà àti ògì, ọ̀ṣu àti ẹ̀yin, ẹ̀wà àti búré̀dì, dọ̀dọ̀ àti ẹ̀yin, búré̀dì àti sandiìni, búré̀dì àti ẹ̀yin, búré̀dì àti bọ̀tà*, etc are listed. Also, different categories of food: snacks (*ipápánu*), *ẹ̀so* (fruits), *èlẹ̀lẹ̀ ọ̀bẹ̀* (ingredients), *ọ̀bẹ̀* (soup and stew), and *óúnjẹ olókèlẹ̀* (morsel food) and *aláìlókèlẹ̀* like *ìrẹ̀sì funfun, ìrẹ̀sì jòlò̀òfù, ẹ̀wà, dọ̀dọ̀, ògì, ọ̀ṣu*, etc are identified. How to prepare some of the foods is also treated. Six different exercises follow Lesson 2. In Lesson 3, dialogue method is also employed between Bùnmi and Tósin to show market-oriented discussion. Lesson 4 is also on food, particularly how to buy food in restaurant.

Chapter 8 focuses on how to use possessive forms of emphatic pronouns, parts of the body, how to express what to do with different parts of the body, the future tense, health and sickness and different types of sport. These topics are well

treated with illustrations, comprehension passages, dialogue and exercises. In chapter 9 themed “My Work Place” *Verbs for professions, Future Tense “Máa”, Negation: kò tí ì (has not)/kò ì tí ì (has not yet)*, and *Professions* are treated in Lessons 1 to 4. Various exercises that will test learner’s knowledge and comprehension rate are provided.

In Chapter 10, the author explains the process of deletion of the initial vowel “i” in *Yorùbá* ordinals when they are used as qualifiers. He also explains and gives exercises on vowel assimilation, vowel lengthening and vowel deletion. He embarks on the comparison of the two categories of houses that we have in *Yorùbá* land: *Ilé Alámò àti Ilé Simẹ̀ntì*; the features of each type of house are enumerated. Readers are introduced further to the items in the home through three monologues. Chapter 11 explains different types of clothing in *Yorùbá* land. It explains the types of clothes that make a complete dressing among *Yorùbá* men and women and also explains the current fashion trends in *Yorùbá* land which allow the wearing of English dresses especially for official purposes. Different types of clothes that are worn at different seasons and the corresponding greetings for different seasons are enumerated. The chapter also treats the use of *Verbs fī_lé/fī_kó, wọ̀, dé, wé, ró, gẹ̀*.

In Chapter 12 which is the concluding chapter, the learner is introduced to the schools system. It explains the levels of education and what takes place at each level. The Chapter also contains dialogue on what goes on in the university system between two undergraduates: Tádé and Bùsólà. There is also a monologue about the facilities and courses in the University of Ìbàdàn. The beautiful picture of the University gate, University Bookshop, Faculty of Arts, and the imposing Administrative block are attractive complements on the chapter. The author draws an emphatic conclusion that the university life is not only educative, informative and enlightening but also transforming.

The appendix is in itself a rich source of information which is more than mere appendage. It consists of alphabets with phonetic and phonological examples where necessary. There are topics on *Yorùbá* tones and exercises abound on how to identify and pronounce them. The author does this through drills on tongue-twisters and proverbs. The appendix ends with a beautiful poem on Ìbàdàn, a very prominent city in Africa, written by Professor Adédòtun Ògúndèjì.

The author opens each of the twelve chapters of this illuminating book with vocabulary development and words that are related to the topic under reference are used. This exposes

the reader to the register to use ahead of the lessons. One other striking feature which makes this material useful and helpful is the use of pictures which are clear and expressive enough to drive home the point of the teacher. Sufficient exercises are also provided and they afford readers the opportunity to work on their own. Also worthy of note is the fact that the author provides more exercises in the book with the least being in chapter 2 and 9 and highest being thirty-nine in chapter ten.

However, attention should be drawn to some few errors observed in the book. For instance, preposition “of” is missing in the table of contents under the sub-topic “Map... *Yorùbá Land*” on pages 2 and 11 while there should be a space between “*Yé*” and “*Mi*” in the title under “Preface”. Also, attention is drawn to the consonant “*t*” used instead of “*b*” for “*bàbá*” under *Yorùbá* alphabets on page 13. The high tone mark that should be on “*ràkúnmi*” is equally missing. On page 19, it was observed that the name “*Similólú*” was written twice under *Yorùbá* names hence, this should be revisited. On page 25, under interrogative “what”, the second “are” should be deleted while a fall tone mark should be represented on “*isòròngbèsi*” on page 27.

Having said that, *Yorùbá Yé Mi* is a very comprehensive teaching manual on *Yorùbá* language for beginners particularly



second language learners. It is comprehensive, accessible, user-friendly and systematic.

The topics are sequentially arranged and well graded for ease of comprehension for learners. It is practical-oriented and like food, it is broken into morsels that are swallowable for learners from stage to stage.

The coverage of the book is another area of strength. It treats adequately all the essential areas of Yorùbá language: vocabulary, grammar, culture and institutions through effective incorporation of the basic skills of language acquisition: listening, speaking, reading and writing. All these are enhanced by the methodology of presentation viz vocabulary, dialogue, monologue, song, photograph, picture, illustration, chart etc. Production-wise, *Yorùbá Yẹ̀mì* is of high quality: The A4-trimmed size of the book is quite adequate and very enhancing, considering its volume. A smaller size would have definitely been counter-productive. The print-quality is also of high class. The texts and graphics register well. The screens and the tones (both the thick and the light) are evenly printed. The folio and the publisher's imprint below the page and the running heads indicating the chapters (*orí*) on the top left and lesson (*ẹ̀kọ́*) on the top right of every page makes for easy page location and referencing.

Cover is a crucial factor in production. As succinctly described by Fọlárànmí (2008 : 117),

The book cover is the outpart of a book designed to provide some form of information about the content of the book. Normally made with stronger material than the inner leaves, it is usually beautiful and attractive; first as a market strategy, and second for aesthetic purpose.

The cover, which is the exterior part of *Yorùbá Yé Mi* is quite enhancing. Its traditional concept of well-carved calabashes with ornamented design arranged on a dark background which projects the carved-calabash is quite complimentary. This therefore creates a synergy between the cover and contents which therefore projects. And of course, the spine, the trimming, the finishing of the publication and the general production is technically excellent.

On the whole, *Yorùbá Yé Mi* is a very good publication which is recommended for use of all, without hesitation.



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