

## **Web Searching in a Nigerian Language: An Assessment of Google Yoruba**

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*This study assesses the audience rating of [www.google.com/intl/yo/](http://www.google.com/intl/yo/), the Yoruba language interface website of Google search engine (named "Google Ede Oyinbo" but dubbed "Google Yoruba" in this paper for easy reference). The study begins with the level of awareness, which is expressed in terms of actual visits to the site. A survey of the rating of the satisfaction derived by the audience from five expectation categories was carried out twice in two years, across literate, Web-experienced members of five age groups. The findings from the two surveys, which correlate, showed that awareness was low and in fact, those who had actually paid visits to the site, with evidence of response to queries, were not enthusiastic about the satisfaction they derived with regard to their expectations. This uninspiring attitude came about not only as a result of limited service offerings at the site but attributable as a result of audience intrinsic challenges which owe much to colonial legacy interference.*

**Keywords:** Google Yoruba, audience awareness, audience expectations, web search

### **Introduction**

Marshall (1967) concept of "the global village", which is a world made one or at least smaller through the globalization of communication, is fast turning into reality and bringing about social change. The fulfilment of this concept will be total by the time the presently disadvantaged population of Asia, Africa and South America are fully connected to the Internet, on the heels of the post modern communication societies of Europe and North America who view the increasingly preponderant New Media as a necessity. A major way by which this inevitable destiny could be speedily realized is to linguistically decentralize communication, whereby people the world over are able to gain access to the Village even though their tribes and tongues differ. That village is the Internet – a kind of virtual global system with glue that binds cultures together (Mooij, 1997: 43). Since the major improvement in the world wide web in 1977, using the Transmission Control Protocol (TCP) and Internetworking Protocol (IP)

(Forouzan, 2003:281), the hitherto divergent world elements have been drawing closer by the day to a convergence that promotes useful cultural exchanges, "globalization and hyper-commercialism" (Baran, 2004: 298).

Linguistic decentralization of communication, as practiced by the major Internet companies is proof that the world is fast inching towards a global opportunity, with a concomitant marketplace that is ready to guarantee success to those with novel and bright ideas and smart ways of achieving them, notwithstanding the kinds of language they understand. For instance, United States based Yahoo! has a search engine which is accessible to many nations in different languages. Google, also based in the United States and worth more than \$150 billion (*The Economist*, 2006: 13), is one of the world's biggest search engines and comes in other languages besides English, its chief language of communication. In addition to German, Dutch, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and other major world languages, Google has enlarged its coasts further by including some

prominent languages in Africa, particularly Afrikaans, Hausa, IsiZulu and Yoruba. The search engine can now be read in well over 100 different languages.

Google's commendable effort in this regard is probably a response to several researches which recommend ways by which search engines can build their brands, improve their performance and satisfy their audiences better. Of note is that by Shneiderman, et. al., (1998: 95-98) which suggests ways of building search engine interfaces that could bring a better search experience. The ability of Google to develop and maintain multilingual sites, which can drastically reduce the incidences of *overlap of results* (Spink, et. al., 2006:1379) with another search engine is a clear evidence of huge financial strength as only the biggest and richest firms have the capability to do so (Samiee, 2001: 285). This paper examines the conditions that could facilitate the extension of a search engine to an African language with a particular reference to Google Yoruba and how this website has been able to fulfil the expectations of its audience.

### Features of Google Yoruba Search

Google Yoruba comes with the usual Google logo with the six-letter word on the home page, designed in cyan-magenta-yellow-cyan-green-magenta color format, and bears "TM" – the trademark sign- at the top right side of the design. Table 1 contains the hyperlink menu titles and their interpretation in Yoruba.

**Table 1: Table showing hyperlink titles and their interpretation**

Hyperlink Semantics	Interpretation
Web	<i>Alantakun ti a mo si Web</i>
Image	<i>Ayaworan</i>
Video	Button Not Available
News	Button Not Available
Maps	<i>Iwe Ilana</i>
Advanced Search	<i>Iwadi Nilosiwaju</i>
Preference	<i>Fi-saju</i>
Language Tools	<i>Irinse Ti Ede Nlo</i>
Google Search	<i>Iwadi Google</i>
I'm Feeling Lucky	<i>Mo ni Ori Ire ni Eni</i>
Advertising Programs	Button Not Available
Business Solutions	Button Not Available
About Google	<i>Gbogbo nkan Nipa Google</i>
Go To Google South Africa	<i>Lo si Google South Africa</i>

Google Yoruba Home page, to a good extent, conforms to the conditions necessary for an on-screen presentation given by Williams (2004: 92). Some of the conditions are that the words must be in short lines, be visibly arranged in meaningful amounts, be in readable fonts and contrastive colors and presented in short phrases and sentences. None of the design comes in dynamic presentations such as animation. This deficiency is characteristic of Google Home Pages in most of the vernacular versions.

Navigation to the searched pages is effected upon the pressing of the Google Search (*Iwadi Google*) button. The interior pages contain search results nearly all of which are presented in English. In addition to those listed in Table 1, Table 2 contains other hyperlink semantics of inside pages and their interpretation.

**Table 2: Table showing hyperlink semantics of interior pages and their interpretation**

Hyperlink Semantics	Yoruba Interpretation
Cache	<i>Akopamo</i>
Similar Pages	<i>Iwadi Oju Iwe Kanaa</i>
View as html	Button Not Available
More Results from...	<i>Esi Lati...</i>
Result Page	<i>Ojuwe Esi</i>
Next	<i>Itesiwaju</i>
Search Within Results	<i>Se Iwadi Larini Ibi Ti a wa yi</i>
Search Tips	<i>Akivesi Iwadi</i>
Dissatisfied?	Button Not Available
Help Us Improve	Button Not Available

### Google Yoruba as a Confirmation of History

Yoruba, a member of the Niger-Congo language family, is one of the three main languages in Nigeria and the majority of those who speak it and bear the name are concentrated in the southwestern part of the country. Southwest Nigeria has a chequered history as home to pioneering media and media organizations. *Iwe Irohin fun Awon Ara Egba ati Yoruba*, was established in 1859 and it was the first indigenous newspaper in Africa (Salawu, 2006: 6). The newspaper, besides making people read, prepared the grounds for proper understanding of the upcoming Yoruba Bible which was being translated from English by Adjai Crowther, the first orthodox African bishop, in collaboration

with Professor Samuel Lee of Cambridge, and the respected German linguist, Jacob Schon, who was helping Crowther to mark the high and low tones of the Yoruba language (Odutola, 2006:9). The Yoruba newspaper was a private sector initiative of an individual, Henry Townsend, a missionary whose name would forever linger in Nigeria's media history. In Townsend's words: "My objective is to get the people to read... to beget the habit of seeking information by reading (Uche, 1989: 93).

In the broadcasting area, Lagos, the most urban Yoruba cosmopolitan city and the former capital of Nigeria was, in 1932, the first to enjoy radio service, which was in the form of a redifussion signals relayed from British Empire Service in Daventry, England (Uche, 1989: 36). This service, by which colonial programmes were distributed by landlines into listening devices that were subscribed to by the audience, formed the nucleus of the Nigerian Broadcasting Service which was inaugurated in 1951 (Uche, 1989: 37).

With regard to television, Ibadan, the famed historical headquarters of Yoruba people, is home to the very first television station in Africa, established by the Western Nigeria Television (WNTV) in 1959, even beating Nigeria's federal government to it (Uche, 1989: 63). Cable television that specialized in relaying foreign channels was also first introduced in Lagos in 1985 while the first indigenous language cable channel called *Yotomi* was first introduced in Ikeja also in Lagos, in 2005.

Google Yoruba is therefore the elongation of an historical pattern that started nearly 150 years ago. The news of the Yoruba edition of Google search engine was broken in 2006 by the Lagos-based *Punch*, the largest circulating newspaper in Nigeria, though Google Yoruba had been in existence several months earlier. In this pioneering sequence, *Iwe Irohin* let people seek information by reading, the British Empire Service made it possible by listening, WNTV by watching and Google Yoruba by browsing.

### ***Google Yoruba and Advertisement Potentials of its Audience***

The dominant media in Nigeria are located on the Ibadan-Lagos axis, with their bulk of patronage concentrated in the southwest of the

country. Accompanying this is the advertisement patronage which is clearly evident in the percentage point of insertions and placements that originate from the area. Therefore, Google Yoruba is not just for members of the public that traditionally appreciate any good medium of expression, but is also willing to contribute to its survival and progress through advertisement, provided it lives up to their expectations. The potential in advertising from this area is corroborated by the on-line sales division of Microsoft Africa which opened its representative office in Lagos to cater to a very active base of over 180,000 Internet advertising accounts ([*Nigerian*] *Businessday*, 2006: 9). A part of the worldwide advertising sales which increased from \$5.7 billion in 2001 (Dominick, et. al., 2004: 141) and which are expected to hit \$61 billion in 2010 (ibid. *The Economist*) is expected from this source.

The observed patronage and huge advertising potentials are results of a civilization birthed from a cherished history of education. The people of south western geopolitical zone of Nigeria are regarded as the most urbanized (Uche, 1989:11), educated and civilized though facts are hardly available to support some parts of this assertion. However, there are strong indications that Southwest has invested in education more than other areas and is home to some of the most reputable educational institutions in the country. For instance, the first premier of the region, Obafemi Awolowo, introduced a free education system which helped to ensure that millions of people were educated at both primary and secondary levels. The programme informed the establishment of many tertiary institutions in the region and these are still among the best in the country. The Nigerian Universities Commission (NUC) also recently rated another southwest-based institution, Covenant University Ota, as the best private university in the country.

Besides government, individuals and missionaries also established several colleges which helped to create an army of literate people who in turn helped to prepare an audience that was ready to respond to the wide array of news media that had been created. Media literacy and receptiveness to modern way of reasoning, among others, were the significant results of the

investment in education in southwestern Nigeria.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

Communication is not effective if the audience of a medium does not attend, process or comprehend the messages (Belch and Belch, 2001: 149) that are being sent. Mass media messages become more appreciable when the audience moves beyond the passive level of mere comprehension to a stage of actively seeking such messages because of the benefits they believe they are going to derive from them, thereby making a reality of the Uses and Gratification Theory (Williams, 2004: 119). Therefore the attitude of an audience concerning web contents is a useful indicator of a site value (Chen and Wells, 2001: 177). This study is an expose on the usefulness of Google Yoruba and the relevance of the website to its audience.

### **Study Criteria**

The principle of assessment in the study is based on how the website has been able to fulfil the expectations (*Es*) of its audience. Williams (2004: 57) outlines five of such expectations in a typical mass communication system as:

- i. Fundamental (*E1*),
- ii. Training (*E2*)
- iii. Conventional (*E3*),
- iv. Personal (*E4*), and
- v. Contextual (*E5*).

Williams' categorization sounds simplistic. However, it offers a useful framework to measure appreciably an audience's level of satisfaction in a communication process within a socio-cultural context. Besides that, it frees this study from the chaos that normally accompanies a research on the attitude of a website audience. The contextual expectation refers to the packaging of information in particular contexts in order to enhance the comprehension of information that is being passed across. Access to the Internet is open and cheap, thereby offering more information than any other electronic medium. Therefore, the need to organize the content in a useful way becomes imperative (Cairncross, 2000). Williams stresses this variable (p. 59):

*... if a document says [on the Web for instance,] that it is 'Reference Guide', the reader will expect that it contains information in separate sections that are not to be read in a linear way from beginning to end. If an essay says 'firstly I will discuss the development of television', then reader expectations have been created which will lead to confusion or frustration if unsatisfied.*

Personal expectations have to do with those particular benefits that are available to different parts or constituents of your audience. Yoruba is an agglomeration of sub-nations, comprising the Ekiti, Igbra, Ijebu, Lagosians, Ijesha, Ibadan and others. For instance, can an Ijebu native have access to particular information or entertainment that precisely benefits him as an Ijebu person on [www.google.com/intl/yo/](http://www.google.com/intl/yo/)? Jansen and Spink (2005) have reported that an appreciable size of web searchers would cherish the precision of the search engines in providing specialized services that satisfy personal expectations. Satisfying this expectation is therefore a source of concern to the web audience especially when the language in use is local.

Expectation by convention refers to those communicative customs and practices on the cyberspace that can be assessed by an audience just like their counterparts elsewhere. For instance, are the various offerings such as Maps, Video, Images, etc. accessible to an English visitor to Google.com also available to the Yoruba visitor at [www.google.com/intl/yo/](http://www.google.com/intl/yo/) in his or her own language?

The fundamental expectation is operationalized in terms of Google's ability to communicate to its audience in the language it understands. The training dimension is indicated when the website is presented to the visitor in a way that increases his or her interest, skill and knowledge of the Internet especially by the use of available tools. Here the audience can tell whether or not it is comfortable to surf the website.

### Study Population

- i. Potentially, Google Yoruba has millions as its audience. The audience will mostly be Yoruba people who come in categories. The native Yoruba are concentrated in six states of the southwestern geopolitical zone of Nigeria and scattered in no fewer than three other states. The population in this category was, in the 1991 national census, estimated at 20 million (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2007). Going by the growth rate of 3.0 per cent (UNFPA, 2007), the population was 21.02 million in 2007.
- ii. The second category is the smaller scattered groups in the West African countries of Sierra-Leone, Republic of Benin and Togo, the estimate of which is not readily available. However, the presence of Yoruba-speaking people is felt in Porto Novo in Benin and to some extent in northern Togo.
- iii. The third category comprises the Yoruba in the Diaspora and two of such Diaspora can be identified.
  - a. The first is that which occurred by the fact of slave trade as in Cuba and Brazil.
  - b. The second is as a result of travel or emigration which has seen many Yoruba people living and working all over the world, most especially in Europe and North America.

However, the population used in this study is the first category – the native Yoruba of Southwest Nigeria, which encompasses six of Nigeria's 36 political subdivisions namely Lagos, Oyo, Osun, Ogun, Ondo and Ekiti.

### Method

The stratified random sampling method was adopted in the study. The population was segmented into the six states. A survey of five age groups, was done across the six states twice in two years – 2006 and 2007 in a panel design. Owing to the fact that the target respondents did not offer the benefits of call-backs for repeat contacts, the repetition had to be carried out on fresh respondents in the same location during similar periods in order to improve on the

reliability of the survey. During the exercises, copies of the study instruments were distributed at different sites among educated Yoruba Internet visitors in cyber cafés and individuals who had access to the net. The population had a substantial number of both sexes. The determining criteria for response were that respondents must have browsed the Internet for no fewer than two years and must have attained at least the senior secondary level of education. This step was taken to ensure that majority of respondents had had adequate knowledge of the Internet and could discriminate adequately among web contents.

Respondents were asked to rate their awareness of the Google Yoruba website as well as its performance concerning the five benchmark expectations. Awareness was defined in terms of actual visits to the target website, not just hearing about it. Response to awareness had a yes/no format while that of expectation was put on a five-point scale, with the most positive attracting 5 and the most negative attracting 1. In the simple random exercises in each of the states, 720 respondents were selected from Lagos, 320 from Oyo, 246 from Ondo, 246 from Osun, 249 from Ogun, and 211 from Ekiti. The number of respondents selected was based on the population of the states which ranged from the largest – Lagos – with nearly 10 million to the least - Ekiti – with about 2.5 million.

### Data Presentation and Findings

Table 3 presents the outcome of the response to the item on awareness.

According to Table 3, out of the total of 1992 respondents, used for each of the two years, 853 and 861 responded positively for 2006 and 2007 respectively – substantial but not up to half the study population. A look through the response also showed that both figures had fair representation of both sexes. The total response figures were transposed into the five age groups used in the study as presented in Table 4.

**Table 3: Awareness profile of Google Yoruba audience for 2006 and 2007**

Yoruba States	Lagos	Oyo	Ogun	Ondo	Osun	Ekiti	Total
Study Population	720	320	249	246	246	211	1992
Response 2006	408	127	107	86	56	69	853
Response 2007	371	132	60	111	59	128	861

**Table 4: Figures of response to Awareness spread across the five age groups**

Age Groups	< 15	15-25	26-35	36-50	> 50	Total
2006	99	381	188	144	41	853
2007	28	504	161	89	79	861

Table 4 shows that the 15-25 group had the highest response in both cases, with the 26-35 group coming next. This clearly justifies several industry and academic studies that have established that the Internet *user* is young and educated (Donthu and Garcia, 2001:129). While there are marked differences in the scores of two of the groups - < 15 and 15-25 - the trend of

response was basically similar across the population. Responses from the five Expectation variables were limited to the Awareness response data. Tables 5a and 5b are the presentation of the mean and significance of rating across the five age groups, which are the required data for the study.

**Table 5a: The five groups' mean of rating of the five expectations in 2006**

Es	Age Groups					Group Mean
	< 15	15 - 25	26 - 35	36 - 50	> 50	
E1	2.2917	2.3622	2.4153	2.5180	2.3659	2.3920 (n = 829*)
E2	2.4211	2.2715	2.4780	2.2101	2.4782	2.3341 (n = 826*)
E3	1.8830	1.8284	1.8703	1.7324	2.1707	1.8443 (n = 835*)
E4	2.2366	2.2198	2.1484	2.3676	2.2821	2.2334 (n = 814*)
E5	2.4948	2.2340	2.3314	2.5105	2.1579	2.3975 (n = 815*)

*\*Each of the ratings had missing values of less than 5%*

**Table 5b: The five groups' mean of rating of the five expectations in 2007**

<i>Es</i>	Age Groups					Group Mean
	< 15	15 – 25	26 – 35	36 - 50	> 50	
<i>E1</i>	1.8571	2.0794	2.1195	2.0227	2.2987	2.0937 (n = 843)*
<i>E2</i>	2.2692	2.1401	2.0537	2.2326	1.8800	2.1140 (n = 807)*
<i>E3</i>	2.1429	2.2886	2.1742	1.8824	2.1216	2.2062 (n = 834)*
<i>E4</i>	2.0769	2.2332	2.1203	2.1279	2.1867	2.1912 (n = 821)*
<i>E5</i>	2.0357	2.0808	2.4167	2.1685	1.9367	2.1370 (n = 843)*

According to Table 5a, the mean ratings of all the categories by each group were far below average. The nearest to the average point (which is 3) in 2006 - 2.5180 – was recorded by the 36-50 group on the fundamental expectation category while that of 2007 was 2.8886, achieved by the 15-25 group. Some of the ratings were a good distance away from the average, including the farthest value of 1.7324 recorded on conventional expectation by the 36-50 group in 2006 and 1.857 recorded on fundamental expectation by the <15 group in 2007. The significance of the five ratings across the groups is presented in Tables 6a and 6b.

Tables 6a and 6b confirm the low ratings of the five expectation categories across the five age groups as the ratings were found far insignificant with .605 recorded in 2006 for the fundamental expectation category and .861 recorded in 2007 for the contextual expectation category. The results of the two survey exercises exhibited close relationship as they correlate substantially at 0.59 and at 0.147 significant level.

**Table 6a: Significance of ratings across the five age groups in 2006**

<i>Groups</i>	Age Groups				
	<i>E1</i>	<i>E2</i>	<i>E3</i>	<i>E4</i>	<i>E5</i>
1	< 15	< 15	< 15	< 15	< 15
2	15 – 25	15 – 25	15 – 25	15 – 25	15 – 25
3	26 – 35	26 – 35	26 – 35	26 – 35	26 – 35
4	36 – 50	36 – 50	36 – 50	36 – 50	36 – 50
5	> 50	> 50	> 50	> 50	> 50
( <i>F</i> ...	(4, 824) = .681, <i>p</i> * < .605)	(4, 821) = 1.726, <i>p</i> * < .142)	(4, 830) = 1.428, <i>p</i> * < .223)	(4, 809) = .728, <i>p</i> * < .573)	(4, 810) = .959, <i>p</i> * < .429)

\* Significance level at 0.05. The table shows the ratings were not in any way significant (*F* (4, 709) = .181, *p* < .948) for the five groups.

**Table 6b: Significance of ratings across the five age groups in 2007**

Groups	Age Groups				
	E1	E2	E3	E4	E5
1	< 15	< 15	< 15	< 15	< 15
2	15 – 25	15 – 25	15 – 25	15 – 25	15 – 25
3	26 – 35	26 – 35	26 – 35	26 – 35	26 – 35
4	36 – 50	36 – 50	36 – 50	36 – 50	36 – 50
5	> 50	> 50	> 50	> 50	> 50
(F...	(4, 838) = .796, p* < .526)	(4, 802) = 1.072, p* < .369)	(4, 829) = 1.653, p* < .159)	(4, 816) = .325, p* < .861)	(4, 842) = .935, p* < .443)

\* Significance level at 0.05. The table shows the ratings were not significant ( $F_{(4, 710)} = .530, p < .714$ ) for the five groups. The 2006-2007 pair ratings of the five expectation categories correlate at 0.59 at 0.147 significance level.

### Discussion

Google Yoruba, according to some of the respondents, offers them a sense of pride and an attestation to their ethnic group as a nation to reckon with. But their reaction to the website as shown in the below-average ratings of the five expectation categories can be explained within the remit of the audience's colonial experience. Salawu (2006: 9) notes that one of the problems with the indigenous language media in Africa is the reality of colonialism that has robbed local languages of their relevance. For example, in Nigeria, English, which is the key official legacy left behind by British colonialists, is the official medium of communication which makes the local languages less esteemed. English is the language used to conduct government business in nearly all the 36 political subdivisions of the country as well as in the educational system. Uzochukwu, (2004: 33, quoted in Salawu, 2006: 10) corroborates:

*It is very painful that amongst the major ethnic groups (in Nigeria), only Igbo (sic) are the most apathetic about their language. That is very painful. In fact, in a recent survey, those in Igbo land who are in favour that English should be used in many of their transactions are up to 85 per cent. In Yoruba land they are up to 75 per cent, while in Hausa land, they are merely 37.5 per cent...*

The picture painted by this quotation is a highly probable reason for cold attitude toward Google Yoruba. This is why the imperative of populating Google Yoruba with indigenous content becomes obvious.

The very low rating of the satisfaction of the audience's fundamental expectation is an indication that Google Yoruba is not communicating adequately in the language its audience comprehends. One major reason why mass media such as websites do not communicate in the language people understand is that their owners hardly seek the views and opinions of their target audience before they develop the websites. Undermining the importance of audience analysis has been a potent factor in website failures as many organizations neglect the due process of market research in an unprofitable rush to establish their presence online (Nadillo, 1998).

An obvious feature of Google Yoruba is the intonation marks in the orthography of the home page. Without marks, Yoruba words are notorious for being tone-deaf, thereby making recognition or pronunciation extremely difficult. The orthographic presentation in Google Yoruba has a good example of this problem as it compounds the challenges of the website's mechanisms of meaning transfer. Nicovich and Cornwell (2001: 147) note, with regard to the transfer of meaning in a cultural context, that the Internet is particularly sensitive because meaning cannot be successfully transferred without the interpretation of the recipient. In



other words, the ease with which an audience obtains and processes information will be within the context of how the information was provided (Bettman and Kakkar, 1977). In Google Yoruba, apart from *Iwadi Google* and *Mo ni Ori Ire Ni Oni*, all other words and sentences on the page do not have those marks, which also brings up the complex issue of ambiguity. The challenges of adding these marks to the vowels can be enormous especially when one considers the fact that only very few computer keyboards have such marks. Efforts to achieve marks can involve designing them especially in some graphic software applications like Corel Draw which have high text manipulation systems.

One of the implications of the challenges posed by intonation marks is that it puts an extra demand on the understanding of Yoruba, a language with a tonal pitch that swings between three tones – high, medium and low – when spoken. This demand can turn into a burden when one considers the fact that intonation marks are not only on top but also at the bottom of the vowels. This challenge can have a profound implication for the survival of this Yoruba version of Google because it denies its audience the benefit of “reciprocal action” (Haeckel, 2001) or “reciprocal interaction” (DiMaggio, et. al., 2001) which is a hallmark of interactivity of the Internet. One way of resolving this issue is to devise an acceptable, easy-to-use mark system that makes written communication less stressful.

Another problem, though a subtle one, is the difficulty in localizing the Google vernacular presentation in any of the Yoruba language genres. It lacks the savvy, upbeat and friendly style characteristic of the normal Lagos Yoruba which is probably the most commonly used in the southwest today and the conservative Ibadan variety which is pervasive in only two of the six states and is less universally acceptable. There is no trace of any of the various dialects in the presentation. Also lacking in Google Yoruba is the sense of humor that normally accompanies Yoruba media presentation and enhances its communication potentials whether spoken or written. Sometimes, this humor may transform into some dose of sensationalism (Salawu: 2006: 14) but presenters often succeed in driving home the point.

Information access options such as buttons, links, signposts and clues are few, which is an indication of a few search offerings and little or no business activities going on at the site. Conspicuously absent on the interior page is Google tool bar, which can be found in Google.com and other more recognized versions. This perhaps explains why the respondents’ rating of expectation with regard to skill improvement in Internet browsing is low. Features here include the freedom of the visitors to add buttons to the toolbar to enable them search their favorite sites, bookmark frequently visited pages and access them more easily, search in a more reliable way that guarantees better results, share with others web pages via e-mail and blogs, block the unwanted pop-ups, check spelling, complete web forms and do some measure of translation. Recall that the respondents, who had at least two years’ experience in Internet browsing, must have visited websites where these features were commonplace.

Google Yoruba home page presentation is similar to many other vernacular versions with some differences showing up as the language in question becomes a more recognized type. For instance, when compared with Twi, Zulu and a few other African languages that have a place in Google, the presentation is pretty similar, but when juxtaposed with Dutch, German, French or Russian, Google Yoruba enjoys lesser features. The home page for each of these European languages has additional offerings such as Weather, Date and Time, Google Calendar and Top Stories. The preponderance of these languages over Yoruba is attributable to the appreciable level of relevance they command in international business and the language local contents of the search results.

The vernacular contents offering of these European languages constitutes a crucial element in the search business. Besides giving the native speaker some sense of pride as noted earlier, search results actually pertain not just to the language but also to other cultural aspects, as well as business. Such Google products and functions as *Google Groups*, *Personalized Search*, *Google Alerts*, *Froogle Shopping Lists* etc. are also offered, with contents of these products readily available in some of these

languages. Vernacular offerings in Google Yoruba are very few and this is a reason why hyperlink bullets that lead to Yoruba web pages upon clicking are missing. The implication of this "value-subtracted" (Shapiro and Varian, 2001) website finds expression in referring to it as a mere language interface to contents which come mainly in English and probably French, though pages containing search results have the pointer tools presented in Yoruba. Therefore the task of populating it becomes even more imperative if it is to make any meaningful impact on its audience.

The low profile of Google Yoruba can delimit its relevance especially when it is looked at from the perspective of advertising potentials. While these potentials remain untapped, the key factor to generate advertisements will be to have an active and high profile search results which form the platform for on-line advertisements. Answers to search queries are hardly seen, which makes Google Yoruba a no-go area for those willing to promote their goods and services. Those who desperately want their products and services advertised in Yoruba by Google will be forced to put up with Google.com.

### Conclusion

It is again stressed that there is a latent advertisement potential waiting to be tapped by Google Yoruba going by the successes that have been recorded by hundreds of Yoruba-oriented media, including home video (Yoruba constitutes the biggest ethnic part of Nigeria's movie industry which UNESCO has recently confirmed as the world's second largest after India, having beaten the United States to the third place). But the success will depend on the rate at which more Yoruba speaking people visit the website and how it can be populated with contents in the language. It does not stop there. Google Yoruba may need to also study the number of hours its audience is willing to spend on the site, audience's purchase behaviour as well as figure out its specific needs (Korgaonka and Wolin, 2001: 97). Despite the relatively high percentage of its audience, who owing to a colonial consequence, still prefers Google.com as earlier noted, a large number still exists who prefers to communicate in their mother tongue.

A populated Google Yoruba will no doubt complement the existing Yoruba media, know *more and sell more* (Hagel, 2001: 258) and build relationships where partners are willing to rely on another with confidence (Moorman, et. al., 1992), as it enhances the expectation profile of its audience. But that still brings up another question: Can that ever be the *real* motivation of Google for floating [www.google.com/intl/yo/](http://www.google.com/intl/yo/)?

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