Lexical erosion in Yoruba[1]

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Abstract

This study examines the decline in use of some lexical items in Yoruba. 15 competent Yoruba speakers distributed across six communities were tested; 94 words were presented to five speakers in three rural communities, while 62 of the words were presented to 10 speakers distributed across three urban communities. The results showed that the use of the test words had reduced. The test words constituted only 31.8 % of the entire test; in the remaining 68.2 %, where they were not used, participants used alternatives such as descriptive phrases, synonyms, slang terms and the use of generic terms among others. Also, out of the 94 words used in the test, 21 (22.3 %) were not used at all by the respondents and were classified as obsolete, while 41 other words (43.6 %) had a frequency of 40 % or less and were classified as obsolescent. It is noteworthy that loanwords were used in only 3.9 % of the entire test. It is concluded that the Yoruba lexicon is currently undergoing change, but this change has not yet attracted scholarly attention.

Keywords: Yoruba, lexical erosion, descriptive phrases, loan words, synonyms

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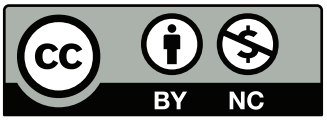

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1 Introduction

Lexical erosion refers to "reduction and loss in the lexical resources of a language" (Dorian 2013, 1). It has been the subject of linguistic inquiry for a long time. Dike (1935) studied obsoletisms in English and noted that English had lost words and inflections, including poetic words and war terms (1935, 354). One of the reasons advanced for obsolescence is lack of use due to synonym rivalry and replacement (See also Dike 1933, 212–214). In her study of Scandinavian loanwords in English, Bator (2006, 286) also reported that rivalry between synonyms is one strong reason for lexical obsolescence. Similarly, Tejedo-Herrero (2016) studied vocabulary loss and innovation in Early Modern Spanish and reports that "reduction of polysemy" is one of the reflectors of lexical change during this period of Spanish.

Dorian (2013) identifies normal language change, language shift, and incomplete language transmission and disuse as phenomena that result in lexical reduction. She reports that where speakers' lexical resources have reduced, they usually devise creative methods to compensate for their deficiencies (see also Gal 1989). Such augmentation methods include "paraphrasing (finding roundabout ways of expressing a concept for which the speaker lacks the conventional term), substitution of a word semantically similar to the one that the topic requires but less specific than that term", or extension of the semantic range of words (Dorian 2013, 4). It has also been reported that while some words are dropped in favour of alternative words and expressions within a language, others may be dropped for borrowed words (Sands, Miller and Brugman 2007, 59; Chebanne and Dlali 2017), or lost as a result of their referents ceasing to be relevant in the contemporary society (Murray 2011, 301). Bavin (1989) studied change in progress in the language of young speakers of Warlpiri, an Australian Aboriginal language. In discussing various lexical changes, Bavin shows how English borrowings were replacing traditional Warlpiri words (1989, 275).

Vocabulary loss without shift has been recognized as one of the ways Africa is losing linguistic diversity. Mous (2003) cites an example of Bantu languages of Tanzania whose non-basic lexical items are gradually being replaced by Swahili words (2003, 158–160). It has also been noted that despite how central lexical erosion is to language attrition, it has not gained much scholarly attention (Sands, Miller and Brugman 2007). Citing Gross (2004), Sands, Miller and Brugman note that lexical items are prominent among the elements that are susceptible to attrition.

In Yoruba (ISO 639-3 yor), one of the few works that have examined the dropping of basic vocabulary, especially relating to naming, is Ogunwale (2016). Ogunwale observes that many Yoruba names can no longer be decomposed because the component words have become archaic. Such words include *ṣiyan* 'comfort', *wùsì* 'popularity, prosperity', *jọ̀jọ́* 'multiple', *igà* 'courtyard, domain, palace', *sí* 'to lend', *jìn* 'to give', *ẹ̀lẹ̀* 'cosmetic bowl, beautiful lady' and *ọ̀kẹ́* 'sack' (Ogunwale 2016, 133–135). Yusuff (2008) examines "lexical addition", "lexical percolation" and "semantic manipulation" as dimensions of language change in Yoruba, and observed that moribund words were only moribund in the case of the elites, as the "grassroots" speakers were still using those words.

In an earlier work, Bamgbose (1986, 58) observes that Yoruba broadcasters particularly compete in the deployment of idiomatization. In the process, they end up coining new words for ideas or realities that are already captured in the lexicon. One of the examples of this given by Bamgbose is the use of *omíyalé* in place of *ìkún-omi* 'floods', following the Ogunpa flooding disaster in Ibadan in 1980.

The patterns and extent of lexical erosion in African languages have not been studied

extensively enough to give a clear picture of this dimension of language change. While the previous works on lexical erosion in Yoruba have charted a path in this area of study, each of them had clear limitations; for instance, Ogunwale (2016) was limited to the abandonment of traditional names among Yoruba people, while Bamgbose (1986) focused on idiomatization among broadcasters. For his part, Yusuff (2008) focused primarily on the morphosyntax of lexical items, and not on the understanding of lexical erosion itself. A more holistic study on the extent, patterns, and implications of the disuse of core vocabulary in Yoruba is still lacking. It is this gap that the present article aims to address. In pursuing this objective, competent speakers of Yoruba were tested on their use of a set of vocabularies in such a way that the patterns and extent of erosion can be seen.

1.1 Yoruba

Yoruba is a cross-border West Benue-Congo language spoken predominantly in south-western Nigeria by about 30 million people (Oyetade 2011). It is a dialect continuum consisting of more than 40 dialects spread across the southwestern states of Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ekiti, and Ondo States. Dialects of Yoruba are also spoken in parts of Kwara and Kogi States in North-Central Nigeria (Adetugbo 1982; Oyetade 2011; Fabunmi 2013). The standard form of Yoruba is among the most extensively studied Nigerian languages and enjoys recognition as a national language, along with Hausa and Igbo. Yoruba is also used as an official language in the states of south-western Nigeria and is currently used in every domain of contemporary human communication within these speech communities. Although it was the Oyo dialect that was standardized, Standard Yoruba (SY) has now abstracted away from the initial dialect and it is now generally agreed that SY is the form that is used in schools and other official domains. Regardless of the dialect of a speaker, everyone switches to the standard form in public and formal settings.

2 Theoretical background

Language change, in the sense of disuse of lexical items, is what is referred to as *lexical erosion* in this article. Therefore, this study is conducted within the framework of language change. One fact of language is that every language is constantly changing (Weinreich, Labov and Herzog 1968, 99–100; Bright 1997; Yusuff 2008). This continued change in language has been viewed as variation and is the subject of seminal works, especially by Labov (see Labov 1972; Labov 2006, among others). The study of language change has focused more on structural aspects that can be more easily tracked empirically, but languages actually change in all areas, including in their vocabulary (Bright 1997; Dorian 2013). It has also been specifically noted that words can be lost from the lexicon over time (Murray 2011), or replaced with synonyms (Bator 2006).

As studies in linguistic variation and many other aspects of historical linguistics have shown, "change can be observed while still in progress" (Wardhaugh 2006, 191–193). This, however, requires "the need to identify cases of change in progress and account for them" (Wardhaugh 2006, 195). This is what is done in this work. However, we do not follow the mould of variation study, where structured variations are observed and tracked until they become defined language change. The difficulty with theorizing language change has to do with working around a fixed structure when in actual fact the language continues to change (Weinre-

ich, Labov and Herzog 1968). In this work, change in progress is conceived as the progression of lexical disuse, which requires identifying and tracking. As noted in the introduction, a number of works have been published along these lines, but the present study seeks to quantify the extent of lexical disuse in Yoruba and identify the patterns of disuse in such a way that future works can either replicate this one or conduct fresh studies in order to reveal the progression of lexical disuse in the language.

3 Methodology

We employed both qualitative and descriptive statistical methods in this research (see Angouri 2011, 31–32). First, we examined the choices of each participant manually in order to describe the patterns and dimensions of lexical erosion observable in the data; we then employed frequency counts to obtain a picture of the extent of the process (Bamgboye et al. 2016, 158). This hybrid approach is adopted essentially because there were no restraints on the choices that each participant could make; this allowed them to make choices ranging from the expected to wide of the mark ones. This then required the assessment of each choice in the light of others in order to work out the patterns of erosion.

3.1 The participants

The participants in this study consisted of 15 native speakers of Yoruba, with an average age of 50 years old. Eight of the participants were female and seven were male. All 15 participants were bilingual in Yoruba and English.

Data were collected in six communities spread across three states in South-western and North-central Nigeria. Three of the selected speech communities (Omu-Aran, Rore, and Aran-Orin in Kwara State) were categorized as rural areas, while the other three communities (Akungba-Akoko and Ondo in Ondo State, and Ile-Ife in Osun State) were categorized as urban areas. In this study, rural areas were, essentially, those communities that were predominantly agrarian, while urban areas were those communities where a good number of the residents engaged in corporate occupations. In addition, the three communities categorized as urban had public higher institutions (universities in Ile-Ife and Akungba-Akoko, and a degree-awarding college of education in Ondo) that attracted people from different parts of the country and from outside Nigeria, as well as those who worked for corporate establishments. This multicultural environment meant that many residents were likely to be exposed to both Yoruba and English (Nigeria's official language) daily.

The same could not be said of the rural communities; over 90 % of the residents of Aran-Orin and Rore were farmers, and the percentage was only slightly lower in Omu-Aran. For instance, at the time of data collection, there was no operational commercial bank in Omu-Aran Township. Hence, participants who lived in these two types of communities were distinguished from each other by possible environmental effects on word usage. This allowed for a testing of Yusuff's (2008) assertion that moribund words were only so to the elites, while the "grassroots" speakers still used them. Achieving an appreciable spread across the Yoruba-speaking area was the main rationale behind the locations of the specific communities selected for research purposes (the communities were located across three states).

3.2 Compilation of the wordlist

The lexical items tested in this study included 94 selected Yoruba words, many of which, from the authors' observations, were no longer frequently used (see Appendix 1). Compiling the data items involved an extended observation of conversations on the precision of lexical usage in Yoruba-medium religious programmes, television and radio programmes and daily interactions between speakers within the speech communities. Proverbs and traditional poetry were also examined as they are regarded as preservers of words; hence, words attested in proverbs and poetry that were deemed to be no longer frequently encountered were listed for testing. To complement these two main sources of data, the *Dictionary of Yoruba language* by the Church Missionary Society (1913) was consulted to ascertain meanings and to source more words that were considered to be no longer in frequent use.

Words relating to specific fields were excluded from the test in order to eliminate the chance of the results being influenced either by participants' familiarity with these fields or by their infrequent encounters with those words. Consequently, the test words were drawn, essentially, from household items and other everyday objects and experiences that people would normally use or encounter daily. These included words relating to kitchenware, weather, household items, times and seasons, animals, and human endeavours. Others were means of mobility, agriculture, rivers and other bodies of water, human body and beautification, sicknesses, food, human feelings, and plants. Although the list of 94 words may not be regarded as large, it is not unrepresentative of the reality in Yoruba.

3.3 Elicitation procedure

Data elicitation involved interactions with participants in both Yoruba and English. This was possible because both researchers were competent speakers of Yoruba and had been conducting research on the language for over 10 years prior to the time of research. Specifically, one of the researchers was a senior lecturer in Yoruba in a public university in South-western Nigeria. This background in speaking and teaching Yoruba allowed the researchers to switch between English and Yoruba as appropriate when presenting data to the participants. Specifically, being Yoruba speakers allowed the researchers to conceive and draft the carrying utterances in such a way that they were well situated within the Yoruba culture and language. Where there were English correspondences that adequately represent the ideas, those English correspondences were presented to the participants with the request that they render the ideas in Yoruba.[2] We employed this method because we tried as much as possible to avoid using the test words ourselves, to avoid giving the participants clues as to what we were testing. Further details of the use of each language in data elicitation are outlined in examples (1–9; 10–11; 12–15; & 16–19) below.

Examples (1–9) illustrate items in which the speakers were required to render the Yoruba equivalents of English utterances. The carrying utterance for each word was specifically designed to narrow the use of the test word to only that word (to the exclusion of other words that may be considered synonymous).

[2] This method is similar to the one adopted by Rouchdy in his investigation of Egyptian Nubian (Rouchdy 1989, 260)

S/N	Word	Gloss	Carrying utterances
1	*wí*	'say'	What did you say?
2	*òpó*	'track'	This is the rat's track.
3	*san*	'bite'	The dog bit the thief.
4	*ewú*	'grey hair'	The old man's grey hair.
5	*ìbú*	'width, breadth'	The breadth of the cloth is fine.
6	*iwọ*	'poison'	The child poisoned the dog.
7	*òòyà*	'comb'	I need a comb.
8	*ọ̀dẹ̀dẹ̀*	'passage, hallway'	You need to sweep the passage.
9	*èsì*	'reply, response'	He was insulted, but he did not respond.

Examples 1–9: Fitting test words within appropriate contexts

The elicitation of some items involved asking the participants questions in Yoruba; it was then expected that their responses would contain the test words. The questions were designed to attract one-word answers, and any alternative word used would involve a degree of imprecision. Examples of these are provided in (10–11) below.

S/N	Word	Gloss	Questions
10	*ìródan*	'delay tactics'	What is the delay tactic system for little children called?
11	*àtàrí*	'centre of the head'	What is the centre of the head called?

Examples 10–11: Questions in Yoruba requiring specific one-word answers

Where possible, the carrying utterances were idioms, collocations or popular sayings in Yoruba, and thus it was expected that once the participants heard the English utterances, anyone who was familiar with the expressions would render them straight away, because the idioms, collocations and popular sayings are built around the words being tested. Examples of such expressions are given in (12–15) below. *Ibú* is the word being tested in (12), but the entire English utterance presented to the participants actually has a collocation, *ẹjalónibú*, that has already been transformed into a personal name. It was expected that the word would be used by the participants, even if they failed to use the collocation. This is the same with the other utterances in this category.

S/N	Word	Gloss	Carrying utterances	Yoruba popular saying
12	*ibú*	'deep part of a river'	The deepest part of the river is for the fish.	Ẹjalónibú
13	*àtẹ*	'wares'	She displayed her wares.	Ó pàtẹ
14	*ìtẹ́*	'throne'	Our God is on the throne.	Ọlọ́run wa wà lórí ìtẹ́
15	*ìyànjú*	'attempt, effort'	You tried.	O gbìyànjú

Examples 12–15: Carrying phrases consisting of popular Yoruba collocations

In instances where it was suspected that participants did not fully understand what was required, further discussions were initiated to prompt them, but a conscious attempt was made to avoid

the use of the specific words being tested. These discussions were aimed at painting the picture clearly, such that the participants would use the focus words if they knew them. Examples of these are in (16–19) below.

S/N	Word	Gloss	Carrying utterances	Further discussion/prompt
16	*òpó*	'track'	This is the rat's track.	The route that rats follow
17	*àgánrándì*	'half door'	Please close the half door.	That small door meant to prevent goats from entering the house; it's always supplementary to the main door
18	*pẹkọrọ*	'loiter'	I do not like people loitering around my house.	For somebody to walk around aimlessly
19	*bàǹtẹ́*	'charm apron'	The hunters all wore charm aprons.	The cloth that hunters wear

Examples 16–19: Use of contexts supplemented by further discussion

Generally, participants were afforded enough time to think over the utterances and were allowed to express the required ideas as differently as they wished until they came up with definite choices. Further, participants were allowed to return to previous utterances at any point in the course of data collection and make changes to their inputs, in case they recollected more appropriate expressions after the items had been passed. Our method was intentionally contextualized in order to minimize retrieval difficulties.[3]

3.4 Data analysis procedure

Following the elicitation of data, the participants' choices of words were examined manually and were categorized along the following lines:

i) Use of the focus words
ii) Use of descriptive phrases
iii) Use of synonyms
iv) Use of loanwords
v) Use of neologisms
vi) Use of slang terms
vii) Use of generic terms
viii) Off-the-mark choices
ix) Non-responses

Results were subjected to statistical analyses and simple percentages were used to determine the extent of use of the focus words.

[3] The reader is referred to Dorian (2013) for a fuller discussion of the effects of non-contextualization of test words.

4 Results

4.1 Overall results

For the participants in cities, 62 words were recorded from 10 speakers, yielding 620 responses. The speakers used the focus words in only 234 responses, which is 37.7 % realization. In the rural areas, 94 words were recorded from five participants. This produced 470 tokens; the focus words were used in only 113 tokens, which is 24 %. Overall, 1090 tokens were analysed, out of which the focus words were used in 347. This yielded a frequency of 31.8 %. This was subjected to further statistical testing as follows:

Hypothesis test

As pointed out above, all the 1090 tokens were tested together, and the assumption was that at least 90 % realization of the test words would imply that there is no erosion. But if the realization is significantly less than 90 %, then there is a general picture of erosion in the language/data.

Null hypothesis: H_0:$p \geq 90$ % *or* 0.9 (the proportion of focus words realized is at least 90 %).

Alternative Hypothesis: H_0:$p < 90$ % *or* 0.9 (the proportion of focus words realized is less than 90 %).

Test statistics

$$z = \frac{\hat{p} - p_0}{\sqrt{p_0(1-p_0)/n}}$$

where **n** is the sample size and $\hat{p} = \frac{x}{n}$.

Hence, ***x*** is the total number of focus words realized = 347, **n** = 1090 and $\hat{p} = \frac{347}{1090} = 0.3183$

$$z = \frac{0.3183 - 0.9}{\sqrt{0.9(1-0.9)/1090}} = -64.0164$$

At 5 % level of significance ($\alpha = 0.05$), the critical value (C.V) is -1.65 and the p-value is 0.0000

Decision Rule: Reject the null hypothesis if $|z| > |C.V|$ at $\alpha = 0.05$ or if p-value ≤ 0.05.

The proportion of focus words realized in the sample was 0.3183. The z-statistic of -64.0164 was calculated with a p-value of 0, which was obviously less than the 5 % significant level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, and it was concluded that the proportion of focus words was significantly less than 90 %.

These results confirm our initial impression that many Yoruba words have eroded. In spite of the fact that the selected test words relate to everyday objects and experiences, a good degree of erosion was still found. Further details of the patterns of lexical erosion are reported in sections 4.2–4.4.

4.2 Breakdown of results

Overall, the focus words were not used in 743 out of the 1090 responses tested. Below is a breakdown of the alternatives deployed by the participants. It must be pointed out that these alternatives were not necessarily wrong, since the participants communicated their meaning effectively; nevertheless, as competent native speakers as well as teachers of the language, the researchers still observed some degree of imprecision in each instance of the use of alternatives.

4.2.1 Substitution with descriptive phrases

There were 221 responses containing descriptive phrases. These constituted 20.3 % of the entire test. Examples of such phrases and their derivations are listed in (20–23) below. Some descriptive phrases encountered in the test were extremely vague. An example is the use of *inú ilé* (inside the house) in place of *ìyẹ̀wù* 'room' and *ìdáná kékeré* (small cooking utensil) in place of *ìsaasùn* 'small cooking pot'. The use of these descriptive phrases is a common feature in Yoruba-speaking society. This observation is affirmed by the fact that the use of these phrases cuts across all the test participants, in spite of their locations, genders, or ages (see Appendix 2).

S/N	Basic lexical item	Gloss	Descriptive phrase	Derivation of descriptive phrase
20	*òyìyà*	'comb'	Ìyarun	ì-yà-irun → ìyarun NOM-comb-hair
21	*ewú*	'grey hair'	Irun funfun	irun funfun → irun funfun hair white
22	*ọ̀gán*	'ant hill'	Ilé kòkòrò	ilé kòkòrò → Ilé kòkòrò home ant
23	*balùwẹ̀*	'bath room'	Iléèwẹ̀	ilé ìwẹ̀ → iléèwẹ̀ house-bath

Examples 20–23: replacement with descriptive phrases

4.2.2 Substitution with synonyms

Synonyms of the focus words were used in 263 of the tokens analysed. This constitutes 24.1 % of the data. Examples of such words are *ìyàwó* for *aya* 'wife', *akàbà* for *àkàsọ̀* 'ladder', *májèlé* for *iwọ* 'poison', *ìtẹ́* for *àpèrè* 'throne' *orúkọ* for *àpèjẹ́* 'name', *àlàjẹ́* for *ìnagijẹ* 'nickname', and *wúwo* for *òòrìn* 'weight', where *wúwo* actually means 'having weight'. For four of the test words, all of the participants tested used the same synonyms, while for nine test words there were at least 10 participants who used the same synonyms. There were other words for which participants substituted with slightly different synonyms.

4.2.3 Substitution with loanwords

There were 42 instances of words borrowed from English in the responses. While some of these were nativized (*páànù* for *òrùlé* 'roof', *bẹ́líìtì* for *ìgbànú* 'belt'), there were eight instances of nonce borrowings from English (involving *window [wĩ́ndò], glasses [glásíìs], cup [kɔ́p],* and *ladder [ládà]*). As can be observed from the transcriptions above, the nonce borrowings still had the suprasegmental features of Yoruba superimposed on predominantly English segmental materials. This is because none of the words was produced with English stress patterns; they were rather produced with Yoruba tonal features. When put together, this constitutes 3.9 % of the total test data.

4.2.4 Substitution with neologisms

There were four instances of the use of neologisms that have become widespread in the language. These relate to the use of *fisíi* in place of *èènì* 'extra'. *Fisíi* is actually a phrase comprising *fi* 'add', *sí* 'to', and *i* 'it', but it is now used as a word, predominantly among younger speakers of the language. When viewed in the light of the total 1090 responses, this is just 0.4 % of the data.

4.2.5 Substitution with slang terms

There were five instances of the use of slang terms that have come to be accepted in the language. These include one instance of the use of *gbàbẹ́ẹ̀* for *àkó* 'reality', and four uses of *ìgò* in place of *awò* 'glasses', where *ìgò* means 'bottle'; when used in this context it suggests that a person wears a pair of bottles, rather than a pair of glasses. In the light of a total of 1090 responses, these constitute only 0.5 % of the data.

4.2.6 Use of generic terms

In some instances, the speakers simply used broad terms that cover the focus words along with other related words. Such instances include using *oògùn* for *ìwọ̀*, where *oògùn* does not necessarily mean 'poison' but could also mean 'drug for healing' in some contexts. There were 44 tokens depicting the use of generic terms in the data, amounting to 4 % of the total responses. These 44 tokens involved 16 words; in 11 of these 16 words, there was more than one speaker who resorted to the use of the same generic terms. It is worth noting that this striking similarity in their choices cuts across the participants in spite of the differences in their locations, genders and ages.

4.2.7 Off-the-mark choices

In many instances, participants used words that could be considered wide of the mark; but the words used were not so wrong as to imply incompetence in the language, since even with their off-the-mark choices, the speakers still communicated the expected ideas. Besides, since these were the same speakers who displayed proficiency by using the appropriate words, synonyms

or descriptive phrases for other tokens, their off-the-mark choices could not be regarded as proof of linguistic incompetence; they were rather taken as proof of these speakers' reduced lexical capabilities. Examples of these items include the use of *òṣùká* 'folded cloth used to shield the head when carrying heavy load' where *ìrọ̀rí* 'pillow' was expected, *awò ńlá* 'big glass' where *dígí* 'mirror' was expected and *ojú* 'eye, spot' where *òpó* 'track' was expected. There were 107 instances of off-the-mark choices, and it is worth noting that the distribution of these words across the speakers could best be regarded as inconsistent. These make up 9.8 % of the total data.

4.2.8 Non-responses

There were 28 words for which non-responses were recorded for some of the participants; 11 of these words involved more than one speaker. This reality of different speakers at different locations not recollecting the same words, and not replacing them with substitutes, points to a pattern of consistency across the Yoruba-speaking areas. According to Sands, Miller and Brugman (2007, 63), inability to recall lexical items is proof of intragenerational loss. Altogether, there were 57 tokens where respondents did not supply responses as a result of their inability to recollect the appropriate words. These constituted 5.2 % of the total data.

4.2.9 Summary of results

The results presented so far are summarized in Table 1. The table is followed by Figure 1, which presents a graphical representation of the results in the light of the total test. Full details of the results are given in Appendix 2.

Table 1: Summary of Experimental Results

Category	Focus words	Descriptive phrases	Synonyms	Loanwords	Slang terms	Neologisms	Generic terms	Off-the-mark	Non-responses	Total
Frequency	347	221	263	42	5	4	44	107	57	1090

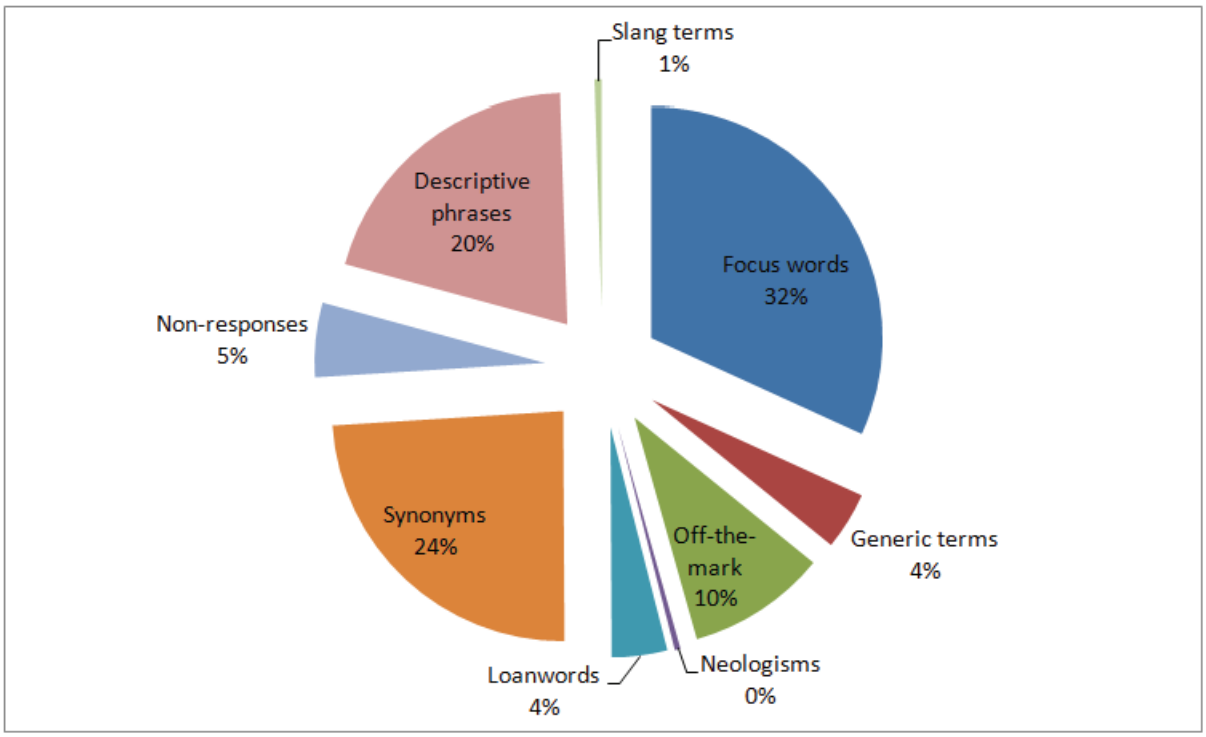

Figure 1: Summary of results in percentages

4.3 Words with 40 % frequency and below

As noted above, only 62 words were presented to the participants in the urban areas; these 62 words were also included in the test presented to the participants in the rural areas. This means that for each of the 62 items, a total of 15 responses were expected. These 62 items were then analysed to see how many of them were produced by six or fewer participants. 41 words were in this category. This means that the 41 words recorded a frequency of 40 % or less. These were regarded as obsolescent.

4.4 Obsolete words

An examination of individual lexical items in the test reveals that 21 words were not used at all in the entire test in spite of the diversities of the participants' locations, genders, and ages. The respondents rather opted for the various alternatives available. These words are listed in Examples (24–44) below. These 21 words, which constituted 22.3 % of the test words, were categorized as obsolete. A closer look at these obsolete words shows that 15 of them were administered only to the participants in rural areas, while the other six were administered to all 15 participants.

S/N	Word	Gloss	S/N	Word	Gloss
24	*ọbẹdò*	'green'	35	*irọ̀*	'contemporary'
25	*ikùdu*	'pond'	36	*àko*	'branch of palm tree'
26	*réré*	'afar off'	37	*ọ̀hahà*	'excessive thirst'
27	*dẹ̀dẹ̀*	'very (near)'	38	*iwọ*	'poison'
28	*jẹ́*	'respond/answer'	39	*gẹdú*	'timber'
29	*dùrọ̀*	'mumps'	40	*àgbékọ́*	'female vest'
30	*àpèrè*	'throne'	41	*aló*	'flame of fire'
31	*àkó*	'reality'	42	*eji*	'rain'
32	*ìlọ́ra*	'sluggishness'	43	*ìko*	'tiny rope'
33	*ọ̀jẹ̀lẹ́*	'tender leaf'	44	*aya*	'wife'
34	*arọ́*	'blacksmith'			

Example 24–44: Obsolete words

5 Discussion

The different degrees of disuse of the test words indicate the participants' reduced access to the Yoruba vocabulary through their substitutions of semantically inexact or unspecific words for the test words, which would have been more precise choices in the given contexts. This may not be a strange reality; Olshtain and Barzilay (1991) found similar results in their test of immigrant Americans living in Israel (cited in Dorian 2013).

The picture of the change in progress becomes obvious with the fact that 21 items have already become obsolete, while 41 are obsolescent. This amounts to 22.3 % obsolete and 43.6 % obsolescent words. Conversely, only 32 (34 %) of the 94 test words were still actively in use by the participants.

The fact that many words occurred with low frequencies even among the grassroots speakers is at variance with Yusuff's assertion that moribund words are only so to the elite speakers, but are well known to grassroots speakers. This finding may be connected to the fact that Yusuff (2008) draws his data from "names of animals and birds, names of plants, names of traditional costume, agricultural terms and miscellaneous", whereas our data were purposively drawn from everyday activities which both the elite and grassroots speakers were supposed to be equally familiar with. The result thus clearly suggests that some words are dropping out both among the elites and among the grassroots speakers of the language.

Another key pattern from the results is the use of descriptive phrases, which constituted 20.3 % of the responses. By *descriptive phrases*, we mean that participants used phrases/clauses in place of basic vocabulary. This is similar to what Dorian (2013) terms "paraphrasing", which she defines as "finding roundabout ways of expressing a concept for which the speaker lacks the conventional term" (2013, 4). To Dorian (2013), this is an indication of speakers' reduced lexical resources. It reveals speakers' preference for longer strings that are descriptive, rather than concise basic vocabulary. The use of descriptive phrases also indicates innovation by the speakers (Chebanne and Dlali 2017, 104). That descriptive phrases occurred in 221 of the responses is instructive, because it shows that 20.3 % of the test words are not just being dropped as a result of synonym rivalry; rather, they are being lost for various reasons and speakers

compensate for this with the use of descriptive phrases. The preference for descriptive phrases over lexical precision may be said to be a feature of the entire language community, because where they are used, the descriptive phrases tend to be consistent across the six communities where data were collected. Hence, this may be taken as a pattern representative of the entire Yoruba-speaking areas of Nigeria. The use of descriptive phrases is common in Yoruba. In fact, our conceptualization of descriptive phrases covers various word-formation strategies, including idiomatization, description, composition, specification, explication, naming by association, reanalysis, among others (Bamgbose 1986; Bamgbose 1992; Awobuluyi 1992; Owolabi 2006; Yusuff 2008; Murray 2011, 274–275, etc.).

A noteworthy component of the result is the low frequency of loanwords. These constitute only 3.9 % of the responses. The general impression has always been that English loanwords are increasingly encroaching into Yoruba-medium communications (see Goke-Pariola 1983; Olaoye 1989; Ufomata 1991; Adedun and Shodipe 2011), but these findings suggest otherwise. It must be pointed out that the participants were bilingual in English, which enabled them to hear English phrases and render them in Yoruba. Therefore, for the same participants not to think of resorting to the use of nativized loanwords in instances of non-recollection of actual Yoruba words is noteworthy. We note, however, that this could be because the participants were instructed to express themselves only in Yoruba. Even in that case, it would mean that the participants did not use nativized loanwords in such situations because they did not consider them to be truly Yoruba words, in spite of the nativization.

It was also reported that generic terms were used in 4 % of the results. It is worth noting that the spread and consistency of use of each generic term among the speakers shows that they are an important component of the findings. Fabunmi and Salawu (2005, 401–403) regard this reality in Yoruba as an indication of endangerment. The use of generic terms is capable of triggering the erosion of specific lexical items over time (Chebanne and Dlali 2017, 104).

While these findings may first appear as a process of lexical narrowing, it must be pointed out that the loss of these particular lexical items does not impair communication and as such is still largely within the scope of the natural process of language change. The patterns by which the change is proceeding are, however, worth paying attention to. The lexical erosion observed in this study is regarded as a result of incomplete transmission of the language from the older generations to the younger ones. This failure of current speakers to "acquire the fuller vocabularies that were in use among their parents and grandparents" (Dorian 2013, 2) may reflect increasingly negative attitudes towards Yoruba in comparison to English, Nigeria's official language.

6 Conclusion

This article has reported that the Yoruba lexicon is currently undergoing erosion. This is substantiated by the patterns of reduced lexical resources found among contemporary speakers of the language. Out of the 94 words tested, 21 (22.3 %) were obsolete, 41 (43.6 %) were obsolescent, and only 32 (34 %) were in active use among the participants. While some words were dropped as a result of synonym rivalry (24.1 %), others were replaced by generic terms that were not as precise (4 %). Many others were replaced with longer strings or descriptive phrases (20.3 %). It is noteworthy that instances of the use of off-the-mark choices constituted 9.8 %, while non-recollection of the appropriate words constituted 5.2 % of the responses. The use of English loanwords constituted only 3.9 % of the data, which is contrary to the perceived influ-

ence of English on the language. These observed strategies constitute the speakers' ways of coping with their reduced lexical resources without compromising communication.

We hope that future studies will interrogate the histories of the erosion of some of these words and possibly throw more light on the specific motivations for such processes. This will advance our understanding of the state of the language in contemporary times.

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Appendix 1: Words/carrying utterances

S/N	Word	Gloss	Utterance	S/N	Word	Gloss	Utterance
1	ààrò	clay-made stove	My grandma usually cooks with a clay-made stove.	51	ọ̀gìnnìntìn	incessant cold	I am tired of this incessant cold.
2	erèé	beans	We went to the farm to harvest beans.	52	ipọ́n	blood	Blood gushed out.
3	wí	tell/say	What did you say?	53	ọ̀kẹ́kan	twenty thousand	Give me twenty thousand pounds.
4	eji	rain	I can hear the sound of rain.	54	ẹmọ	lump in pounded yam/amala	The pounded yam has lumps.
5	ìyèwù	room	My father is in the room.	55	irọ̀	contemporary	We are contemporaries.
6	ife	cup	Give me the cup on the table.	56	ọjọ́rọ̀	evening	I will come over in the evening.
7	ààjìn	mid-night	I woke up at midnight.	57	ìrọ̀rí	pillow	I don't like using pillow while sleeping.
8	òpó	track	This is the rat's track.	58	àpèjẹ́	(brand of) name	What is your name?
9	ọwọ̀	broom	Give me the broom.	59	ìnagije	nickname	What is your nickname?
10	san	bite	The dog bit the thief.	60	arọ́	blacksmith	His father is a blacksmith.
11	ìṣẹ́	poverty	Poverty is a bad thing.	61	ọ̀ṣìn	king	The king is my uncle.
12	ìsaasùn	pot	I need a small cooking pot.	62	òòrìn	weight	That bag is not heavy.
13	ìyálẹ̀ta	before noon	It's too early now, let's do it towards noon.	63	rọ̀gbọ̀kú	to lean on	Do not lean on the table.
14	ìyànjú	attempt, effort	You tried.	64	sókí	brief	Make your comment brief.
15	àjàgbé	trailer	He drives a trailer.	65	ọ̀dẹ̀dẹ̀	passage, hallway	You need to sweep the passage.
16	ìkókó	new born baby	He is only an infant.	66	afárá	culvert/bridge	The river swept the passage away.
17	ewú	grey hair	The old man's grey hair	67	rẹ́gí	evenly, equally, perfectly	It fits perfectly.
18	tàràkà	struggling to survive	May we not struggle to eat.	68	àtẹ	wares	She displayed her wares.
19	okinni	needle	Give me the needle.	69	àko	branch of palm tree	Don't let the hanging branch of that palm tree hurt you.
20	ọkọ̀	automobile	Board a vehicle.	70	àkó	reality	Let us accept reality.

S/N	Word	Gloss	Utterance	S/N	Word	Gloss	Utterance
21	òrùlé	roof	Our roof is leaking.	71	tààrà	straight	Just go straight.
22	fèrèsé	window	Shut the window, please.	72	aló	flame of fire	Do not go near the flame of the fire.
23	àjà	ceiling?	Don't break that ceiling, please.	73	aya	wife	She is my friend's wife.
24	àgánrándì	half door	Please close the half door.	74	réré	far off	The farm is very far away.
25	pẹkọrọ	loiter	I do not like people loitering around my house.	75	dẹ̀dẹ̀	very (near)	Judgement is very near.
26	awò	eye glasses	He uses eye glasses.	76	dùrọ̀	mumps	He has mumps.
27	ìbú	width, breadth	The breadth of the cloth is fine.	77	ẹ̀ẹ̀bú	short cut	He took a short cut to the market.
28	ọparun	bamboo	Bamboo was used for constructing bridges in the olden days.	78	èsì	reply, response	He was insulted, but he did not respond.
29	tìmùtìmù	cushion	We have good cushions in our house.	79	tẹ́	disgrace	He has been disgraced.
30	kálámù	pen	Give me that pen.	80	gẹdú	timber	He is a timber dealer.
31	àtàrí	centre of the head	What is the centre of the head called?	81	ikùdu	pond	Get a fish from the pond.
32	ààtàn	refuse dumping ground	Throw this away at the dumping ground.	82	ìlọ́ra	sluggishness	I dislike sluggishness.
33	àkàsọ̀	ladder	I cannot climb that ladder.	83	ìró	sound, noise	I can hear the sound of joy.
34	balùwẹ̀	bathroom	Hold on, I am bathing in the bathroom.	84	isán	space of nine days	The next market is in nine days' time.
35	àgbékọ́	female vest	I can see her vest through the transparent dress she wears.	85	òòyì	giddiness	He is feeling giddy.
36	àpamọ́	hand purse, wallet	Keep the money in your purse.	86	ọbẹdò	green	Look at that green leaf.
37	ìgbànú	belt,	He tied a belt round his waist.	87	ọ̀gán	ant-hill	See the ant-hill.
38	ìko	tiny rope used to weave mat	Give me that tiny rope for mat weaving.	88	ọ̀hahà	excessive thirst	Excessive thirst is not good for you.
39	bàǹtẹ́	charm apron	The hunters all wore charm aprons.	89	ọ̀jẹlẹ́	tender leaf	She is playing with the tender leaves of the flower.
40	àtùpà	hurricane lamp	Put the hurricane lamp in the passage.	90	ọ̀bọ̀rọ́	plain, unadorned	Give me the plain dress.
41	èènì	extra	The food vendor gave me some extra.	91	jẹ́	respond, answer	I'm answering you.
42	ororo	day-old egg	Have you seen a day-old egg before?	92	bi	ask	What did he ask you?

S/N	Word	Gloss	Utterance
43	iwọ	poison	The child poisoned the dog.
44	ọlẹ̀	foetus	It was the nurse who disposed of the foetus.
45	onígbàjámọ̀	barber	My father was a barber.
46	òòyà	comb	I need a comb.
47	sànpònná	smallpox	The girl has smallpox.
48	ibú	deep part of a river	The deepest part of the river is for the fish.
49	tòbí	skirt	I need a new skirt.
50	òjòjò	ailment	The chief is ill.

S/N	Word	Gloss	Utterance
93	dígí	mirror	I need a big mirror.
94	apèrè	throne	The king is on the throne.

Appendix 2: Complete listing of results by categories

		urban										rural				
S/N	**WORD**	**SP1**	**SP2**	**SP3**	**SP4**	**SP5**	**SP6**	**SP7**	**SP8**	**SP9**	**SP10**	**SP11**	**SP12**	**SP13**	**SP14**	**SP15**
1	ìyànjú	y	y	y	y	y	*ṣedáad áa*	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
2	àtùpà	***iná***	y	***iná***	y	y	y	**fìtílà**	y	***iná***	***iná***		*amérítan -ná*	*amérítan-ná*	y	y
3	ibú	*ibi tó jìnjù*	y		y	y		y	y	*àárin gbùngbùn*	y	***jìn***	y	*ibi to' jìn ju`*	**ogbun**	*ibi to' jìn*
4	èènì	y	y	y	y	y	**oúnjẹ síi**	y	y	járá	fi síi	fi síi	y	fi síi	bù síi	y
5	àjàgbé	y	y	y		y		y	y	y	y	trailer	y		y	*ọkọ ẹrù*
6	òrùlé	y	y	**àjà**	**àjà**	y	y	y	y	y	**àjà**	*orí páànù*	y	**àjà**	páànù	y
7	ìrọ̀rí	**òṣùká**	**àkéte**	**àkéte**	y	**igbèrí**	pillow	y	y	y	y	y		y	y	y
8	ìgbànú	y	**ọpọ̀**	y	**ọpọ̀**	y	y	y	y	y	y	bẹ́líìtì	bẹ́líìtì	**okùn**	**ìgbàdí**	**ọ̀já**
9	ọkọ̀	y	y	y	y	y	mọ́tò	y	y	mọ́tò	mọ́tò	mọ́tò	y	y	mọ́tò	y
10	àjà	y	**pẹpẹ**	y	y	y	sílì	**òrùlé**		y	y	y	**òrùlé**	àbẹ́stọ̀	**òrùlé**	àbẹ́stọ̀
11	kálámù	y	y	y	y	y	**gègé**	y	y	y	y	bírò	**gègé**	bírò	**gègé**	*ìkọ̀wé*
12	ọparun	y	y	y	y	y	y	**ìràwé**	y	y	y	bambú	y	y	y	**ìko**
13	ife	y	y	y	kọ́ọ̀pù	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	cup	kọ́ọ̀pù	y
14	fèrèsé	y	y	y	y	y	window	y	y	y	y	y	y	window	window	y
15	awò	y	*awò-ojú*	ìgò	ìgò	**dígí**	*ìgò-ojú*	y	y	y	y	glasses	y	ìgò	y	ìgò
16	àátàn	*ilé ilẹ̀*	*ilé ilẹ̀*	y	y	y	*ilé ilẹ̀*	y	y	y	y	*ilé ilẹ̀*	y	y	y	y
17	àárò	y	y	y		y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	*àdògán alámọ̀*	y	y
18	àpamọ́	***àpò***	y	**àpamọ́wọ́**	y	**àpamọ́wọ́**	pọ́ọ̀sì	**àpamọ́wọ́**	y	**àpamọ́wọ́**	y	y		**ìgbànú**	**opọ̀**	***àpò***
19	àgánrándì	*ilẹ̀kùn ọ̀dẹ̀*	y	y	**ẹran-àn-jẹ**	y	**ẹran-àn-jẹ**	**ẹran-àn-jẹ**	***ilẹ̀kùn***	y	**ẹran-àn-jẹ**	***ilẹ̀kùn***	y	y	***ilẹ̀kùn***	y

		urban										rural				
S/N	WORD	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7	SP8	SP9	SP10	SP11	SP12	SP13	SP14	SP15
20	erèé	y	ẹ̀wà	y	y	ẹ̀wà	y	ẹ̀wà	y	ẹ̀wà	ẹ̀wà	y	y	ẹ̀wà	ẹ̀wà	y
21	wí	y	y	y	ọ	y	y	ọ	y	ọ	y	y	ọ	ọ	ọ	ọ
22	àgbékọ́	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀
23	eji	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀	ọ̀jọ̀
24	ìyèwù	yàrá	yàrá	y	y	y	y	y	y	yàrá	yàrá	yàrá	yàrá	*inú-ilé*	yàrá	yàrá
25	okinni	abẹ́rẹ́	abẹ́rẹ́	abẹ́rẹ́	abẹ́rẹ́	y	abẹ́rẹ́	y	y	abẹ́rẹ́	y	abẹ́rẹ́	abẹ́rẹ́	abẹ́rẹ́	abẹ́rẹ́	abẹ́rẹ́
26	ìṣẹ́	àìní	àìní	àìní	y	ọ̀ṣì	ọ̀ṣì	ọ̀ṣì	àìní	ọ̀ṣì	ọ̀ṣì		ọ̀ṣì	y	jìyà	ọ̀ṣì
27	iwọ	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	*oògùn*	*oògùn*	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé	májèlé
28	ọlẹ̀	ibi-ọmọ	aigboo yun	oyunases eni	olúbi	y	ibi-ọmọ	ibi	ibi	olóbi	ibi-ọmọ	olóbi	ibi	ibi-ọmọ	olóbi	olúbi-ọmọ
29	ọṣìn	ọba	kábíèsí	ọba	ọba	y	ọba	ọba	ọba	ọba	ọba	ọba	kábíèsí	ọba	ọba	ọba
30	òòrìn	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	y	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo	wúwo
31	tòbí	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	y	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀	*àwọ̀ sísàlẹ̀*	yẹ̀rì	gbáriyẹ̀	yẹ̀rì	àwọ̀tẹ́lẹ̀
32	òjòjò	àìsàn	àilera	àárẹ̀	y	àìsàn	*ara o ya*	àìsàn	*ótẹ̀*	àìsàn	àìsàn	rẹ̀	àìsàn	rẹ̀	rẹ̀	àìsàn
33	ipọ́n	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀	y	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀	y	ẹ̀jẹ̀	y	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀	ẹ̀jẹ̀
34	ẹmọ	kókó	y	kókó	kókó	y	kókó	kókó	y	y	y	kókó	kókó	kókó	y	kókó
35	àkàsọ̀	y	y	àtẹ̀gùn	akàbà	akàbà	àtẹ̀gùn	akàbà	akàbà	y	y	lader	y	akàbà	akàbà	*agàjà*
36	àpèjẹ́	inagijẹ				alaje	y	orúkọ	orúkọ	orúkọ	orúkọ	orúkọ	y	orúkọ	orúkọ	orúkọ
37	irọ̀	ẹgbẹ́						ẹgbẹ́		ẹgbẹ́	akẹgbẹ́	akojogba		akọjọ́gbà	ẹgbẹ́	akẹgbẹ́
38	ìnagije	y						àlàjẹ́	y	y	àlàjẹ́	oríkì	àlàjẹ́	àlàjẹ́	àlàjẹ́	àlàjẹ́
39	ọjọ́rọ̀	ìrọ̀lẹ́						ìrọ̀lẹ́	àṣálẹ́	alẹ́	y	ìrọ̀lẹ́	ale	ìrọ̀lẹ́	ìrọ̀lẹ́	ìrọ̀lẹ́

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S/N	WORD	SP1	SP2	SP3	SP4	SP5	SP6	SP7	SP8	SP9	SP10	SP11	SP12	SP13	SP14	SP15
40	tàràkà	y	**gbìyànjú**	**làkàkà**	y	**tiraka**	**rago**	**làkàkà**	**dàmú**	**làálàá**	**làálàá**	*toro je*	y	**wàhálà**	**gbìyànjú**	**dàmú**
41	ìbú	**fífẹ̀**						y	y	**ìwọ̀n**	y	**fẹ̀**		**ẹ̀gbẹ́**	y	y
42	tìmùtìmù	y	y	**ibùsùn**	**ibùsùn**	**ibùsùn**	**ibùsùn**	**ibùsùn**	**ibùsùn**	**ibùsùn**	y	**ìjòkó**	foomu		**àga-aláfẹ̀yìntì**	**ìjòkó**
43	ọ̀kẹ́kan	*ogún ẹgbẹ̀rún*	y	y	**ẹgbẹ̀rún-pọ̀n-ùn**	*egberun lona ogun*		**ogún pón-ùn**	**ẹgbẹ̀wá pón-ùn**	*ogún ẹgbẹ̀rùn-ún*	**ẹgbẹ̀rún pón-ùn**	**ogún-pọ̀n-ùn**	**ogún-pọ̀n-ùn**	*ogún-ẹgbẹ̀rún*	*ogún-ẹgbẹ̀rún*	**ogún-pọ̀n-ùn**
44	sànpònná	y	*àjàkálẹ̀*	*ìgbónára*		y		*ilẹ̀ gbígbóná*		**ìgbóná**	**ìgbónáá**	**àárùn kòkòrò**	**ìgbóná**	**àléfọ́**	**kúrúnà**	y
45	arọ́	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	**àgbèdẹ**	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	*alágbẹ̀dẹ*	**àgbèdẹ**	**àgbèdẹ**	**àgbèdẹ**	**àgbèdẹ**
46	ìsaasùn	***ìkòkò***	*kòkò kékeré*	*ìkòkò kékeré*	*ìkòkò-ase*	*ìkòkò ìdáná*	*ìkòkò kékeré*	*apẹ ìdáná*	y	***ìkòkò***	***ìkòkò***	***ìkòkò***	**àgègè**	*ìkòkò kékeré*	*pọ́ọ̀tì ìdáná*	*ìdáná kékeré*
47	ìko	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùn tẹ́ẹ́rẹ́*	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùn tẹ́ẹ́rẹ́*	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùn tẹ́ẹ́rẹ́*	***okun***	**gbodogi**	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùntín-ín-rín*	*okùn kékeré*
48	ìkókó	*ọmọ kékeré*	**jojolo**	*ọmọ tuntun jòjòló*	*ọmọ tuntun jòjòló*	y	*ọmọ ọwọ́*	*ọmọ kékeré*	**ọmọdé**	*ọmọ kékeré*	*ọmọ kékeré*	*ọmọ kékeré*		*ọmọ kékeré*	*ọmọ kékeré*	*ọmọ kékeré*
49	pẹkọrọ	*rìn gbére gbère*	*fẹsẹ̀ palẹ̀*	*pòyì ká*	*pòyì ká*	*fẹsẹ̀ palẹ̀*		*paráro*	*paráro*	**pòyì**	*dúró kiri*	*yí káàkiri*	*rìn kiri*	y	*máa lọ máa bọ̀*	*rìn kiri*
50	ororo	*ẹyin ònín*	*ẹyin akoye*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	y	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	**oojo**	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*	*ẹyin òòjọ́*
51	òpó	y		y		*ìró eku*		*ojúpòó*	*ojúpòó*	*ojúpòó*	***ọ̀nà***	*ojú ẹmọ́*	y	y	y	**ojú**
52	balùwẹ̀	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	y	y	y	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	y	y	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	y	*ilé ìwẹ̀*	*ilé ìwẹ̀*
53	onígbàjámọ̀	bábà	y	*gẹ́rígẹ́rí*	*gẹ́rígẹ́rí*	y	bábà	y	y	*agẹrun*	y	*agẹrun*	*agẹrun*	*agẹ́rí*	*gẹ́rígẹ́rí*	*agẹrun*
54	òòyà	*ìyarun*	*ìyarun*	*ìyarun*	*ìyarun*	y	konbu	*ìyarun*	y	*ìyarun*	y	*ìyarun*	*ìyarun*	*ìyarun*	*iyarí*	*ìyarun*

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S/N	**WORD**	**SP1**	**SP2**	**SP3**	**SP4**	**SP5**	**SP6**	**SP7**	**SP8**	**SP9**	**SP10**	**SP11**	**SP12**	**SP13**	**SP14**	**SP15**
55	ààjìn	*àárin òru*	*ọ̀gànjọ́ òru*	y	*ọ̀gànjọ́ òru*	y	y	*ọ̀gànjọ́ òru*	*àárin òru*	*òrugànjọ́*	***òru***	***òru***	***òru***	*àárin òru*	**ale**	***òru***
56	ewú	*irun funfun*	y	y	y	y	*irun funfun*	y	y	*irun funfun*	y	y	*irun funfun*	*irun funfun*	y	*irun funfun*
57	ọwọ̀	*ìgbálẹ̀*	*ìgbálẹ̀*	y	y		*ìgbálẹ̀*	*ìgbálẹ̀*	y	y	*ìgbálẹ̀*	y	*ìgbálẹ̀*	*ìgbálẹ̀*	*ìgbálẹ̀*	y
58	san	*bù-jẹ*	*gé-je*	*bù-jẹ*	*gé-jẹ*	*bù-jẹ*	*bù-jẹ*	*gé-je*	*bù-jẹ*	*gé-je*	*bù-jẹ*	*gé*	y	*gé-je*	*gé-je*	y
59	ìyálẹ̀ta	*òwó ọ̀sán*	y	y	***ọ̀sán***	*ọjọ́kanrí*	***ọ̀sán***	**òwọ́ àsálẹ́**	y	*òwó ọ̀sán*	***ọ̀sán***	**ìrọ̀lẹ́**	y	**ìrọ̀lẹ́**	**díẹ́ síi**	***ọ̀sán***
60	àtàrí	*ọpọ́n-orí*	*ọpọ́n-orí*	*àárín-orí*	**àwùjẹ̀**	**àwùjẹ̀**	**afúlu**	y	y	y	*àárín-orí*	*àárín-orí*	*àárin-gbùngbùn*	**agbárí**	*àárín-orí*	*àárín-orí*
61	bàǹtẹ́	*aṣọ oògùn*	y	*aṣọ oògùn*	*aṣọ oògùn*	**ìgbàdí**	**olóńdè**	**gbérí**	**gbérí**	**ìgbàdí**	*aṣọ oògùn*	y	**àjàpá**	y	y	
62	ọ̀gìnnìn tìn	*òtútù àmún-ùn-mútán*	y			*otútù ìgbà gbogbo*	y	y	y	***otútù***	***otútù***	***otútù***		***otútù***	***otútù***	***otútù***
63	rọ̀gbọ̀kú											*sùn lé*	*nira*	*sùn lé*	*rọ̀mọ́*	y
64	òòyì											y	y	y	y	**agara**
65	ọ̀dẹ̀dẹ̀											y	y	y	y	y
66	afárá											y	y	y	gádà	y
67	bi											y	y	y	y	y
68	ìró											y	y	**ohùn**	y	y
69	tààrà											*lọ lópòópó*	y	**òókán**	y	y
70	dígí											gíláàsì	y	y	y	*awò ńlá*
71	ẹ̀ẹ̀bú											**àbùjá**	y	y	**àbùjá**	*ọ̀nà tó kúrú*
72	èsì											**bìkítà**	**dáhùn**	y	**dáhùn**	**dáhùn**
73	aya											**ìyàwó**	**ìyàwó**	**ìyàwó**	**ìyàwó**	**ìyàwó**

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S/N	**WORD**	**SP1**	**SP2**	**SP3**	**SP4**	**SP5**	**SP6**	**SP7**	**SP8**	**SP9**	**SP10**	**SP11**	**SP12**	**SP13**	**SP14**	**SP15**
74	apèrè											**ìtẹ́**	**ìtẹ́**	**ìtẹ́**	**ìtẹ́**	**ìtẹ́**
75	réré											**jìn-nà**	*jìn-nà gan-an*	**jìn-nà**	**jìn-nà**	***púpọ̀***
76	àkó											gbà bẹ́ẹ̀	**òtítọ́**	**òtítọ́**	*òótọ́ ọ̀rọ̀*	**òtítọ́**
77	dùrọ̀											**eéwo**		**segede**	**segede**	**segede**
78	ọ̀jẹ̀lẹ́											**òdòdó**	**ọ̀mùnú**	*ewé tuntun*	**ọ̀mùnú**	*òdòdó ewé*
79	àtẹ											**mú-hàn**	**fi-hàn**	**oja**	**fi-hàn**	y
80	gẹdú											**agbọ́jàká**	*ẹni tó ńta igi*		**rẹ́girẹ́gi**	**pákó**
81	ikùdu											**odò**			***omi***	**odò**
82	rẹ́gí											sáìsì	*báa mu*	**yẹ**	**yẹ**	**yẹ**
83	sókí											y	**kánmọ́n**	**kékeré**	**fúyẹ́**	y
84	ọ̀bọ̀rọ́											y		**mọ́**	**bọ̀rọ̀gidi**	*tí kò ní kọ́lọ̀*
85	ìlọ́ra												**òròjú**	**dìndìnrìn**	*má yàára*	*má yàára*
86	jẹ́											*dá lóhùn*	*dá lóhùn*	*dá lóhùn*	*dá lóhùn*	*dá lóhùn*
87	dẹ̀dẹ̀											*sún-mọ́ tòsí*	*sún-mọ́ gan-an*	*sún-mọ́*	*sún-mọ́*	*dé tán*
88	isán											*ọ̀jọ́ mẹ́ṣàn-án*	*ọ̀jọ́ mẹ́ṣàn-án*	*ọ̀jọ́ mẹ́ṣàn-án*	*ọ̀jọ́ mẹ́ṣàn-án*	y
89	tẹ́											*èrè ìtìjú*	*ìdójútì*	**yẹ̀yẹ́**	**yẹ̀yẹ́**	y
90	ọbẹ̀dò											grín-ìn		gínrín-ìn	grín-ìn	**tàn mìnìmìnì**
91	ọ̀gán											*ilé kòkòrò*	y	*ilé ikán*	*ilé ikán*	y

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92	ọ̀hahà											***òǹgbẹ***	*apòǹgbẹ*	*òǹgbẹ tó pọ̀jù*	***òǹgbẹ***	***òǹgbẹ***
93	àko											*imọ̀ ọ̀pẹ*	***ẹ̀ka***	***imọ̀***	***imọ̀***	***ẹ̀ka***
94	aló											***iná***		**ẹ̀gún iná**	***iná***	***iná***

Key to results by categories

Category	Focus words	*Descriptive phrases*	**Synonyms**	Loanwords	Slang terms	Neologisms	***Generic***	Off-the-mark	*Non-responses*	**Total**
Colour	y	*green*	**blue**	yellow		ash	***red***			
Frequency	347	*221*	**263**	42	5	4	***44***	**107**	*57*	**1090**