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Terminology development: Panacea for aspects of disentanglement with African futures

Abstract

Terminology development is a veritable tool that can be harnessed for the continuous alignment of indigenous languages to meet global demands in diverse spheres. It contributes to the quality of translation and transfer of ideas in subject-related communications; it is inextricably linked to language development. This study engaged terminology development as a linguistic strategy that can be employed to fill the gaps between indigenous languages and their contribution to the development of African future praxes. The haphazard use of terms in the news media could be a serious communicative challenge for the preservation of language originality in Yorùbá language, and this poses a challenge for the future usage of the language. South Africa has since focused on terminology development for almost every field that concerns human existence. This study focused on fostering adequate communication and oral dissemination of information since the media has the responsibility of making the citizens aware of what is happening far and near. Proper and continuous use will help the future of African indigenous languages in general and Yorùbá language in particular. The study adopted a mixed research methodology; data were gathered from Yorùbá news media from two radio stations in Lagos State, Southwest Nigeria with the aim of interrogating terms used in information dissemination in the stations. The analysis of the data geared towards bringing to the fore the importance of terminology development in the preservation of African languages as they struggle to meet up with current and future communicative needs.

Keywords: Terminology development, news media, communications, indigenous language

Introduction

It is a known fact that the world has become a global village; cultural exchange and diversity have become the order of the day. It has become expedient for African indigenous languages to embrace terminology development to foster a future that is indeed African; a future of prospect for African languages. When a new concept finds its way into the society, the language of the society must address the communicative need posed by that concept or notion. This linguistic intervention is called terminology development. It refers to a process of functionally extending, especially, the lexical semantics of a language into new domains (Antia/Lanna 2016). Although the notion of the theoretical autonomy or self-sufficiency of language exists, most African languages do not have sufficient terms especially on scientific, administrative, and contemporary disciplines. In this case, the strategy of adaptation can either be employed or a translation-oriented terminology resorted to.

According to Thelen (2015), there are two types of terminology: theory-oriented and translation-oriented. See fig. 1 below:

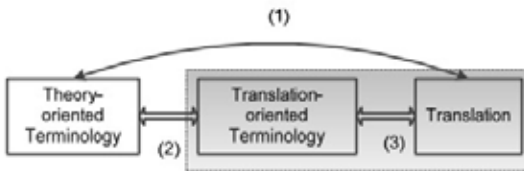


Fig. 1: The interaction between Theory-oriented Terminology, Translation-oriented Terminology and Translation (source: Thelen 2015: 352)

Theory-oriented terminology is a type of terminology often carried out by terminologists who are more “concerned with the relation between term and concept, concept formation, term formation and standardisation” in a given speech community (Thelen 2012: 132). Translation-oriented terminology on the other hand is terminological work carried out purposely to aid appropriate translation. It analyses the meaning of a term in the source language and translates same with caution to the appropriate or specific domain or field of the term. This study focuses on how to foster adequate communication and oral dissemination of

the outcome of research activities that could help the future of African indigenous languages in general and Yorùbá language in particular. Terminology study is not new to Africans, as the field has been ventured into since the 1950s in South Africa. The situation of South Africa and Nigeria can be likened to each other. Language policy gave rise to terminology development in South Africa, and Nigeria also currently has an education policy which needs terminology development for implementation. Scholars of Yorùbá language have made efforts towards providing technical terminology in different fields of study (Bamgbose 1984; Awobuluyi 1992; Odetayo 1993; Olubode-Sawe 2010; Yusuff 2010; Eleshin 2023). However, as at the time of this study, Eleshin (2023) seems to be the only terminology development model for indigenous languages in Nigeria known to this researcher. Several terminology development models have been proposed and implemented by the South African Terminology Development outlets, and these models can be adopted and used for Nigerian indigenous languages.

Some of the Terminology Development Models in South Africa

A terminology development process being driven at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (referred to as UKZN) identifies the following five stages of terminology development process:

1. *harvesting* of existing usage terms;
2. *description and translation* of terminology that has been harvested or created;
3. *consultation and verification* with end-users about terminology proposed;
4. *authentication and standardization through official national structures and*
5. *listing* on the database of institutional Terminology Development Platform.

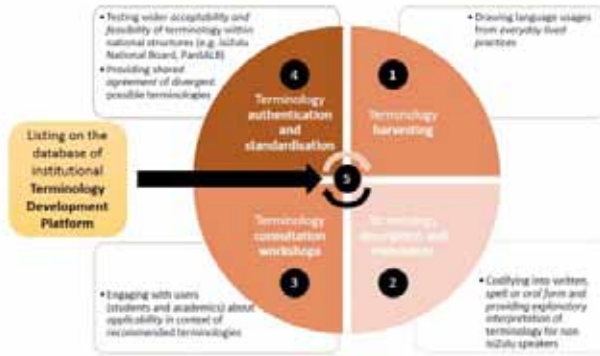


Fig. 2: UKZN Terminology Development Model (Khumalo 2016)

The UKZN model is explicit and easy to follow. However, in 2019, Ramuedzisi, Huyssteen and Mandende researched how terminology is being developed and managed in South Africa. Their aim was to propose effective models and principles for terminology development and management, and to eliminate the duplication of terminologies, sequel to the previous terminology development model already operational in South Africa. The research re-presents two models developed in South Africa; a model for collating existing terminologies (Terminology Developing Model 4), and a model for future terminology development and management (Terminology Developing Model 5). This latter model seems to me an extension of the former and they appear feasible in a situation where the concept exists in the language for which the terminology is being developed. This approach is achievable in South Africa because there are about eleven official languages recognised by the South African government and terms are developed in these languages. The case of South Africa and Nigeria is similar as Nigeria has one official language and 3 national languages i.e., Igbo, Hausa and Yorùbá. These national languages have the status of being used in their region for official purposes. In Lagos state, Yorùbá is used on the floor of the House of Assembly on Thursdays. Every Wednesday is Yorùbá day in all government-owned schools across Lagos state and Yorùbá is always used as the language of instruction on this day. Hausa is the official language of several states in

northern Nigeria. Considering the similarities that exist between South Africa and Nigeria, the UKZN and TDM 4 & 5 models can be adopted for terminology development in Nigeria. However, this study further modifies the models by introducing strategies that account for the derivation of terms. This study will dwell more on these strategies and the terms derived by the media.

Methodology

The methodological approach used in this research is qualitative, i.e., live recording, transcription, and key informant interviews. Terms were sourced and harvested from English news broadcasts and newspapers. Live broadcasts of Yorùbá news of two selected radio stations in Lagos state of the south western part of Nigeria were recorded and transcribed. The selected radio stations are Faaji 106.5FM and Bond 92.9 FM. The transcriptions were closely studied with the aim of identifying the Yorùbá terms used for the concept presented in the English language in the source data. This was helpful as it was possible to track terms developed by the media for given concepts. Media practitioners were interviewed with the aim of understanding the process(es) that they used to derive terms that were identified to have been derived by them. Some elderly native speakers of Yorùbá language were also interviewed to sample their opinions on terms appropriate for concepts that are not entirely new to the Yoruba community. The appropriate term derivation strategy employed in the derivation term was identified and appropriately indicated in the data analysis.

Analysis

This study posits that terminology development in African languages should be based on a translation-oriented terminology model. This position is based on the existing reality that almost all terms exist in the official languages, which in most cases are foreign languages used as official languages in most African countries. The terminology development model proposed by Khumalo (2016), and highlighted above, is adopted

for the study. Scholars have agreed that terminology development in African Languages is an effort beyond mere translation (Yusuff 2010; Olubode-Sawe 2010; Eleshin 2022; 2023). At the point of translation, the derivation of every term must be properly accounted for by indicating the process followed for the derivation. Eleshin (2023) refers to the process followed as strategies. Every terminology development effort must follow certain terminology development strategies. This study adopts the strategies proposed by Eleshin (2023):

- Lexicon: this refers to terms already in existence in both languages.
- Morphological processes (MP): this is the use of term derivation processes like affixation (prefix, interfix), compounding, reduplication and desententialisation.
- Coinages: this is the process of putting together strings of phonemes in a natural pattern to derive new terms in a language. The position of this research is that terms derived using this method are often descriptive. Here are three sub-strategies of coinages:
 - Describing Physical Features (DPF): this strategy is used to derive terms by describing the physical features of the concept or notion.
 - Describing Functionality (DF): this strategy is used to derive terms by describing the function of the notion, idea, or concept.
 - Describing Quality (DQ): terms are derived by describing the nature or quality of the concept.
- Semantic Extension (SEMEX): this means extending the name of an existing idea to a new idea. The two ideas are either related by feature, nature, function or meaning.
- Loan: this strategy is also referred to as borrowing. It is the process of loaning terms from a speech domain e.g., Table (English) Tébù (Yorùbá). The two words are pronounced the same way. This example was given to illustrate the concept of loaning as a term derivation strategy, since it will not be discussed in the analysis below.

It is important to note that, sometimes, these strategies can overlap. That is, more than one strategy can be used to derive a term.

In this study, focus is on terms used by the media. These terms cut across different disciplines; politics, judiciary, legislature, labour union related, and health.

S/N	Source Terms	Media Generated Terms	Glossary	Strategy
1.	Social distancing	Sún-fún-mi kí-n-sún-fún-ọ	Shift for me, I shift for you	DQ
2.	Nose Mask	Ìbòmú	Nose cover	DF
3.	Covid-19	Àrùn fófíḽḽḽḽ/ kofid-19	Covid disease	Loan
4.	Bandits	Ikò Jàndùkú adihámóra-ogun	Group of armed thugs	DQ
5.	Terrorists	Ikò Alákatakítí	Group of fanatics	DQ
6.	Subsidy	Owó ìrànwó	Money paid to assist	DF
7.	Head of department	Olórí ẹka	Head of a division	LEXICON
8.	Senate president	Olórí ilé-ìgbìmò aṣofin àgbà	Head of national legislative	DQ
9.	Bill	Àbá òfin	Proposed law	DQ
10.	Correspondence	Oníròyìn/ Akóròyìjọ	Person who gathers news	LEXICON
11.	Reporter	Ajábò-iròyìn	News reporter	MP
12.	Commonwealth Nations	Àjọ àwọn orílẹ̀-èdè tó gba òminira lábẹ́ ìjọba ilẹ̀-Gẹ̀ẹ̀sì	Group of countries that gained independence from the British government	DQ
13.	Covid protocols	Ìlànà kófíḽḽḽḽ	Covid related rules	DQ
14.	Autopsy	Àyẹ̀wò òkú	Corpse examination	DQ
15.	Ransom	Owó itúsílẹ̀	Money paid for freedom	DQ
16.	Damages	Owó itàrà̀n	Money paid for damage caused	DQ
17.	Power distribution company	Ilé-ìṣẹ́ tó n pín iná mọ̀nọ̀-mọ̀nọ̀	Company that distributes electricity	DF

S/N	Source Terms	Media Generated Terms	Glossary	Strategy
18.	Suspected kidnapper	Afurasí ajínigbé	Suspected kidnapper	
19.	Treasury	Àpò isúná	Budgeting purse	DQ
20.	High Commissioner of the UK in Nigeria	Ajélé ijọba ilẹ̀ UK ní Nàìjíríà	Representative of the British government in Nigeria	DF
21.	Prominent Political Party	Egbé ọ̀ṣẹ̀lú tó gbórín jùlọ̀	The biggest political party	DQ
22.	Indefinite strike	Ìyanṣẹ̀lòdì Àinígbedéke	Indefinite strike	DQ
23.	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC)	Èka tó ní gbógun ti iwà ibàjẹ̀ lẹ̀ka owó-nàà àti ọ̀rọ̀-ajé	Department fighting against financial corruption	DF
24.	Refugee camp	Ibùdó ogun-lé-n-dé	Habitation for people dispersed by war	DQ
25.	Pension Trust Fund	Ọ̀ṣùwọ̀n èdàwó àwọ̀n ọ̀ṣiṣẹ̀ fẹ̀yinti	Contributions made for retired workers	DQ
26.	All Progressive Party	Egbé ọ̀ṣẹ̀lú onítẹ̀síwájú	Progressive Political Party	DQ
27.	Running mate	Igbákeji olùdíje dupò	Deputy contestant	DQ
28.	Rehabilitation Centre	Ibùdó átúnro iwà èdà	Centre for rebuilding human character	DQ
29.	Interrogate	Fòrọ̀pòni-nífun-yọ̀yọ̀	Deep questioning	LEXICON
30.	Facebook	Ìkàni ibánidórẹ̀ẹ̀ kojúsími-kí-n-kojú-sí-ẹ̀	Face-to-face Friendship platform	DQ

S/N	Source Terms	Media Generated Terms	Glossary	Strategy
31.	Internet	Ìkànnì ayélujára	A platform where the world interjects	DQ
32.	Twitter	Ìkànnì abéyefò	Bird-like channel	DPF
33.	Boko Haram	Gídìgánpá agbèbòn	Notorious gunmen	DPF
34.	Gunmen	Ikò Agbèbòn	Group of armed men	DPF
35.	Chief Justice	Adájò àgbà	Chief Justice	DQ
36.	Retired Justice	Adájò fèyintì	Retired justice	DQ
37.	14 days ultimatum	Gbèdèke ojú mèrinlá	14 days ultimatum	LEXICON
38.	Excise tax	Owó-orí lóri jálá ǹnkan mímu	Tax on litre of drink	DQ
39.	University Alumni Association	Egbé Akékòò jáde Fásitì	Group of students who graduated from the same university	DQ
40.	National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA)	Àjò tó ñ dèkun gbígbe egbòogi olóro àti àsilò rè	The agency working against the trafficking and misuse of drugs	DF
41.	Ex-convict	Tèwòndé	Prison returnee	MP
42.	Gun license	Ìwé àṣe àtilòbòn	Certificate for the use of gun	DQ
43.	Nigerian Medical Association (NMA)	Egbé àwọn oníṣègùn òyìnbó	Group of Medical practitioners	DQ
44.	Resign	Kòwé-fipò-sílè	Write to stepdown from a position	
45.	Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC)	Àjò tó ñ dèna itànkálè àrùn	A commission working against the spread of diseases	DF

S/N	Source Terms	Media Generated Terms	Glossary	Strategy
46.	Correctional centre	Ogbà àtúnṣe iwà	Centre for behaviour correction	DF
47.	Independent Petroleum Marketers Association of Nigeria (IPMAN)	Egbé Alágbàtà epo bẹntiro tó dádúró	Group of independent petroleum marketers	DQ
48.	Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC)	Ilé-iṣẹ́ tó ní sí ọ̀rọ̀-epo rọ̀bì lórílẹ̀-èdè Nàìjíríà	National petroleum corporation of Nigeria	DF
49.	World Health Organisation (WHO)	Àjọ elétò ilera àgbáyé	A body of medical practitioners of the world	DQ
50.	Toll gate	Ènu iloro	Toll gate	SEMEX
51.	Refinery	Èbu ifọ̀po rọ̀bì/ Oríkò ifọ̀po rọ̀bì	Oil processing centre	SEMEX
52.	Camp	Bùba	A temporary place of rest	LEXICON
53.	Whip	Akójáanu	Disciplinarian	MP/ SEMEX
54.	Coup	ìditẹ̀gbàjọba	Conspiring to take over ruling position	MP
55.	Budget	ìsúná	Budget	LEXICON
56.	Explosion	Ìbúgbàmù	Explosion	MP
57.	Support	Şúgbáá	Come to aid	LEXICON
58.	Constituency	Èkùn idibò	Voting constituent	MP
59.	Primary election	Ìdibò abẹ́lé	Primary election	MP
60.	Bother	Kanminú	Troubled	LEXICON
61.	Arrest	Pánpẹ	Trap	LEXICON

S/N	Source Terms	Media Generated Terms	Glossary	Strategy
62.	Representative of a foreign government	Ajélẹ̀	Government representative in a foreign land	LEXICON
63.	Tussle	Fàákája	Tussle	LEXICON
64.	Beckon	Wawó sí	Call on	LEXICON
65.	Plead	Rawó èbè	Beg	LEXICON
66.	Frequent	Gbọnmọ-gbọnmọ	Constant	LEXICON
67.	Suspect	Aléboḷérù	Someone who has something that can implicating	LEXICON

Major findings

It is interesting to note that sometimes, strategy overlapping can occur where a term can be accounted for by more than one term derivation strategy. This occurs on the table above in serial number (37) and (54) respectively.

The term derivation strategies discussed above can be divided under two categories. Belonging to the first category are Lexicon, MP and SEMEX and the second category are Coinages and Loan. The first category of strategies is used to derive terms for concepts that are not entirely new to Yorùbá speech community while the strategies in the second category are used to derive terms not entirely new concepts. The terms derived with the second category of strategy are concepts that are new to the Yorùbá speech community. Such concepts find their way into a speech community as a result of civilization and globalisation. since the world has become a global village.

On the table above from serial number (51) to (69), almost all the terms are derived with strategies in the second category. What this means is that concepts represented in this segment are not new to the Yorùbá speech community but, what is interesting about these terms used by the media is that they are not found on the lips of an average

Yorùbá speaker of this generation. These terms no longer enjoy robust and constant usage but the media in their quest to revitalize the Yorùbá language are engaging them to address some of the concepts presented in the English language.

Some of these terms will be analysed based on the clarifications the researcher was able to get from the elderly native speakers interviewed, and from Abraham's Dictionary (1958).

1. ***Ẹnu iloro* (SEMEX) (51)**

This is the front of a house or a demarcation within a settlement as in *Ẹnu iloro ilú*. It is usually a place of short stoppage during transit, a place where you have to either pay before passing through or not. Making payment at *Ẹnu iloro* is not a general rule but is subject to the authority of the land. Thus, using *Ẹnu iloro* for 'toll gate' is not unfounded. However, the addition of *òpópónà* (*tarred road*) by Bond FM to derive *Ẹnu iloro òpópónà* captures the present concept better.

2. ***Ẹbu ifọpo* (SEMEX) (52)**

In the traditional Yorùbá society, *ẹbu ifọpo* is a place where palm oil is processed; the Yorùbá Electronic Media (henceforth YEM) extended this semantically to 'refinery' where crude is processed(refined), and added *rọ̀bì* to indicate 'crude' and differentiate it from edible oil which the existing term stands for. *Ẹbu ifọporọ̀bì* is apt and may be retained in the terminology.

3. ***Bùba* (SEMEX) (53)**

Tracing the origin of this word was a bit difficult as some of the persons we interviewed could not give any direct explanation. However, some old sayings like *ìpònrí ajá ò gbódò békùn ní bùba* were resourceful. An explanation given by one of the resource persons for this research is that *bùba* is the habitation of leopards. *Bùba* is often used in YEM when referring to military camp during a battle or terrorist camp. Here, military men and terrorists are compared to leopards hence the extension of the semantics of the habitation of a leopard to a military camp during a battle or war and by extension, a terrorist camp.

4. *Páápé* (LEXICON) (63)

This is originally a trap. There are expressions like *o ti kó sí páápé mi* ‘you have entered my trap’, *mo de páápé sóko* (‘I set a trap in the farm’) Any-one or animal that enters into a trap will be in serious pain and will need the help of people around or the person who set the trap to be freed. The semantics of this term was extended to ‘arrest’ and this is not out of place considering the experience of someone who has been trapped and someone who has been arrested.

5. *Akójàánu* (MP/SEMEX) (54)

This literally means someone who applies bridles. According to Abraham’s dictionary, *ijánu* is ‘bridle’: *O kó ara rẹ níjàánu* (‘he bridled his tongue’/‘he displayed self-control.’) Bridle is found on the mouth of horses; it is usually held on to by the rider and used to control the movement of the horse. The term *ijánu* has since been extended to mean ‘brakes’, such that many young speakers of Yorùbá language identify it with brakes rather than bridle. The function of controlling the horse with the bridle has been extended to the brakes of automobiles like vehicles, bicycles, motorcycles and others which are used to control their movement. In the same vein, this bridle has been extended to the human tongue which needs to be controlled when talking. *Akójàánu* is therefore derived with the inclusion of the agentive prefix *a-* to derive the term.

- i. a- kó *ijánu* ‘whip’
pre- control bridle

This term is often used for a senate whip who conducts orderliness and decorum on the floor of the house.

These terms are presented as indigenously used in the traditional Yorùbá society; they are not coined. The terms are either semantically extended to a new concept or the concept already exists in the language and has a term used to represent it.

6. *Autopsy* (DQ) (14)

This is a test often carried out on a corpse to uncover the cause of death. The term derived for autopsy is *àyèwò-òkú*.

- i. àyẹ̀wò-òkú “corpse examination/investigation” (DQ)
examination-corpse

The derived term literally means corpse examination (or investigation). This term does not portray the meaning of the source term in its entirety because it does not show that the test is often carried out to determine the exact cause of death of the deceased. If this concern is to be captured, the terms derived would have probably been *àyẹ̀wò okùnḡà-ikú*.¹

- ii. àyẹ̀wò okùnḡà-ikú ‘autopsy’ (DQ)
examine cause-death

This term would seem to express the notion better than the term derived by the YEM.

7. Commonwealth (DQ) (12)

According to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, ‘commonwealth,’ formerly called the British Commonwealth of Nations, was an association of sovereign states who acknowledged the British monarch as a symbolic head. This association has since become free as any country of the world can apply to be a member without any intersection with the British Empire, as indicated on the Commonwealth website. There are 56 sovereign states now as members of the commonwealth, including the United Kingdom. Gabon and Togo just joined in 2022. The term *àjọ àwọ̀n orílẹ̀-èdè tó gbò̀mìnira lábẹ̀ ijọ̀ba ilẹ̀ Gẹ̀gẹ̀sì* was derived by the YEM for this concept.

- i. àjọ àwọ̀n orílẹ̀-èdè tó gbò̀mìnira lábẹ̀ ijọ̀ba
ilẹ̀ Gẹ̀gẹ̀sì
 association plural nation that gained independence from
 the government of Britain

¹ Editor’s note: The term, *àyẹ̀wò* does already carry the meaning “investigate cause.” For example, a sick person would be told: *Lọ ẹ̀ àyẹ̀wò ní ilẹ̀ iwosan* (“Go for a **check-up/medical examination** in the hospital”). The term *àyẹ̀wò òkú* (“examination [of] corpse”) therefore adequately conveys the needed information as a translation equivalent for “autopsy.” The addition of *okùnḡà* (“cause”) to the term would therefore seem superfluous.

‘Association of nations that gained independence from the British government.’ (DQ)

If the explanation above is to be followed, the term derived will work for the British Commonwealth of Nations which was before the 1940s. Modern Commonwealth of Nations as it stands now has not only states which were formerly under the British colonial government as members therefore, the derived term can be faulted. The removal of ‘British’ from the name is significant and must not be overlooked as already done by the YEM. However, reading through the criteria for joining, there is a caveat that any country that wishes to join the commonwealth nations ‘must acknowledge His Majesty King Charles III as the head of the commonwealth.’ Now, to derive a term that will capture the concept of the commonwealth, it will require the consideration of either *modalities of joining association* or *name of the association*. If the modalities of joining the association are to be considered, the following derivation may be adopted considering the caveat earlier mentioned.

- ii. *Àjọ àwọn orílẹ̀-èdè aṣòótọ́ sí ìjọba ilẹ̀-Gẹ̀ẹ̀si* (DQ)
 Association plural nation faithful to government Britain
 ‘Association of nations in allegiance to the British government’

But, if the name of the association is to be considered, a possible derivation is:

- iii. *Àjọ àwọn orílẹ̀-èdè àjùmọ̀jọ̀rọ̀* (DQ)
 Association plural nation enjoying collective wealth

Either of these derivations is possible but subject to criticism

8. High Commissioner of UK in Nigeria (DF) (20)

This is the head of the British high commission in Abuja, Nigeria. The term derived by YEM is *ajélẹ̀ ìjọba ilẹ̀ UK ní Nàìjíríà*. *Ajélẹ̀* has since been in the Yorùbá lexicon. According to R.C Abraham’s dictionary, the term *Ajélẹ̀* means the administrative officer ‘of a former colonial government’ in charge of an area; the term has been extended to mean representatives of foreign governments in a country like the high commissioner of Canada in Nigeria. Where *ajélẹ̀* is x because of the length of the meaning:

- i. *ajẹlẹ̀ ijọba ilẹ̀ UK ní Nàìjíríà*
 x government land UK in Nigeria.
 ‘Representative of British government in Nigeria’

Following the analysis above, this derivation is clear and direct.

Terms analysed above can be placed under the two categories of term derivation strategies discussed above. Terms analysed in 1–5 above are under the first category (theory-oriented), while the terms in 6–8 are under the second category (translation-oriented).

Conclusion

This study has presented two categories of terminology development strategies to demonstrate that terminology development is a panacea for aspects of disentanglement with the African future. The analysis shows the effort of the media in revitalizing the Yorùbá language in three dimensions. First, the continuous use of indigenous terms for concepts that exist in a particular speech domain; second, the extension of the meaning of an existing concept to a new concept, and third, coinage of terms for concepts that are entirely to the Yorùbá speech community, but have become a part of the community. This discovery is the crux of this study; to show that terminology development is indeed a solution to possible endangerment of African languages in the future. If a proper terminology development model is adopted, the future of African languages will be secured.

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