



# The Notion of Truth among the Yoruba's

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## Abstract

The problem of language translation poses several epistemic challenge to understanding what a concept meant per time. The Yoruba people of Nigeria are one tribe that if not properly understood, one could run into several epistemic problem. A single word could have close to twenty denotative meanings aside connotative meanings. This paper examines the subject matter of 'Truth' among the Yoruba people; that this word among the Yoruba people have both epistemic and ethical meaning. The paper exposes the nature of truth among the Yoruba, the distinction between epistemic and ethical use of the word. The paper discusses what constitute an epistemic truth for the Yoruba taking leap from the work of Barry Allen and Olubi sodipo 'Knowledge and Belief' in Yoruba. The paper concludes with a comparative analysis of the concept of truth in western thought and among the Yoruba people of Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Truth; Ooto; Iro; Igagbo

## Introduction

The question about what truth is has been an epistemic problem from time immemorial, the intertwine nature of the concept of truth with the concept of knowledge has always made the problem become more complex, because when we claim to know, it implies that we claim to know of a truth, for if it is a false, we cannot have claim to know, and when we claim to hold or have a truth, it signifies a conscious knowledge about something which we have regard to be the true, so while the epistemic problem of knowledge still persist, the justification of what truth is remains imminent. However, it becomes important to know that the concept of knowledge, beliefs and truth is divergent and hence, going by Quine's indeterminacy of universal propositional attitude, it will be an error to subscribe to the fact that we have universal propositions, that is, this concepts have precise meaning equivalent in other, particularly African language. Suffices to say that the conception of truth, its nature, and process of acquisition in the Yoruba world view although may aim at achieving the same end point like the western conception but yet has its own significant differences.

Ontologically, the negation of an epistemic proposition is not regarded as lie among the Yoruba, rather it is regarded to as falsehood, but due to the fact that most Yoruba people have difficulties in separating an epistemic statement from an ethical statement, they consciously or unconsciously inter-change falsehood as Lie when discussing epistemic issues. Also truth among the Yoruba is relative. Hence, this paper aims at looking at the notion of truth among the Yoruba's as well explicated in the works of Barry Allen and Sodipo vis-à-vis the concept of knowledge and belief with special recourse to both the western and Yoruba conception as it serve as a paradigm for truth. The paper concludes with looking at some similarities between western conception of truth and the Yoruba conception of truth, and then having a critique of the Yoruba conception of truth.

## A Trajectory of the Problem of Truth

There cannot be the question of truth in the western world without a claim to knowledge. The philosophers' search is a search for truth. From the pre-Socratic up till the

modern age, philosophers have concerned themselves with the search for truth and certainty in our knowledge claims. It seem to me that the search for truth is the search for a particular feature or an entity. What then is truth? How do we know one when we see her? What makes truth true? How do I conceptualize the concept 'truth'? What kind of theory has been able to address these problems? The problem of truth is not a problem in isolation. There is this quest for truth and certainty in our knowledge claim, hence after the refutation of the traditional account of knowledge, there arose a wide and yet unsettled debate on the structure of knowledge, the theories of justification and the possibility of a true proposition. It may be practically tasking to expound all there is about truth.

However, the question of what is truth is a very delicate philosophical question has what we hold to be truth is relative. Western Philosophers down the ages have conceived truth differently. Plato and his followers conceived truth as an entity existing outside the mind, an entity in an intelligible world. The mind discovers it and participates in it. The epistemological concern for certainty and truth in our knowledge claims can be traced back to the development in the thoughts of Plato concerning knowledge as 'justified true belief'. Epistemically, justified beliefs are beliefs that are truth-conducive; therefore the epistemic goal is such that knowledge is not a belief in any form of falsehood.

Following the traditional account of knowledge as 'justified true belief', there are three conditions to knowledge; the justification condition, the truth condition, and the belief condition. Although there are counter-examples to show that these conditions are not sufficient giving rise to a fourth condition which is not clear and well spelt out. Truth now becomes a necessary condition for knowledge. That truth is a necessary condition for knowledge implies that one cannot say that he knows falsely that 'p' as this will in no wise count as knowledge. Knowledge must therefore satisfy the condition of 'truth'; indubitability and logically unfalsifiable.

However, other philosophers have also contributed to the question of truth, for instance, Plotinus identified truth with the 'one' and by contemplating the one, the mind participate in it. For Descartes, truth is the clear distinct perception of inmate ideas, truth is indubitable, it comes from within us. The most basic truth for him is the cogito ergo sum. Aristotle conceived truth as the conformity of the mind with reality. The Islamic medieval philosopher, Averroes, is known for his "Double Truth" theory according to which one and the same thing can be true in one discipline but false in another

discipline. For instance, it could be true in philosophy that there is no immortality of the soul, while at the same time it could be true in religion that there is immortality of the soul. The British empiricist tradition of Locke, Beckley and Hume see truth as the agreement between ideas. The object of knowledge are not things themselves but our ideas of them which derive from the impressions they make on us when we perceive them. For Hegel, Schelling and Fichte, truth lies in the Absolute. However, the existentialist introduced a subjective dimension to the concept of truth.

The different disparity about what truth is has shifted the question of what truth is to be what constitute truth, because if we know what constitute truth, then it could be a signboard to direct us to know what truth is. The traditional account of knowledge tells us that we cannot know that which is not true; this is not to say that we know all things which are true. Truth is a necessary condition for knowledge because when we say that we know, it necessitates the truth of such claim. For example, one might be correct to say that the earlier scientists believed the earth was flat but may be incorrect to say that they knew that the earth was flat. This will falsify the knowledge claim. Epistemic truth as we are concerned with are asserted in our propositional claims to knowledge. Truth therefore becomes the predicate of propositions such that the negation of it is falsehood. 'Truth' is a condition which knowledge must meet.

One may believe what is false as well as what is true. On very many subjects, people hold different kinds of incompatible opinion: hence, some beliefs must be erroneous. Since erroneous beliefs are often held just as strongly as true beliefs, it becomes a difficult question how they are to be distinguished from true beliefs. How are we to know in a given case, that our belief is not erroneous? This is the question that has saddled the epistemic empire to which no satisfactory response has been given. However, the clarification of the concept of 'truth' and 'falsehood' may be a better approach.

### The Concept of Truth

At the end of the trajectory, what we could subscribe to is the fact that while still on the quest to know what truth is, it will be of important to understand what constitute truth. In our claim to knowledge, we make propositional statements. These statements are either true or false. This is different from statements of fact which cannot be said to be true or false, but empirically verifiable. Truth is such that the negation of it is falsehood<sup>2</sup>. This is one confusion of the layman. The opposite of truth which we are considering is

1 Omoregbe. J. I. 2007. *Introduction to Epistemology* Lagos: Joja Educational Research and Publishers. P.40.

2 Ayer A. J. 1952. *Language, Truth and Logic*. Dover Publications Inc. New York. p.86.

falsehood and not lie as the layman would say. When I say: 'I know that p', it can either be the case that I am saying the truth or that my proposition is false, incorrect or not the case. The concept of lie or truthfulness as its opposite is statements of morals. This will lead me to briefly state that there are moral and epistemic truths but the kind of truth that we are interested in is the epistemic truth.

The notion of epistemic truth in our knowledge claim seems to be the search for a particular feature or an entity. Popper believes that no one knows the truth, for when we see her, we cannot recognize her because no one knows her features<sup>3</sup>. Truth now becomes a metaphysical concept. The idea of truth is one of the central issues in epistemology as it deals with knowledge. We can say that truth is an enigmatic concept, this is because what is true in one situation may be false in another...this means that we can have situational truths, relative truths and subjective truths. If these were the case, then, there is no problem with the concept of truth. The philosophical problem emanates from the explanation that truth entails irreversibility. What is true should be true under all conditions.

Truth should be objective, universal, stable and certain. There must be noticeable criteria for identifying truth anywhere we see it, but the problem is that the features of truth as noted above are not visible, how do we recognize her with those features when we see her. Ozumba analyzed some criteria necessary for something to be called truth<sup>4</sup>;

1. Truth is immutable, eternal and static
2. Truth is of a positive nature
3. Truth is typified in the reality and factuality of what it predicates
4. Truth is categorical, substantive and unmitigated.
5. Truth is the opposite of falsehood
6. Truth is a generic term with abstractive and concrete connotation

However, Russell<sup>5</sup> also noted three points to observe in the attempt to discover the nature of truth, three requisites which any theory must fulfill: first, Our theory of truth must be such as to admit of its opposite, falsehood. A good many philosophers have failed adequately to satisfy this condition: they have constructed theories according to which all our thinking ought to have been true, and have then had the greatest difficulty in finding a place for falsehood. In this respect our theory of belief must differ from our theory of

acquaintance, since in the case of acquaintance it was not necessary to take account of any opposite. Also. It seems fairly evident that if there were no beliefs there could be no falsehood, and no truth either, in the sense in which truth is correlative to falsehood. In fact, truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs and statement. Suffices to say, it is to be observed that the truth or falsehood of a belief always depends upon something which lies outside the belief itself. If I believe that Charles I died on the scaffold, I believe truly, not because of any intrinsic quality of my belief, which could be discovered by merely examining the belief, but because of an historical event which happened two and a half centuries ago. If I believe that Charles I died in his bed, I believe falsely: no degree of vividness in my belief, or of care in arriving at it, prevents it from being false, again because of what happened long ago, and not because of any intrinsic property of my belief. Hence, although truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, they are properties dependent upon the relations of the beliefs to other things, not upon any internal quality of the beliefs.

This position will however lead us to briefly discuss some of the theories of truth within the western purview in general before we proceed to distilling the Yoruba concept of truth.

### Brief Exposition of the Theories of Truth

We have various theories of truth that have been propounded over the years but for the purpose of this discourse we will only be explaining them briefly.

The coherent theory of truth is the first that will be discussed; this theory opines that truth is structural and logical in nature. It holds that a statement is true if it coheres or conforms to a system of statements already known to be true of which it belongs<sup>6</sup>. The Proponents of this theory are idealists and rationalists such as F.H. Bradley and Brand Blanchard, Spinoza, Leibniz, who believe that knowledge is external and subjective to one's mind. "Idealism claims that the objects of experience do not lie outside our minds waiting to affect us, but that their constituting reality is inseparable from the operation of minds or some mind<sup>7</sup>". As rationalists, there is the belief that knowledge has an intrinsically logical structure. For both Bradley and Blanchard, reality must be considered as an objective whole which is organized systematically and expresses its unity and comprehensibility to those who would understand it...therefore there are no independent facts and truths because no events are ever causally related.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*P.75.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* P.42

<sup>3</sup> Alcock L. M. (ed.). 1998, *Epistemology: the Big Question*. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford.p.52.

<sup>4</sup> Ozumba G. O. 2001. *A Concise Introduction to Epistemology*. Jochrisam Publishers, Calabar. P.67.

<sup>5</sup> Russell, B. "The Problems of Philosophy". Retrieved 2013, www. Abika.com, p.56.

The other one is the corresponding theory of truth which asserts that truth purports that a statement is true if it corresponds to fact. This is to say that our justified belief must correspond to facts. Proponents of this theory are epistemic realist and empiricists in the likes of Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, Kant, etc. argued from the realist background that objects exist independent of any mind that perceive or experience them, and empiricism which emphasizes the role of senses, observation and evidence as the source of knowledge. "A realist theory holds that among the conditions individually necessary and jointly sufficient for the truth of a belief, (proposition, sentence, or whatever) is a condition to the effect that a certain state of affairs must obtain... thus, a realist theory of truth imposes a certain ontological condition on the truth of a truth bearer<sup>8</sup>". Thus we can refer to the correspondence theory of truth as a realist theory of truth. Russell noted in his *Philosophical Development* that: "a belief is 'true' when it has an appropriate relation to one or more facts, and is false when it does not have such a relation<sup>9</sup>". Russell is of the view that 'truth' is to be defined in relation to facts.

Aside this we have the pragmatic theory of truth which upholds a proposition to be true base on how practical or instrumental it is, however we have other theories of truth like semantic, redundant and a host of other theories. But having done an exposition into the western conception of truth, it is now important to look at truth from the Yoruba world view.

### Belief and Knowledge as a Paradigm for Truth among the Yoruba's: Barry Allen and Sodipo in Retrospect

Just as in the western philosophy, the concept of truth in the Yoruba tradition does not stand in isolation; it is predicated upon belief (*gbagbo*) and knowledge (*imo*). The semantic analysis of belief in Yoruba is a combination of two different words (*gba*) which is to accept, agree or show your consent of approval and (*gbo*) which is to hear or listen. So belief in the Yoruba world view can simply mean, consenting or given an approval to what I hear or have heard. However, according to Allen and Sodipo, there are four logical possibilities that revolves round a believe in the Yoruba world view<sup>10</sup>. The first possibility is for you to hear and not agreeing (*ko gbagbo*) this means upon hearing a

propositional statement you do not wish to agree to such fact or the evidences of what you hear are not convincing enough. The second is hearing and agreeing, this is the fact of having an information and consenting to that particular information or agreeing to it, in this instance, believe has taken place, this is what the Yoruba refers to has believe. The third is not hearing and not agreeing, in this scenario nothing has really change about a belief because there is nothing in contention or nothing is in question. The last one is the aspect of not hearing and believing, the not hearing at this stage does not refer to verbal hearing but rather maybe when one is not paying proper attention to what he hears or when such person misunderstood what he hears. Hence, the belief is not a genuine believe because the process of hearing cannot be guarantee to have taking place.

For the Yoruba's, when you claim to hear something, it is believed that you understand (*ye*) that which you claim to hear, lack of understanding among the Yoruba could mean lack of hearing which in the actual sense of it should be not paying attention or lost of mind. Among the Yoruba's' hearing is not only a process of empirical awareness of sound, but it includes some form of metaphysical consciousness, that is why when a child is not paying attention or not listening to what is said, they will say that the mind (*okan*) is not there, that is absent of the mind. So hearing that lead to belief is a process of the ear and the human mind. The absent of one will lead to not hearing and as such, belief will not be imminent.

Belief is the path way to knowledge among the Yoruba's, hence the only belief that can lead to knowledge among the Yoruba is the second possibility listed above. However, it is important to know that the Yoruba epistemic tradition pitch more tent with empiricism than rationalism, although it inculcate some element of rationalism, but does rationalistic trends remains at the level of belief until it is justified empirically. Its justification however necessitate its truthfulness, hence knowledge for the Yoruba's can be taking as "justified true belief" just as Plato has propounded, but the method of knowledge justification in Yoruba is quite different from the western conception, and the Yoruba's do not have a monopolistic justification of knowledge. Suffices to say knowledge justification is pluralistic.

Knowledge for the Yoruba means (*imo*) and before I can claim to know (*mo*) I must have first seen that thing (*ri*) with my eyes (*oju*), but I cannot claim to know (*mo*) when my eye (*oju*) have not seen it, even if I hear I can only lay claim to belief or I touch or taste, all this will make the claim remain at the level of belief because my eye (*oju*) have not seen it, so I cannot claim to know. But then, it is believed in the Yoruba that it is impossible to taste or touch without seeing with your physical eye unless in a case of visual impairment, that is why there is always an aspersion being cast on the truthfulness

8 Owolabi K.A. 2000. *Issues and problems in philosophy*. Grovacs Network, Ibadan, p.60

9 Barry. A and Sodipo. J. O. 1986. *Knowledge, Belief and Witchcraft: Analytic Experiments in African Philosophy*. London: Ethnographica.p.60.

10 *Ibid*.P62

of the claim of a blind person because they will ask that did the blind person see it (*se ose oju e*). Knowledge can be justified via constant acquaintance with something; this can be categorized under induction. For instance, if for some month I have always pass through a street and I perceive an odour from one particular apartment, my first acquaintance with the odour might not guarantee my knowledge but after series of previous acquaintance I can now say that I know and this my knowledge is still predicated upon sense verification mostly by the eye such that if I am asked by someone where the odour is coming out from, I can point to that building and if the person did not believe my claim, I can say let us go there to see for yourself. This form of knowledge is the inductive knowledge, that is, it was the case yesterday, today and definitely it is the case tomorrow.

Another method of knowledge justification in Yoruba land is the eye witness or third party justification. If I claim to know something and I am reporting a speech to someone else who is in doubt about the truthfulness of my proposition, for me to convince that person that what I am saying is true, I could call an eye witness or third party who will back up my claim that indeed it is true. Getting to back this claim up mostly in the Yoruba system is predicated on sense experience. As a third party or testifier in the Yoruba world view you become responsible for whatever you say when you claim to see it (*ri*) but when you say you believe something to be true, they do not hold you responsible for knowledge, but when you confirm that you saw (*ri*) then you become accountable for knowledge claim. Even in legal issue, when you claim to see, you will be held responsible to defend what you claim to see. It should however be noted that for the Yoruba's, the fact that I am certain about my knowledge of something does not make others accept it to be knowledge in all cases, even when they are sure that I know. When you say that I know, your knowledge may be taking as believe to someone else because he or she has not seen (*ri*) it. For instance, if I tell someone I know that the earth is spherical because I have seen it and am sure, even when the person knows that I know, the person will not claim to know because he or she has not seen it, the person at best will claim to believe (*gbagbo*) but the only condition that such person can claim to know will be on the ground of my own justification, then such person will say I know (*mo*) because someone has seen it (*ri*) and if it leads to argument I will now be called upon as a third party or testifier to support the claim. Then they will ask me, is it true (*tooto*) that you have seen (*ri*) it. Then I will respond with yes (*beeni*). My affirmation does not equate to them knowing also, it only serve as a ground for them to believe if they trust my yes to be the truth.

In the Yoruba world view, a claim to know does not generate a scenario of lie, when you say you know, it is either your knowledge is the truth or false, at the stage of

knowledge, you affirm yes (*beeni*) that your claim is the truth, and No (*beeko*) that the claim is false. Hence the opposite of truth among the Yoruba is falsehood and not lie. The only instance when one can be regarded as a liar while presenting a proposition is at the level of moral judgment according to Allen and Sodipo. When one is said to be a liar then people will not believe such claim and it will not even transcend to knowledge.

### Conception of Truth for The Yoruba

Among the Yoruba people, when we have a proposition that is true, the negation of the truthfulness of such proposition is falsehood and it is been expressed using a negation called (*rara*) which means not true, however, when we talk about the truthfulness of an ethical statement among the Yoruba's the denier of the truthfulness of such ethical proposition is refer to as lie, which the Yoruba people call (*Iro*). Suffices to say that the distinction between the truthfulness of an ethical proposition from an epistemic statement among the Yoruba's can be explained using the chain below:

**A truthful proposition (*ooto*)-----Negation of truthful proposition (*Rara* or *Kin s'ooto*)**  
**Truthful ethical statement (*ooto*)-----Negation of truthful ethical statement (*Iro*)**

With the above chain, it implies that among the Yoruba's when something is true either an ethical statement or an epistemic statement, the same word is used to describe it which is *ooto* (*truth*), however, the difference in the linguistic expression comes in cases of falsity in either an ethical statement of a propositional statement. Among the Yoruba's, when an epistemic statement is not true, they say such epistemic statement is not the case using the word *rara* (not the case) or *kin se ooto*, that is, such epistemic statement is false, but if it is an ethical statement, for instance someone was accused of stealing and they want to say that such claim is not true, the Yoruba people will say *Iro ni*, which means it is a lie. By implication the word "LIE" is only used among the Yoruba's while discussing ethical issues and not epistemic issues.

In the Yoruba world view for something to be regarded as truth (*ooto*) one thing is needed to be added to complement the empirical evidence and this is the mind (*okan*). The *okan* here is referring to the seat of human consciousness or one's conscience; hence, some refer to it as (*eri okan*) in literary terms, the mind's testifier. Suffices to say that in the Yoruba world view when you claim to know (*mo*) your mind (*okan*) must testify to it before you can claim to lay hold on the truth. The mind so to say, is a mental ability of man, a rational part, and for truth to be fully ascertain among the Yoruba's both empiricism and rationalism have a meeting point, one without the other will not furnish us with the truth. Allen

and Sodipo assert that perception has a prima facie status, in that it alone of all the senses is a necessary condition for knowledge (*imo*). We must now turn to the correlative element of cognition- the witnessing of the okan (*eri okan*)<sup>11</sup> this is the second condition that must be fulfilled in order to have truthful knowledge (*imo tooto*). Allen and Sodipo opined that, truth in the Yoruba world view requires you to (*ri*) which represent the empirical acquisition of knowledge via the eye and your (*eri okan*) which is the testifying mind.

The function of the (*eri okan*) in the place of ascertaining of truth is so important, the Yoruba believe that our *eri okan* directs us or serve as a guide to discerning both situations and truthfulness of a proposition, that is why when a proposition is discovered to be false, one can say that my *eri okan* was telling me it is false, for instance, if we have a propositional statement of such that it is raining, one could say that my *eri okan* which is mind testifier is telling me not accept such claim to be true, hence truthfulness of any proposition among the Yoruba's is solely reliance on self consciousness or the activity of the mind. However, the Yoruba also really on empirical verification for the validation of a truthful proposition, hence, Allen and Sodipo said that truth which is called *ooto* among the Yoruba is (*ri + eri okan > ooto*)<sup>12</sup> which means (seeing + self consciousness/mind testifier = truth).

However, it appears that the relationship between the two terms is a symmetrical one. The established manual of translation (etm) translates *ooto* as truth. This we may provisionally accept, as long as we bear in mind that it is truth as defined by the conditions stipulated by the above relationship. For instance, if it is *ooto* that this motor vehicle stands here. If people say that the motor vehicle does not stand here, you will say that you use your own eye to see it- that it is *ooto*. *Ooto* appears to be a property of certain forms of experience and statements recounting experience.

But then, the Yoruba belief that there could be disagreement over the truthfulness of a proposition, and when this situation arise, there is a need for such person who claim to have or know the truth to make some explanation (*alaye*), this explanation can be seen as a form of justification, hence the final result of this justification or explanation becomes either true or false. However in situation when a person cannot be able to justify the truthfulness of a propositional statement, the Yoruba's could allow a third party to help in the validation of such claim, for instance, if someone make a propositional statement that it is raining outside, and another person denies the fact, the third person can help validate from an empirical point of view to prove

that such proposition is true.

Nevertheless, although from the semantic construction of the Yoruba people, it is evident that the negation of a truthful proposition is not lie but rather falsehood, but it is a general way among most Yoruba's to refer to the negation of a truthful proposition as lie, for instance, if one say that it is raining, some persons among the Yoruba's could say that such person has lied and it is not raining, and hence it brings a dilemma of knowing the difference between an epistemic proposition and an ethical statement. The reason for this dilemma is not farfetched as most Yoruba people cannot or do not really understand the difference between an epistemic statement and an ethical statement.

However, it is important to know that there is nothing like the truth or a specific way of ascertaining truth among the Yoruba's, as truthful propositions among the Yoruba could become false over time due to diverse cultural differences, modification of statement overtime, acculturation and import of civilization, we have seen several truthful propositions, historical findings, archives and traditions of people that have witnessed changes overtime. Also the continuous development of hermeneutics has seen a lot of truthful epistemic proposition among the Yoruba become either false of relative, so even among the Yoruba, truthful proposition, epistemic statement have relatively truth values.

Having examined the notion of truth among the Yoruba, it is important to look at a critique of the Yoruba conception of truth.

### A Critique of the Concept of Truth among the Yoruba's

One major criticism that have being levied against the Yoruba people is the fact that their process of attaining truth is rather too subjective, as it require individual *eri okan*, which is the testifier of the mind to attest to the truthfulness of an epistemic proposition, the notion of truth is more of personal affirmation of what an individual can be able to justify within the ambit of self-consciousness.

Also, some western conception of truth believes that truth exist independently of human existence, either man attest to it or not, it exist, but the Yoruba conception of truth will rather fall under the umbrella of social epistemology, as truth is nothing than a social frame work, it revolves round social contest. Truth among the Yoruba's can be regarded as a post-modernist truth.

However, the illustration of Barry Allen and Sodipo who equate truth to be seeing+ self consciousness/mind testifier falls short of other areas aside via sight or self consciousness

11 *Ibid.* P.64.

12 *Ibid.* P.66.

that truth can be ascertain, the Yoruba's derive truth via intuition among other means.

### Similarities between the Western Conception of Truth and Yoruba Conception of Truth

Although there was a point of divergence between western conception of truth and Yoruba conception of truth, but then we can find some similarities between them. Both of them hold that one of the criteria for someone to claim to know is if the point of reference is true and they both opine that the case that someone is being truthfulness is not a necessary condition for truthful proposition.

Another similarity is that, both have various theories of truth, although the Yoruba's do not spell out their own as theories but within their philosophy, while talking on aspects like *eri okan*, the testifier and *alaye*, one can see all this as various theories within the Yoruba world view that can enable one to lay hold on the truth.

Lastly both party believe that the opposite of truth is not lie and lie can only come in place when discussing moral issue

### Conclusion

The Yoruba most times consciously or unconsciously do affirm that when someone is not saying the truth, such person must be lying, but this paper has been able to examine the notion of truth among the Yoruba's and come out with a position that ontologically, the negation of truth

among the Yoruba is not lie, that is the reason behind the use of yes (*beeni*) or no (*beeko*) to either or affirm a truthful proposition instead of using the word lie (*iro ni*). However, this paper has been able to outline some similarities between western conception of truth and that of the Yoruba people, lastly the paper levied some criticisms against the notion of truth among the Yoruba, as epistemic truth are relative and constantly changing over time among the Yoruba's.

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