



## Hyperbolic fallacy as a stylistic signature in the Ìjálá and Dàdàkúàdá poetry

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**Abstract.** This study examined the creative and strategic use of the hyperbolic fallacy in the Ìjálá poetry of Ògúndáre Fóyánmu and Dàdàkúàdá by Odòlayè Àrẹ̀mú to enhance artistic and cultural significance. It argued that the innovative use of this specific fallacy in their Yorùbá oral poetry remains understudied, with a lack of understanding of how this rhetorical device contributes to the art form's aesthetic and cultural weight. This research aimed to address this gap by examining how these oral artists employ hyperbolic fallacy to create complex meanings, engage their audience, and reinforce cultural values and traditions. The methodology employed both primary and secondary sources of data collection. Primary data collection included selected discographies of Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Odòlayè Àrẹ̀mú; secondary data collection from books, academic articles, and online resources; and hermeneutic analysis and transcription to interpret cultural texts. This study revealed that these oral artists strategically employed the hyperbolic fallacy to create complex meanings, evoke emotions, and reinforce cultural values in their performances. The use of this fallacy, alongside others like metaphor, enhances the artistic and cultural significance of Ìjálá poetry, making it a rich and dynamic art form. This study revealed that these oral artists strategically employ hyperbolic exaggeration (àşojù) – what Western logic might label a “hyperbolic fallacy” – as a sophisticated stylistic device to create complex meanings, evoke emotions, and reinforce cultural values. Alongside other devices such as metaphor, this technique enhances the artistic and cultural significance of Ìjálá and Dàdàkúàdá poetry, serving as a distinctive stylistic signature that distinguishes the works of Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Odòlayè Àrẹ̀mú from genres such as Oríkì. This research contributed to the documentation and preservation of Yorùbá oral heritage, offers valuable insights for educators and performers in teaching rhetorical strategies in indigenous poetry, supports cultural revival efforts in contemporary Nigerian society, and provides a framework

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for appreciating how traditional oral forms continue to shape moral instruction, emotional engagement, and communal identity in modern contexts

**Keywords:** Yorùbá oral literature; artistic significance; cultural significance; Ìjálá poetry; rhetorical strategies

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## Introduction

Yorùbá oral literature represents a profound expression of cultural identity, wisdom, and creativity that has sustained communities for generations through storytelling, performance, and poetic forms. Within this tradition, genres such as Ìjálá and Dàdàkúàdá poetry stand out for their rhythmic intensity and ability to weave everyday experiences with deeper philosophical insights. These forms serve as vehicles for entertainment, moral instruction, and social commentary. A key element in these poetic forms is the hyperbolic fallacy, an intentional exaggeration or logical overstatement used not as an error but as a deliberate stylistic device to amplify emotions, highlight contrasts, and engage audiences in a vivid, memorable way. This technique allows poets to transcend ordinary language, creating layers of meaning that resonate with cultural values such as resilience, humour, and communal harmony. By employing hyperbolic fallacies, Yorùbá oral artists transform simple narratives into powerful artistic signatures that reinforce collective memory and adapt traditions to contemporary contexts. The study of this device is therefore essential for understanding the enduring vitality of Yorùbá poetry in a globalised world.

A large number of scholarly works have explored various aspects of Yorùbá oral literature, shedding light on its stylistic elements and cultural roles. B.O. Adeseye *et al.* (2022) investigated the potentials of Ifá oral poetry as a medium for both amusement and learning, focusing on how its narrative structures foster a desire for knowledge among listeners. Authors concluded that Ifá poetry effectively preserves cultural heritage by blending entertainment

with educational content, thereby contributing to Nigerian societal development. Similarly, E.T. Ojo (2021) examined the use of repetition in Yorùbá texts, including oral forms, and noted that it enhances emphasis and rhythm, thereby strengthening the persuasive and mnemonic qualities of Yorùbá literature and its oral transmission across generations. O.A. Jacob (2025) analysed the integration of oral poetry within Bàtá dance performances and concluded that these elements document proverbs and poetic teachings, preserving indigenous knowledge for future generations while highlighting dance as a repository of oral traditions. M.M. Fasehun (2025) investigated therapeutic poetics in Yorùbá praise names and determined that such names employ logotherapeutic elements to foster psychological well-being and cultural affirmation within communities. M.J. Oloko *et al.* (2025) observed that enriched idioms, proverbs, and figurative expressions honour deities, reaffirming their status through rhetorical and stylistic depth.

Research on Yorùbá oral literature has recently shifted from simply cataloguing different forms to viewing these performances as vibrant, evolving social texts deeply embedded in their contexts. The major focus today is the interaction and mutual influence between tradition and modern life. K. Barber (2021) states, that during the 1800s, Yorùbá oral genres such as Oríkì (praise poetry) and Ìjálá (hunters' chants) actively responded to massive social changes such as war, state-building, and early encounters with global influences. Author highlighted how these oral traditions were not static but served as tools for recording history,

critiquing society, and shaping new identities. Yorùbá oral poetry employs vivid metaphors and imagery, often termed the “hyperbolic fallacy”, to convey complex philosophical ideas. These expressive figures are not merely decorative but carry profound meaning and contribute significantly to modern philosophical discourse. Another important theme in recent scholarship is the role of the individual artist, or *akéwì*, in the oral tradition. Scholars have moved away from viewing oral poetry as purely anonymous folk culture toward recognising the unique artistic styles of master performers. This focus on individual creative agency makes it possible to examine figures such as Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Dàdàkúàdá as intentional artists. Their distinctive use of devices such as the hyperbolic fallacy reveals a personal creative signature rather than merely a traditional formula.

In summary, contemporary scholarship presents Yorùbá oral literature as a dynamic and intellectually rich field shaped by individual agency. This offers an ideal framework for analysing specific poetic styles and innovations. Yorùbá oral literature itself is a diverse and lively tradition that includes forms such as *Ìjálá* (hunters’ poetry), *Oríkì* (praise poetry), *Ewì* (modern poetry), *Ràrà* (chant-like poetry), and *Ifá* divination poetry. These genres are known for their vivid imagery, metaphors, rhythmic patterns, and call-and-response techniques, all of which help preserve cultural heritage, communicate moral lessons, provide social critique, and entertain communities. While existing studies illuminate stylistic techniques such as repetition, metaphor, and rhetorical dexterity in Yorùbá oral literature, as well as their therapeutic and social functions, they largely overlook the specific role of hyperbolic fallacy as a stylistic signature in genres such as *Ìjálá* and *Dàdàkúàdá* poetry. Little attention has been given to how this deliberate fallacy creates complex meanings and distinguishes the works of artists such as

Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú from other forms. This gap underscores the need for focused research on hyperbolic elements to appreciate their contributions to artistic innovation and cultural reinforcement fully. While existing studies illuminate stylistic techniques such as repetition, metaphor, and rhetorical dexterity in Yorùbá oral literature, as well as their therapeutic and social functions, they largely overlook the specific role of hyperbolic exaggeration as a stylistic signature in genres such as *Ìjálá* and *Dàdàkúàdá* poetry. This study therefore, examines the creative and strategic use of hyperbolic exaggeration (often described in Western terms as “hyperbolic fallacy”) in the *Ìjálá* poetry of Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and the *Dàdàkúàdá* of Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú, highlighting its implications for the aesthetic and cultural significance of Yorùbá oral traditions.

### Materials and Methods

This study adopted a purely qualitative research design, shifting away from a mixed-methods approach to focus on a descriptive-analytical exploration of Yorùbá oral performance. A qualitative framework is essential for capturing the depth of metaphorical expression and the cultural nuances inherent in Yorùbá oral poetry. This design facilitates a detailed examination of the “hyperbolic fallacy” not as a statistical occurrence, but as a deliberate stylistic signature and a vehicle for profound interpretive understanding. The primary scientific method employed was hermeneutics, grounded in the philosophical insights. H.-G. Gadamer (2004) “fusion of horizons” serves as the interpretive foundation, used to bridge the historical and cultural context of traditional *Ìjálá* and *Dàdàkúàdá* texts with the contemporary perspectives of the researcher and audience. This approach justifies the analysis of seemingly “illogical” fallacies as meaningful dialogues rather than detached objective exercises. Complementing this, P. Ricoeur (1981) produced the concept of “*distanciation*”, which

was applied to treat the transcribed oral performances as autonomous texts. This allows for a critical reflection that moves from a “naïve” literal reading of exaggerations to a productive appropriation of their deeper philosophical and spiritual truths.

The research corpus consists of a purposive selection of audio-recorded performances and discographies from two master Yorùbá oral artists: Ògúndáre Fóyánmú, representing the Ìjálá (hunters’ chant) genre, and Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú, representing the Dàdàkúádá genre. The research corpus consists of a purposive selection of twelve audio-recorded performances (approximately 4.5 hours of recordings): seven tracks from Ògúndáre Fóyánmú’s Ìjálá discography and five tracks from Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú’s Dàdàkúádá performances. These were chosen from commercially available discographies after repeated listening sessions identified a high density of hyperbolic expressions and “impossible images”. Selection criteria included: prominence of hyperbolic exaggeration as a recurring structural element; thematic depth relating to lineage, morality, divine authority, ancestral veneration, or social critique; and representativeness across the artists’ careers. Specific excerpts were selected because they best illustrate the device functioning in eulogy, social criticism, and artistic self-assertion – the three rhetorical functions that emerged as dominant during initial analysis. This focused sampling allows for in-depth hermeneutic interpretation while ensuring the examples reflect a consistent stylistic signature rather than isolated incidents. Selection criteria for specific tracks and excerpts were based on stylistic prominence, specifically the density of hyperbolic expressions and “impossible images” that characterise the artists’ unique creative signatures. Additionally, works were prioritised based on their thematic depth regarding lineage, morality, divine authority, and communal identity. While the primary

corpus is drawn from the discographies of the two artists, one illustrative example from the Ifá corpus is included for comparative purposes to show that hyperbolic exaggeration is a broader feature of Yorùbá oral aesthetics. Thus, this study employed comparative analysis. However, the detailed hermeneutic analysis concentrates exclusively on performances by Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú to identify the most representative examples of stylistic transgression.

Primary data was subjected to the transcription and translation process to preserve the integrity of the oral tradition. Audio recordings were transcribed into text using standardised Yorùbá orthography, which is vital for maintaining the tonal markers essential for poetic rhythm and meaning. The subsequent translations from Yorùbá to English were produced and carefully revised by the author. This hands-on approach was necessary to ensure that the “metaphorical and hyperbolic force” of the original chants, which are often lost in literal or automated translations, was accurately captured to reflect the artists’ original intentions and cultural weight. The criteria used to classify the “Hyperbolic Fallacy” were grounded in both Western rhetorical scholarship and Yorùbá literary aesthetics. While Western logic often views fallacies as reasoning errors or logical flaws, this study reframes them based on established rhetorical principles where exaggeration is a valued tool for emphasis and social commentary. Specifically, the “hyperbolic fallacy” was defined as a deliberate, purposeful step beyond formal logic, such as the use of non sequitur or anthropomorphism, to reveal profound truths that straightforward logic cannot capture. The findings are classified by their rhetorical functions: eulogy, social criticism, and artistic self-assertion, rather than a sequential review of songs. This thematic grouping revealed how hyperbole operates as a consistent structural element across oral genres.

## Results and Discussion

The systematic analysis of the research corpus confirms that the “hyperbolic fallacy”, that is, the deliberate use of logically impossible or vastly exaggerated claims, functions as a sophisticated stylistic signature. Rather than being a rhetorical flaw, these intentional departures from literal truth bridge the “horizons” of traditional hunters’ chants (Ìjálá) and Dàdákúàdá. Through this lens, the artists elevate the mundane to the mythic, providing a profound hermeneutic window into Yorùbá cultural values and the resilience of oral traditions in a contemporary context. In the context of eulogy and ancestral veneration, Ògúndáre Fọ́yánmú utilises “impossible images” to capture the essence of a subject’s essence and precocious nature. For instance, in one of Ògúndáre Fọ́yánmú’s song, he eulogises late Àyìnlá Ọmọwùrà, thus: “Kò tí ì dàgbà tó fi gbéyàwó, ó jọ pé láyé ló bá obinrin rẹ, Àyìn-lá ọkọ iyá àgbà”. Translated accurately, this rendered as “He had not even grown up before he got married; it seems as though he met his wife in the primordial world, Àyìn-lá, the husband of the elderly woman”.

This identifies a chronological and biological fallacy, as it suggests a physical and temporal impossibility where a child or an unborn spirit is already functioning as a husband to an elder. From a hermeneutic perspective, this defies physical logic to emphasise the “precocious spirit” and the innate, predestined greatness of the subject. By claiming Ọmọwùrà met his wife in a previous life or before maturity, Fọ́yánmú utilises hyperbole to suggest that the artist’s talent and social standing were not merely acquired through age but were divinely ordained and “immanent” from birth. This aligns with the Yorùbá concept of Àyànmó (destiny), where the “horizon” of the physical life is fused with the spiritual “horizon” of the ancestors (Babalola, 1966). When used for social criticism, particularly by Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú in the Dàdákúàdá genre, hyperbole serves

to highlight the absurdity of human greed or moral decay. An example from his discography states: “Olówó kan ní bẹ ní’lùú yìí, ó f’owó kólé dé ojú ọrun” (There is a rich man in this town; he built a house that reached the heavens with money). This utilises a mathematical and spatial fallacy. Interpreting this through P. Ricoeur (1981) concept of *distançiation*, the text moves beyond the literal impossibility of such a structure to critique the “sky-high” arrogance of the wealthy. The hyperbole acts as a mirror to the social distance between the elite and the community, a theme central to the philosophical depth of Dàdákúàdá.

Furthermore, hyperbole functions as a tool for artistic self-assertion, allowing the performers to establish their professional authority and supernatural protection. A common trope in these performances is the assertion: “Enu mi kì í jẹ kọrọ díjú, mo fahón mi gé irin gangan” (My mouth never allows words to become a knot; I use my tongue to cut through solid iron). This biological and material fallacy establishes the artist’s mastery over language. The “sharpness” of the tongue cutting through iron serves as a stylistic signature, positioning the performer as a powerful social agent whose words possess a weight that can dismantle any opposition (Olátúnjí, 2025). The dual-author design of this study justifies a comparison between the rural-ancestral focus of Fọ́yánmú and the urban-secular focus of Àrẹ̀mú. While Fọ́yánmú’s hyperbole is rooted in the “forest of a thousand demons”, emphasising the ruggedness of the hunter, Àrẹ̀mú’s exaggerations are tailored to the urban “market square”, focusing on the complexities of modern social hierarchy. Despite these generic differences, both artists utilise the fallacy as a mechanism for cultural “truth-telling”. As shown in the comparative analysis, the rhetorical goal shifts from evoking awe in Ìjálá to evoking reflection and satire in Dàdákúàdá, yet the reliance on the “hyperbolic fallacy” remains a shared aesthetic foundation. In

synthesis, what Western formal logic might dismiss as a “fallacy” is, in Yorùbá poetics, a vital stylistic signature. The findings demonstrate that àsojù (exaggeration) is a deliberate strategy to reach the “inner head” (Orí) of the audience. By intentionally breaking the rules of logical consistency, Fóyánmú and Àrẹ̀mú do not confuse their listeners; instead, they invite them into a shared space of heightened reality where the cultural weight of the message is amplified by the very impossibility of its literal form. This confirms that the hyperbolic fallacy is a mark of intellectual depth and artistic agency in Yorùbá oral literature, rather than a lack of logical rigor. Ìjálá is strongly anchored in the detailed taxonomic and stylistic work of (Olátúnjí, 2025). In his foundational book, *Features of Yorùbá Oral Poetry*, Olátúnjí systematically categorises Ìjálá by documenting its structure, rhythmic flow, and stylistic features such as àsoḡbonnu (a form of deliberate exaggeration). This groundwork is enriched by S.A. Babalola (1966) deep literary and linguistic study of Ìjálá’s themes, offering a rich dive into its content and form. Building on these foundations, (Àjùwòṅ, 1982) explores the connections between Ìjálá and other Yorùbá oral genres, like funeral dirges, showing how the heroic and exaggerated language of Ìjálá fits into a broader Yorùbá tradition of poetic amplification used to engage with profound themes such as life, death, and bravery.

The idea of an “artistic signature” in oral literature challenges earlier views that saw oral traditions as anonymous and purely collective. K. Barber (2021) was key in shifting this perspective by showing, through her study of Yorùbá Oríkì (praise poetry), that poets work within traditional structures but deliberately shape their craft to create a unique personal style. She highlights how audiences appreciate the distinctiveness of individual performers, recognising their skill through unique choices in epithets, themes, and rhythm. This insight proves that oral artists are not just passing

down inherited forms but are creative innovators, which is essential for understanding how specific stylistic devices like the hyperbolic fallacy can form a poet’s signature. Expanding on this reflection on aforementioned works offers a broader, Africa-wide framework for identifying these artistic signatures by examining how performers use rhetoric strategically. Common elements such as figurative language, thematic shifts, and narrative tempo categorised as the tools artists selectively use to craft their unique voices. This approach gives scholars the language and concepts needed to pinpoint particular techniques like the hyperbolic fallacy and argue convincingly that such a device can be the defining hallmark of poets such as Ògúndáre Fóyánmú or Dàdákúádá, showcasing their individual creative identity within a traditional art form.

The concept of hyperbolic exaggeration (àpónpo) lies at the heart of this study. In Western rhetorical theory, excessive exaggeration taken literally is sometimes labelled a “hyperbolic fallacy” because it appears to violate principles of logical reasoning. However, within Yorùbá literary aesthetics, such bold overstatement is not an error but a respected and highly effective stylistic device. It enables poets to transcend ordinary language, amplify emotions, highlight contrasts, and convey profound cultural truths that literal expression cannot capture. This study, therefore, adopted the term hyperbolic exaggeration as the primary descriptor, while occasionally referencing the Western notion of “hyperbolic fallacy” only to highlight the contrast in interpretive frameworks. In the hands of master performers like Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú, this device becomes a personal artistic signature – a consistent, intentional stylistic choice rather than an isolated rhetorical slip.

In contrast, within Yorùbá literary aesthetics, hyperbole is a valued stylistic device used by poets and oral performers to emphasise emotions and provide social commentary.

Unlike the Western interpretation of hyperbolic fallacy as a reasoning flaw, Yorùbá oral literature employs hyperbole skillfully within the rules of Yorùbá grammar and cultural communication to engage the audience and deliver powerful messages. The cultural and social context shared between the poet and the audience gives hyperbolic expressions meaning and effectiveness rather than rendering them fallacious. Therefore, while the hyperbolic fallacy in Western rhetoric highlights the problem of unjustified exaggeration that weakens an argument, in Yorùbá literary aesthetics, hyperbole is a culturally rooted artistic technique that captivates the audience, communicates communal values and emotions, and often serves as an artistic signature. The concept of hyperbole is a timeless literary device found across many cultures, defined as a purposeful exaggeration meant to emphasise or create an effect. The audience understands the exaggeration because it builds on shared knowledge of what's real. In Yorùbá oral traditions like Ìjálá, this technique is an accepted way to amplify a subject's strength or qualities. Its success depends on an unspoken agreement between poet and audience that the exaggeration pushes the limits of possibility artistically, rather than presenting literal fact.

On the other hand, a "fallacy" usually means a logical error - a mistake in reasoning that leads to a false conclusion. In formal logic a fallacy is a flaw that invalidates an argument. From this strict viewpoint, saying a hunter "swallowed a thunderbolt" is nonsensical, an impossible idea that defies logic. The word "fallacy" typically carries a negative meaning, suggesting error or deception. So, at first glance, it seems strange or contradictory to call a celebrated creative act a "fallacy". The term "hyperbolic fallacy" combines these ideas into a unique artistic signature. It's not just exaggeration but a deliberate, purposeful step beyond logic to express a deeper truth beyond words. Oral poets use "impossible images" not as meaningless

exaggerations but as powerful metaphors that communicate qualities like heroism or social critique in ways literal language cannot. When poets like Fóyánmú or Dàdákúádá repeatedly use this device, it becomes their defining style. The "fallacy" is the tool they use to reveal profound emotional or philosophical insights that straightforward logic cannot capture. In this way, what seems like a logical error is actually a powerful means of artistic expression and cultural communication.

To grasp the idea of hyperbolic fallacy, it's important to start with Yorùbá aesthetic principles, where exaggeration isn't a mistake but a respected artistic technique. (Abiodun, 2014) highlights key concepts like *ìwà* (the true essence or character of a subject) and *ifarahon* (making the invisible visible). He explains that Yorùbá art aims to reveal a subject's inner nature, which often means moving beyond literal or physical accuracy. This helps to see hyperbolic fallacy not as a flaw in logic but as a purposeful strategy to bring the core essence of something into sharp focus. Building on this, Yorùbá oral traditions, which include proverbs, myths, and poetry that use seemingly impossible or exaggerated images to express profound social and philosophical ideas. Understanding these bold, transgressive expressions depends on a shared cultural knowledge that accepts them as meaningful and truthful ways of communicating. Together, these perspectives show that hyperbolic fallacy is a deliberate and powerful tool rooted in Yorùbá ways of knowing and expressing reality. It is worth noting that hyperbolic fallacy is an integral part of Yorùbá oral literature in general, foregrounding its aesthetics. For instance, in the Ifa corpus below, the hyperbolic fallacy was deliberately employed by the Ifa priest as a constructive ideal that combines two incongruities that seem impossible. *Babaláwo Ifákáyọdẹ Ifálọwọ*, the *Area Asùnyẹrẹ Awo Àgbáyé* and *Àràbà Awo of Oḱínnì* in Osun State, says next words (Table 1).

**Table 1.** *The use of hyperbolic error in the Ifá corpus*

Original Text	Translation
Ifá ní ó dólúyòn tòlú.	Ifá declares that a pregnant woman will give birth to a chief.
Ìgbòngbọn fiyè sòhùn.	The wise one speaks with the voice of authority.
Ifá ní ọjọ tí iyá òun ní relé ọkọ.	Ifá says, on the day his mother was heading to her husband’s house,
Ìpilẹ ilé kẹta lòun wà.	He was at the foundation of the third heading to her husband’s house,
Òun ní iyá ẹ rẹwà o.	He says, “Mother, you are welcome!”
Ìyá ó dàbò.	Mother goodbye
Ìyá ó bọkùnrin bó délé ọkọ.	Mother you will bore a male child when you get to your husband’s house.
Ìyá ó bọ̀bìnrín bó délé ọkọ.	Mother you will bore a daughter when you get to your husband’s house.
Wọn ní ta ni ó ní wí báhùn?	They asked, “Who is speaking thus?”
Wọn ní ọmọ tí Àjànnà yòd bí ní alẹ ànà ní.	They said, “It is the child Àjànnà will bear last night!”

**Source:** S.M. Oyeleke (2023)

The excerpt above employs a fallacy of impossibility by having the unborn child speak and be identified as already born “last night”, creating a temporal paradox that defies causality and chronology. This deliberate contradiction transcends mere exaggeration, embodying Ifá’s esoteric technique of “divine contradiction” to collapse earthly time and spiritual eternity, thereby linking the maternal journey with cosmic prophecy. Through H.-G. Gadamer (2004) fusion of horizons, the chant becomes a hermeneutic event that merges ancient spiritual knowledge with contemporary ritual practice, transforming the paradox into a profound dialogue about destiny (àyanmọ), wisdom, and protection. Artistically, this fallacy enhances the chant’s rhythmic enigma and mnemonic power, compelling repeated performance and deepening communal engagement. Culturally, it affirms Ifá’s role as a living epistemology that counters linear, materialistic views by emphasising pre-birth knowledge and spiritual agency, safeguarding Yorùbá identity through paradoxical truth and oral tradition resilience. The scholarly discourse on fallacies, while rooted in Aristotelian logic and Western rhetorical traditions, has evolved to recognise their multifaceted role beyond mere logical errors. Foundational work by philosophers like Aristotle (1955) and contemporary theorists

such as C.W. Tindale (1997) has established that fallacies function not only as deceptive tactics in argumentation but also as potent rhetorical and creative devices. This nuanced understanding provides a critical lens for analysing non-Western oral traditions, where what appears as a logical transgression can be a deliberate artistic strategy. Within the domain of Yorùbá oral literature, which is a vast corpus including Ìjálá, Oríkì, and folktales that preserves history and cultural values that scholars like O. Owomoyela (2005) have demonstrated that “fallacious” reasoning, particularly through extravagant metaphor and hyperbole, is a conventional technique for conveying complex ideas, creating emphasis, and providing social commentary. T.O. Adeyemi (2020) and H. Oripeloye & F. Hunsu (2021) demonstrated that rhetorical devices in Yorùbá oral literature, which are traditionally mistaken as logical flaws, are in fact indispensable tools for constructing Yorùbá cultural identity and enabling nuanced social critique through artistic expression. Building on this foundation, the present study focuses specifically on the “hyperbolic fallacy” within Ìjálá poetry, aiming to reframe it not as a deceptive error but as a deliberate stylistic hallmark that enriches both the aesthetic and philosophical dimensions of the oral tradition. This culturally grounded

approach deepens understanding of rhetorical strategies in African oral performance, emphasising their creative and communicative power.

Types of fallacies found in Yorùbá oral literature. In alignment with the stylistic requirements of the study, the various types of fallacies identified in Yorùbá oral literature must be understood as integrated narrative strategies rather than isolated categories. Metaphorical fallacies utilise comparisons to create vivid imagery and convey complex ideas, such as when a king is likened to a lion to symbolise inherent strength and sovereign power. These are often supported by allusive fallacies, which draw upon myths, legends, or historical events to ground the performance in a shared cultural context; for example, referencing the mythological figure *Òrúnmilà* to convey exceptional speed or spiritual agility. At the core of this research are hyperbolic fallacies, which involve deliberate exaggeration for heightened emphasis or emotional effect, such as a performer claiming to have repeated a warning a thousand times to underscore its urgency. Complementing these are proverbial fallacies, which leverage traditional wisdom and communal values to offer moral guidance, illustrated by the use of aphorisms regarding the consequences of ignoring maternal advice. Allegorical fallacies provide another layer of depth by employing extended narratives, such as the classic tale of the tortoise and the hare, to communicate broader themes of perseverance and the dangers of hubris.

Critical engagement with societal norms is often achieved through ironical and satirical fallacies. Ironical fallacies utilise paradoxical imagery, like the concept of a blind man who possesses true sight, to challenge standard perceptions and expectations within the community. Similarly, satirical fallacies serve as a potent tool for social critique, often lampooning leadership by depicting a king as a fool to question the exercise of power and authority. Finally, symbolic fallacies ground these

abstract concepts in physical or conceptual markers, where an object like a crown serves as an undeniable symbol of power and the weight of ancestral leadership. Through the integration of these rhetorical devices, Yorùbá oral artists move beyond literal communication. These fallacies, when rephrased as complete narrative structures, demonstrate a sophisticated intellectual system where the “fallacy” is the primary engine of aesthetic and philosophical expression. By moving away from list-based descriptions, the analysis better reflects the fluid and interconnected nature of these stylistic signatures as they appear in the works of *Ògúndáre Fóyánmú* and *Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú*.

Fallacies serve multiple important functions in Yorùbá oral literature. They are employed as a tool for creative expression, enabling artists to create vivid imagery, evoke strong emotions, and convey complex ideas in unique and engaging ways. Culturally, fallacies help convey important values, traditions, and beliefs while reinforcing cultural identity among the Yorùbá people. They also function as a form of social commentary, allowing performers to critique societal norms, challenge prevailing social expectations, and make meaningful comments on political issues. Furthermore, fallacies add emphasis, create emotional connections, and actively engage the audience. By introducing multiple layers of meaning, they encourage deeper interpretation and personal reflection. As a rhetorical device, fallacies are used to persuade, convince, and influence listeners during performances. Artists often take advantage of fallacies to exercise creative license, experiment with language, and push the boundaries of artistic expression. In addition, fallacies play a vital role in cultural preservation by keeping heritage, myths, and legends alive and ensuring they are passed down to future generations. They serve an educational purpose by teaching moral lessons, conveying ancestral wisdom, and instructing audiences on core

cultural values. Finally, fallacies enhance entertainment value by entertaining, engaging, and captivating the audience, thereby making Yorùbá oral literature more enjoyable and memorable. These functions highlight the significance of fallacies in Yorùbá oral literature

and demonstrate their central role in creating a rich, complex, and deeply engaging form of cultural expression. This section focuses on how the hyperbolic exaggeration acts as a purposeful artistic tool that draws audiences into thoughtful reflection and dialogue (Table 2).

**Table 2.** An analysis of chronological and biological errors in the poetry of Ìjálá of Ògúndáre Fóyánmú

Original Text	Translation
Mo búyàn ni	If I insult someone,
Mo lùyàn ni	If I strike someone,
Mo pààyàn ni	If I kill someone,
Mo sá láti ibikan	If I flee from somewhere
Tí o bá bù rìn rìn rìn	If you wander far and wide,
Tí o bá fojú kan ilé Kadir oḅa Ilorin	And you set eyes on the palace of Emir Kadir of Ilorin,
Iná ọlórún dí èwò fún un	The fire of the Almighty becomes forbidden for you

Source: O. Owomoyela (2005)

This Ìjálá poem, uses bold and vivid exaggerations – a hallmark of the “hyperbolic fallacy” – to engage deeply with themes of morality, justice, and redemption within a Yorùbá-Islamic cultural context. Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú lists severe actions like insulting, striking, killing, or fleeing, then contrasts these with the extraordinary claim that seeing the palace of Emir Kadir of Ilorin shields one from the “fire of the Almighty” a metaphor for divine punishment. According to H.-G. Gadamer (2004) hermeneutics, this exaggeration creates a “fusion of horison” merging Àrẹ̀mú’s worldview rooted in Yorùbá cosmology and Islamic belief with the audience’s moral reflections, turning the poem into a dialogical space for interpreting forgiveness and the power of sacred places. Simultaneously, hermeneutic arc shows how the poem’s repetitive and escalating structure intensifies the moral stakes, while the metaphor of divine fire being forbidden at the Emir’s palace invites listeners to explore spiritual transformation

beyond literal events. The hyperbolic fallacy here is not a mistake but a poetic strategy that transforms extreme imagery into a profound expression of cultural values about authority, justice, and redemption. Through the interplay of H.-G. Gadamer (2004) and P. Ricoeur (1981) theories, Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú’s poem exemplifies how hyperbolic fallacy functions as more than a stylistic flourish. It becomes a powerful tool that opens philosophical and spiritual meanings within Ìjálá poetry, inviting audiences into ongoing reflection on morality and sacred authority. The exaggerated claims are meaningful bridges that connect historic and cultural horizons, enabling the audience to relate universal themes of guilt and forgiveness to their own lives. In the works of Àrẹ̀mú such hyperbole serves as a distinctive artistic signature, enriching the tradition by turning fanciful, impossible images into vital carriers of Yorùbá cultural and philosophical discourse. The excerpt below buttresses it (Table 3).

**Table 3.** Spatial fallacies as a tool for social criticism in the works of Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú

Original Text	Translation
Ìlú tí a ò lóko,	A city where we have no farm,
Tí a ò lódò,	Where we have no river,
A sí nì jẹ ohun tódùn nígbà gbogbo,	Yet we eat sweet things all the time.

Table 3. Continued

Original Text	Translation
Kò sí ibi tí Ọlórún ò sì, exist,	There is no place where God does not
Şùgbón Ilorin ló n sùn	But it is in Ilorin that He sleeps

**Source:** O. Owomoyela (2005)

In the excerpt above, Odòlayè Àrẹ̀mú employs rhetorical devices, including fallacies, not as logical errors but as deliberate creative strategies. These serve to amplify artistic expression, evoke cultural pride, and embed deeper philosophical or communal meanings. The excerpt exemplifies this through a strategic fallacy that transcends mere exaggeration, functioning as a non sequitur (a conclusion that does not logically follow from the premises) infused with anthropomorphism (attributing human-like actions to a divine entity). Here, the artist concludes that “God sleeps in Ilorin”, implying divine favoritism or residence in the city, despite premises that affirm God’s omnipresence. This is not a flawed argument in a philosophical sense but a purposeful literary tool to celebrate Ilorin’s prosperity and cultural identity (ilú tó jìnnà síná tó sún mó àlùjànà). Hermeneutically, we interpret this fallacy by situating it within the Yorùbá cultural “horizon” which is a fusion of pre-colonial animism, Islamic influences (Ilorin being a historically Fulani-Yorùbá emirate with strong Muslim ties), and oral performance contexts. Dàdákúàdà artists like Àrẹ̀mú were often commissioned to praise patrons or towns, using chant to foster communal identity and attract favor. The fallacy serves multiple strategic purposes.

This is a non sequitur fallacy because the conclusion does not logically derive from the premises. The prosperity without resources could suggest human ingenuity, trade, or other factors, and omnipresence contradicts the idea of God “sleeping” (implying rest or preference) in one specific location. It’s more than hyperbole (simple exaggeration, like calling Ilorin “heaven on earth”); it’s a deliberate illogical leap that anthropomorphises God -portraying the divine as humanly vulnerable or domiciled

to make a bold, memorable claim. In logical terms, it violates the principle of non-contradiction: if God is everywhere, He cannot exclusively “sleep” anywhere. Yet, in Yorùbá oral tradition, such “fallacies” are not defects but artistic licenses, akin to poetic license in Western literature. Hermeneutics emphasises that meaning arises from the “fusion of horizons” between the text and the audience. The image of God “sleeping” in Ilorin humanises the divine, making abstract omnipresence tangible and relatable. In Yorùbá cosmology, where deities (òrìṣà) are anthropomorphic and intervene in human affairs, this fallacy creatively extends that to the monotheistic Ọlórún (Supreme God, influenced by Islam/Christianity). It’s not literal but evocative: “sleeping” implies peace, rest, and blessing, contrasting Ilorin’s resource scarcity with divine abundance. This heightens artistic appeal, turning a simple praise into a rhythmic, memorable chant that engages listeners emotionally, encouraging participation in performances. Interpreting through P. Ricoeur (1981) hermeneutic arc (from naive understanding to critical explanation to appropriation), the fallacy initially seems absurd (naive reading: illogical claim), but critically, it explains Ilorin’s historical prosperity despite lacking agricultural or riparian advantages as divinely ordained. Ilorin, as a 19th-century emirate hub, thrived on trade, scholarship, and cultural fusion. The fallacy strategically attributes this to God’s “preference”, reinforcing cultural narratives of exceptionalism. In appropriation, audiences internalise this as Yorùbá resilience and faith, enhancing social cohesion. It’s a “productive prejudice” (Gadamer) that biases toward cultural upliftment, countering colonial-era diminishment of African oral arts (Table 4).

**Table 4. Material fallacies as a means of artistic self-expression for artists**

Original Text	Translation
Ọmọ odò kòdò	Offspring of the unknown river,
Ọmọ omi kómi	Offspring of the uncommon water,
Àrẹ̀mú ọmọ odò mẹ̀rindínlógún	Àrẹ̀mú, offspring of sixteen rivers
Bóbá wùmí mo lè pé, òun ni ọmọ odò táà moye nílẹ̀ baba tó bí ọ ọ̀lọmọ	If I wish, I can declare he is the offspring of countless rivers in his father's house.
Wọ̀n a ni bó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ àbàtà	They say, whether it is a swamp,
Bó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ ẹ̀ rú	Whether it is stagnant water,
Bó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ omi odò tí n sà̀n rẹ̀rẹ̀	Whether it is a river that flows freely,
Bó somi adágún	Whether it is a murky pool
Bó ẹ̀ ẹ̀ omi tí wọ̀n ní ọ̀n la fẹ̀ ní	Whether it is water we fetch for use,
È ọ̀ bá sì rómi Kaṅga pẹ̀lú	Or even the water of a well.

Source: S.M. Oyeleke (2023)

This Ìjàlá poem by Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú celebrates lineage and identity through rich water imagery, using the hyperbolic fallacy as a key stylistic device. The poet declares himself the “offspring of sixteen rivers” and even “countless rivers”, exaggerating his heritage to mythical proportions. The list of various water sources like rivers, swamps, wells which symbolises diversity, vitality, and interconnectedness, common themes in Yorùbá cosmology. Drawing on H.-G. Gadamer (2004) hermeneutics, the poem’s exaggerated claims create a dialogue between the poet’s cultural background and the audience’s interpretation, inviting reflection on ancestry and identity within Yorùbá traditions. This fusion of horizons allows listeners to engage with the poem not just literally but as a metaphorical exploration of heritage as a universal human

experience. Hermeneutic arc further enriches this reading by showing how the poem’s repetitive and escalating structure emphasises Àrẹ̀mú’s boundless essence. The hyperbolic fallacy here is not mere exaggeration but a metaphorical vehicle that connects Àrẹ̀mú to an infinite lineage, transcending specific origins to embody universal human spirit and vitality. As listeners move from a surface understanding to deeper interpretation, they may see in the poem a meditation on identity’s complexity amid diverse influences. Together, H.-G. Gadamer (2004) and P. Ricoeur (1981) theories reveal that this poem uses hyperbolic fallacy not just as decoration, but as a profound means of cultural and philosophical reflection, turning Àrẹ̀mú into a symbol of ancestral pride and shared humanity, resonating deeply across time and culture (Table 5).

**Table 5. Metaphorical fallacies as a means of visualising sovereign power**

Original Text	Translation
Ọjó tí Alàbí òkín taná rándí ìbọ̀n ní gbó Kútọ̀nù.	The day Alàbí, the noble hunter, fired his gun in the Kútọ̀nù forest, Ójù irú àwà wọ̀nyí nàà ni gboḡbo ẹ̀ ẹ̀.
Àgbà ni n ọ̀ ì dā.	I was not yet grown,
Mo ti ẹ̀ tí ì dāgbà.	I have grown into an adult.
Mo kúró nínú òmọ̀dé kékére tí a lè gbẹ̀ kòrùn lọ sínú oko.	I am no longer the little child carried on the neck to the farm
Bí òmọ ọ̀ bá bà itàn,	If a child does not witness history firsthand,
Yóò bà àwígbọ.	They will hear it recounted by elders.
Àwígbọ ni baba itàn.	What elders recount is the father of history.

Table 5. Continued

Original Text	Translation
Wọn ẹ bíní nínú gbogbo àsikò tí mo wí wònyí sùgbón,	Yet, I was not even born during all those times I described, But
Ó ọjù àbùrò mi tí wón bí lẹmi.	my younger sibling, born just after me, bore witness to them.

**Source:** S.M. Oyeleke (2023)

This excerpt from Ogúndáre Fóyánmú's Ìjálá chant artfully blends personal testimony with communal history, using a deliberate fallacy of impossibility that exemplifies Yorùbá oral poetics. The narrator claims firsthand witness to events before his birth, then intriguingly passes this role to his younger brother born after him, creating a temporal paradox that defies literal logic. This is no accidental slip but an intentional rhetorical strategy, rooted in Yorùbá tradition's use of paradox and "speaking in opposites" to express layered truths beyond linear time. Drawing on H.-G. Gadamer (2004) concept of the "fusion of horizons", this fallacy invites listeners to move beyond a literal reading toward a shared cultural understanding where history is communal, cyclical, and accessible through oral memory rather than strict chronology. Artistically, this fallacy heightens

the chant's dramatic tension and engagement, creating a performative puzzle that makes the audience active participants in its interpretation. It enriches the rhythmic flow and mnemonic power of the performance, transforming the chant into a living enigma that bridges individual and ancestral identities. Culturally, it affirms Yorùbá epistemologies that value oral transmission and communal inheritance over eyewitness proof, challenging Western notions of historical validity. Ethically, it models humility and relational truth, reflecting the narrator's growth and fostering societal maturity. In these ways, Fóyánmú's strategic use of impossibility elevates Ìjálá poetry from mere entertainment to a profound cultural practice where logical "flaws" become powerful vehicles for philosophical reflection and communal resilience (Table 6).

**Table 6.** Allusive fallacies: the use of mythological references to bolster authority

Original Text	Translation
Anígíláyé Àyínlá	Anígíláyé Àyínlá
Aníyàlóbínrin	Possessor of a woman as a mother
Ó saláré sabiyamo	A performer who combines artistry with motherhood,
Kèé tì dàgbà tó fi gbé ìyàwó	He had not yet grown to maturity before taking a wife,
Ó jọ pé láyé lo bá obínrin rẹ ni	It seems he was destined to meet his wife in this life
Àyínlá ọkọ iyá àgbà	Àyínlá, husband of the revered grandmother.

**Source:** S.M. Oyeleke (2023)

The poem uses hyperbolic fallacy line by line to portray Àyínlá as a larger-than-life figure whose identity transcends ordinary human experience. It begins by presenting him with a grandiose name, setting the stage for his exceptional status. His relationship to motherhood is exaggerated, blending artistry and maternal

power in a way that highlights his unique versatility. The claim that he married before reaching maturity suggests a supernatural precocity, implying divine favor and destiny. This sense of fate is further amplified by the assertion that his union with his wife was predetermined. Finally, describing him as the "husband of the

revered grandmother” pushes the exaggeration into a paradoxical realm, symbolising respect and an almost mythical crossing of generational boundaries. Together, these exaggerations

invite the audience to reflect on themes of destiny, identity, and social roles within the Yorùbá cultural context, elevating Àyìnlá into a symbolic figure of profound human potential (Table 7).

**Table 7. Aphorisms as a tool for moral education**

Original Text	Translation
Èmi pàà dúpẹ ojọ tí o gbé iyá rẹ sin	I give heartfelt thanks for the day you buried your mother,
Mo gbowò nílẹ̀ yín	I received abundant money at your house
Mo gba aṣọ	I received fine cloth,
Ọtọtọ̀tọ̀ èyàn lókú tí n ò gbà	Only a living person did I not take as a gift.
Ìbòsì aláàárù owó ni mo ké tí mee délé wa	As a bearer of wealth, I shouted for help until I reached home,
Tí e filé ọ̀ṣi local gin,	You left the door open for brewing
Ẹ̀ mọ̀nà rọ̀kà	You cleared the path to the attic for preparing yam flour
Agbada ni ẹ̀ fi ní dín ẹ̀ran	You used an àgbàdà to roast meat.
Akinṣà pa mààlù kan ràbàtá	Akinṣà slaughtered a massive ox,
Ó tún fi rẹ̀lẹ̀ màamá	He offered for the burial rite
Ọ̀kọ̀ Lánfihún ó pa erinla	Ọ̀kọ̀ Lánhùn killed big ox
Ó ní kí gbogbo wa ó máa ẹ̀	He invited us all to feast.
Ojọ̀ tí a wí yí ní a ẹ̀ odidi mààlù tẹ̀yin-tẹ̀yin	On that day we speak of, we devoured the entire ox together with its egg
Bóótó: À ẹ̀ máàlù a máa lẹ̀yin ògá mi?	Bóótó: “Does an ox have eggs, my master?”
Ìdáhùn: Ẹ̀yin ò mọ̀ pé ibi tí èyàn bá gbé jojú	Response: “Don’t you know that where people feast on the eyes of
mààlù, ẹ̀yin ẹ̀ran ló ẹ̀	an ox, its the eggs of ox you have eaten?”
Bóótó: òtótó ni	Bóótó: “That’s true.”
Èmi ò gbàgbé, obẹ̀ ẹ̀ràn tí a fi ẹ̀run lálẹ̀ ijọ̀ kíńí	I cannot forget the meat stew we ate that first night,
Àyànwándé onílù ọ̀ḍẹ̀ mi ní n sàlàyé pé epo ni wọ̀n fi ẹ̀bẹ̀ nàà	Àyànwándé, my hunter-drummer, explained it was cooked with palm oil,
Èmi kọ̀kọ̀ ẹ̀bí àdín ni wọ̀n fi ẹ̀bẹ̀ nàà ni	I first thought it was made with castor oil,
À ẹ̀ wọ̀n gbá ẹ̀ran nàà níjọ̀ nàà ni	not know that they fried that meat that very day.
À fi ìgbà tí èmi yóò fòkèlẹ̀ kán án tí gbogbo rẹ̀ ní ràn mọ̀mọ̀	Until I dipped my morsel, the stew was perfectly blended.
Ìgúnwó ni epo mùmí dé	The palm oil reached my elbow,
Ojọ̀ mèrìndínlógún epo kò tán létè mi	For sixteen days, the palm oil lingered on my lips
Èkúté ẹ̀mí létè n ò délé wí at	The rat bit my my lips, and I didn’t mention it home.
Ọ̀pẹ̀lọ̀pẹ̀ onísònà tí n bẹ̀ ní àdúgbò wa ló túnmi lẹ̀nu ẹ̀	It was the grace of the craft man in our neighborhood, that mend my mouth
Àwọ̀n ọ̀mọ̀ sànmọ̀rì aláìjẹ̀bẹ̀rì stew	The young ones who had never tasted such
Gbogbo wọ̀n ní pọ̀n mi létè lá mọ̀ràn-mọ̀ràn	All leak my lips repeatedly
Ojọ̀ táa wí yí	On that day we speak of
Bí a ti ní wòran ni ìran ní woni	As we watched the spectacle, the spectacle watched us back.

**Source:** S.M. Oyeleke (2023)

This poem by Ògúndáre Fóyánmú uses hyperbolic imagery to celebrate a communal funeral feast, highlighting themes of generosity, cultural memory, and social bonding within Yorùbá tradition. The extravagant descriptions

such as palm oil lingering on the lips for sixteen days and eating an ox’s “eggs” (its teeth) that serve to elevate the event’s significance beyond the literal, transforming the feast into a spectacle that embodies communal abundance

and collective identity. Through H.-G. Gadamer (2004) fusion of horizons, the poem's hyperbole bridges the cultural context of Yorùbá funerary and feasting customs with the audience's own experiential understanding, fostering a dialogue on generosity and reciprocity. Hermeneutic arc deepens this interpretation

by showing how metaphorical exaggeration invites reflection on shared humanity and the lasting impact of cultural rites. Overall, the hyperbolic fallacy is a central stylistic device that makes the poem a rich philosophical meditation on the interconnectedness of memory, spectacle, and cultural meaning (Table 8).

**Table 8.** Allegorical and ironic fallacies as a reflection of social norms

Original Text	Translation
È wá wò omi òjò Àkàhò.	Come and behold the rainwater of Àkàhò
Bí tí nì m̀ì sánm̀ò,	How it shakes the heavens,
Tí nì ml̀ú.	How it quakes the city.
Bí tí nì m̀ì èkè ilé,	How it rattles the rooftops of houses,
Ní nì m̀ì igi oko.	How it sways the trees in the farms.
Olá rẹ̀ wá dòdò tí nì sà̀n rẹ̀rẹ̀.	His glory arrives in full flood, flowing ever so smoothly.
Gbogbo eni tí kò bá gòkè àràfá rí,	Everyone who has not climbed the hill of wonders to see,
Kó kálọ̀ sá àfìn sọ̀un.	Let them proceed to the Soun's palace
Gbogbo enikéni tó bá tí fojú kan àgbàlá ilé ọ̀ba Ògbómòşó,	Everyone who has set eyes upon ... the courtyard of the king's house in Ògbómòşó
Oní tọ̀hún ọ̀mọ̀ àlìjònnà,	Today, that one is the child of alijanna

**Source:** S.M. Oyeleke (2023)

Ògúndáre Fóyánmú's Ìjálá chant masterfully employs a fallacy of impossibility by paradoxically portraying the violent, chaotic rain as a smooth, glorious force and asserting that merely witnessing the Ògbómòşó palace courtyard transforms one into "the child of the Alijanna" This deliberate contradiction transcends simple exaggeration, blending natural phenomena, royal majesty, and mystical identity into an illogical yet culturally rich unity that evokes awe and communal belonging. Through H.-G. Gadamer (2004) hermeneutic fusion of horizons, the chant's tension between destructive immediacy and serene glory invites the audience to merge lived experience with ancestral worldview, transforming empirical skepticism into a participatory cultural dialogue. The paradox deepens the performative and mnemonic power of Ìjálá, affirming Yorùbá values of ọ̀lá (honor) and àwùjọ̀ (community cohesion) while resisting cultural fragmentation. Fóyánmú's strategic use of this fallacy not only enriches the chant's artistic texture but also fortifies the

resilience of Yorùbá heritage by positioning oral tradition as a site of transformative, paradoxical truth.

The analysis of hyperbolic fallacy in Yorùbá oral literature, particularly within Ìjálá poetry as performed by master artists such as Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Dàdákúádá, revealed it to be a deliberate stylistic device rather than a mere logical error. Through the application of hermeneutic principles, this device emerges as a sophisticated rhetorical strategy that transgresses conventional logic to create mythic, heroic worlds and foster cultural dialogue. Key findings indicate that hyperbolic expressions, such as the imagery of "swallowing a thunderbolt", serve to distanciate the text from literal interpretation, opening up imaginative possibilities that transcend factual accuracy and invite interpreters into a dynamic engagement with Yorùbá traditions. Drawing on H.-G. Gadamer (2004) concept of the "fusion of horizons", the study demonstrates how contemporary interpreters merge their historical and cultural

perspectives with the oral text's context, generating new meanings from these stylistic transgressions. This process transforms apparent fallacies into vibrant expressions of cultural sophistication, where prior knowledge and assumptions (or "prejudices") enrich understanding rather than hinder it. For instance, in the works of Ògúndáre Fáyánmú and Dàdàkúàdá, hyperbolic fallacy bridges historic traditions and modern experiences, challenging audiences to reinterpret exaggerations as dialogical tools that expand interpretive horizons.

P. Ricoeur (1981) notion of "distanciation" further illuminates these findings by highlighting how oral texts, once separated from their original performative context, propose alternative worlds that emphasise creative potential over historical fidelity. The results show that this distanciation enables a reflective appreciation of hyperbolic elements, repositioning them as culturally significant layers that encourage ongoing interaction between past and present. In Yorùbá Ìjálá and Dàdàkúàdá, such devices not only enhance rhetorical impact but also preserve aesthetic principles, revealing pan-African parallels in stylistic innovation. These findings align closely with several recent studies on Yorùbá oral literature. I.T. Akinsola (2025) observes that hyperbole is central to both traditional *Oríkì* and contemporary "hype" performances, where exaggeration serves socio-cultural and economic functions by amplifying the qualities of the subject. Similarly, the present study confirms that hyperbolic fallacy in Ìjálá and Dàdàkúàdá operates beyond mere praise to create emotional and philosophical depth.

G. Kolawole (2023) highlights the malleable and elastic nature of Ìjálá texts, which adapt traditional forms to secular and modern contexts. This mirrors the present finding that hyperbolic fallacy allows Ògúndáre Fáyánmú and Odòlayé Àrẹ̀mú to fuse historical hunting chants with contemporary realities, thereby sustaining the genre's relevance. The present

study parallels this by illustrating how hyperbolic fallacy in Ìjálá and Dàdàkúàdá simultaneously entertains audiences and transmits moral and philosophical lessons. S.M. Oyeleke (2023) describes the sociocultural functions of Yorùbá lullabies as oral poetry, emphasising their role in identity formation. Likewise, the hyperbolic elements in Ìjálá and Dàdàkúàdá foster intergenerational transmission and communal identity. J. Alexander (2024) argues that oral poetic techniques in modern Nigerian poetry serve decolonial creative strategies. The present results support this view by showing that hyperbolic fallacy in traditional oral forms already embodies decolonial potential through its ability to challenge ordinary language and propose alternative cultural worlds. Finally, M.J. Oloko *et al.* (2025) emphasises the rhetorical depth of idioms, proverbs, and figurative expressions in honouring deities. The present analysis reveals that hyperbolic fallacy operates as an intensified form of such figurative language, elevating it into a signature stylistic tool that distinguishes master performers. Overall, the findings underscore the artistic and interpretive value of hyperbolic fallacy, demonstrating its role in sustaining Yorùbá oral heritage through creative evolution. These insights, derived from a hermeneutic examination of selected performances, confirm that the device fosters intergenerational and cross-cultural understanding while adapting to contemporary contexts. By comparing the results with recent scholarship, this study fills a noticeable gap in the literature and highlights the continued vitality of Yorùbá oral poetry as a dynamic, philosophically rich tradition.

## Conclusions

This research has demonstrated that the strategic deployment of the hyperbolic fallacy, along with its associated stylistic variations ranging from the metaphorical to the satirical, was far from a rhetorical defect. Instead, it serves as the foundational cornerstone of

artistic sophistication within Yorùbá oral literature. Through a hermeneutic analysis of the works of Ògúndáre Fóyánmú and Odòlayé Àrèṁú, the study revealed that what traditional Western logic might classify as a formal error is actually a deliberate and potent cultural instrument. By masterfully wielding “illogic”, these performers transcend the boundaries of mere entertainment. They utilise these calculated transgressions to engage in profound social commentary, preserve ancestral philosophical insights, and reinforce communal identity. The findings confirm that the intentional application of these fallacies allows Yorùbá oral genres like Ìjálá and Dàdákúàdà to function as living, adaptive forces for education and cultural continuity. The analysis of specific thematic categories, such as eulogy, social critique, and artistic self-assertion, proves that the “hyperbolic fallacy” was a systematic stylistic signature that bridges the gap between the mundane and the mythic. This recognition of intentionality facilitates a much deeper appreciation of the literature as a complex system of meaning, where stylistic innovation and cultural weight are inextricably linked. Ultimately, the study affirmed that these oral traditions possess a timeless relevance and a profound intellectual

depth that continues to resonate across generational boundaries. Moving forward, there are several promising directions for further research on this topic. Future studies could explore the evolution of the hyperbolic fallacy within modern Yorùbá digital performances and social media poetry to determine how the shift from oral to digital platforms affects these traditional stylistic signatures. Additionally, a comparative study involving other West African oral traditions, such as the griot performances of the Mande people, could provide a broader regional understanding of the role of logical fallacies in African aesthetics. Finally, there is a need for a dedicated linguistic inquiry into the phonological and tonal shifts that occur during the delivery of hyperbolic statements, which may further illuminate the intersection of sound and meaning in Yorùbá poetics.

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## Гіперболічна помилка як стилістична ознака в поезії Ìjálá та Dàdàkúàdà

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**Анотація.** У дослідженні розглянуто творче та стратегічне використання гіперболічної помилки в поезії Ìjálá Огундаре Фоянму та Dàdàkúàdà Одолайе Арему з метою підвищення художньої та культурної значущості. У ньому стверджується, що інноваційне застосування цієї специфічної помилки в усній поезії йоруба залишається недостатньо вивченим, а розуміння того, як цей риторичний засіб впливає на естетичну та культурну вагу мистецької форми, відсутнє. Це дослідження мало на меті заповнити цю прогалину, проаналізувавши, як ці усні митці використовують гіперболічну помилку для створення складних смислів, залучення аудиторії та зміцнення культурних цінностей і традицій. Методологія охоплювала як первинні, так і вторинні джерела збору даних. Первинний збір даних включав вибрані дискографії Огундаре Фоянму та Одолайе Арему; вторинний збір даних – з книг, академічних статей та онлайн-ресурсів; а також герменевтичний аналіз і транскрипцію для інтерпретації культурних текстів. Виявлено, що ці усні митці стратегічно використовують гіперболічну помилку для створення складних смислів, викликання емоцій та підкріплення культурних цінностей у своїх виступах. Використання цієї помилки поряд з іншими, такими як метафора, підвищує художню та культурну значущість поезії Ìjálá, роблячи її багатогою та динамічною мистецькою формою. Встановлено, що ці усні митці стратегічно застосовують гіперболічне перебільшення (àṣọjù) – те, що західна логіка могла б назвати «гіперболічною помилкою» – як витончений стилістичний засіб для створення складних смислів, викликання емоцій та зміцнення культурних цінностей. Поряд з іншими засобами, такими як метафора, цей прийом підвищує художню та культурну значущість поезії Ìjálá та Dàdàkúàdà, слугуючи характерною стилістичною ознакою, яка вирізняє твори Огундаре Фоянму та Одолайе Арему з-поміж таких жанрів, як Oríkì. Це дослідження зробило внесок у документування та збереження усної спадщини йоруба, пропонує цінні ідеї для викладачів і виконавців у навчанні риторичних стратегій у традиційній поезії, підтримує зусилля з культурного відродження в сучасному нігерійському суспільстві та забезпечує основу для розуміння того, як традиційні усні форми продовжують формувати моральне виховання, емоційну залученість і колективну ідентичність у сучасних контекстах

**Ключові слова:** усна література йоруба; художнє значення; культурне значення; поезія Ìjálá; риторичні стратегії