
Many Tongues, Multiple Networks: A corpus-based pragmatic study of multilingualism on Nigerian virtual political space

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This study examines the increasing utilisation of the Internet and related digital media technologies such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube for political activities and civic engagement in Nigeria. It focuses specifically on the ways in which political actors and citizens in Nigeria draw on the existing multilingual resources within the Nigerian sociolinguistic ecosystem in their web-based political interactions.

The study also discusses how these stakeholders use a combination of mixed codes in online interactions with political issues and political stakeholders to reshape the political space and promote participatory democracy.

Theoretical insights that underpin the study adopt approaches from **computer-mediated discourse analysis** and **pragmatics**. The data set consists of a range of media multilingual-based online political posts between 2011 and 2015 elicited from our corpus construction project, CONNMDE (Corpus of Nigeria New Media Discourse in English). The methodological procedures also utilise some digital humanities software packages and concordancers such as *Sketch Engine* and *AntConc3.4* for data harvesting and to complement the qualitative and quantitative analyses (Baker, et al, 2008:275).

Generally speaking, the study reports some findings on the ongoing digital humanities project focusing on new media corpus construction. It then isolates and identifies clear instances of deliberate deployment of multilingual resources influenced by and rooted in ethnolinguistic identities as communication inclusion strategy. It equally confirms that Nigerian politicians use political websites with multilingual texts to encode acts of political persuasion and convey pragmatic meanings.

This presentation concludes by suggesting that online multilingual discursive practices may be indicative of or closely linked to people's purpose-driven offline sociolinguistic practices and identities deployed for socio-pragmatic goals.