

Sociolinguistic Analysis of Networking on Twitter: A Communicative Action Perspective

By

Ndibe, Princess N.

Department Of Igbo and Other Nigerian Languages,
Nwafor Orizu College of Education, Nsugbe
e-mail: princessladyp8@gmail.com

&

Nduka Perpetua Ugochi

Igbo Unit, Directorate of General Studies
Federal University of Technology
Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria
+2348063396961 perpetuanduka@gmail.com

Abstract

The study examines networking on Facebook and Twitter. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the study adopts Habermas' theory of communicative action to study the nature of actions and the three-world concept that exist among users of Twitter. A total number of seventy (70) tweets form the data of the study. The research observes that from the tweets and their corresponding comments, most participants acted or commented strategically in the sense that the stance they took were motivated by reasons and facts and not merely opinions or emotions. Participants who acted instrumentally often tweet

based on emotions and engaged in war of words with participants who acted strategically. The findings from the second research objective reveal that even in this post-truth era, when alternative truths gain preeminence over facts, some networkers showed that they operate in the objective world by abiding by social norms and facts. The research recommends that further researches from other aspects of sociolinguistics be carried out to tap into the benefits, which social networking sites have for language scholars.

Introduction

Dialogic engagements and interpersonal relationships have transcended from face-to-face interaction to computer-mediated or electronically-mediated discourse. Social networking sites (SNSs), through the internet, have fostered communication amongst people from different parts of the world. Information, in the present dispensation, can be disseminated in nanoseconds. People from different parts of the world have been able to network with people through social media/network like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, etc. Social network sites, note Boyd & Ellison (2007), allow interactants to create a public or quasi-public profile within a bounded system and interact with a list of other users with whom they are in connection with. Admittedly, SNS performs the function of maintaining easy communication access among people (Varis & Blommaert, 2014).

Social networking sites or the social media have been studied from different perspectives. Linguistically, researches have been carried out on code-switching (Habtoor & Almutlagah, 2018; Alaslal, 2018), communication style (Alvidrez & Rodriguez, 2016), language variation and change (Ibe-Kalu, 2016; Bailey, 2018), ethnography and conversational analysis (West, 2015). In social networking

sites, participants reveal their ideologies through the messages they send and the posts they share, forward or ‘retweet.’ More so, personal relationships influence members’ online interactional decisions and time of responses (West, 2015). This implies that people often reply the messages of those they are close to than the messages of people they are not closely related to.

Facebook, Twitter and other social networking sites in the sociolinguistic parlance can be referred to as a speech community because there exist therein specific forms of language use that are only used in these sites and unacceptable in a formal setting. English has become the lingua franca of social media (Kim, Wei, Weber, oh, 2014), although the world is not a ‘global village’ because the internet does not use a single language (Crystal, 2006). Inasmuch as there is no single language used on social media, English continues to be the most used language and participants use it to communicate and network with one another.

The advent of SNS has made it relatively difficult for one to have a private life. Two individuals that are friends on Facebook, for example, might attend a function together; one may not want to disclose to the cyber world that he was present at the function. The other person might make a post of a picture he took with the other person, tags him and uploads. In scenario like this, Marvick and Boyd (2014) contend that privacy is discussed in terms of ‘network privacy’ and that information is interrelated and that people share information that implicates others. ‘Network privacy’ here refers to “trying to be *in* public without always *being* public” (Marwick & Boyd, 2014: 2; emphasis in the original). This implies that an individual might be in his room alone but with his mobile device, he is communicating with many people. Suffice it to note that individuals often interact through computer-mediated platforms than face-to-face. This explains the reason

a group of five persons will prefer interacting with people far from them than engaging in a face-to-face conversation with the people around them.

In essence, SNS has bridged the barriers of communication. As individuals' network on the social media, they exchange messages, reveal their ideologies and current activity, market their products or disseminate information. Since individuals on social media make use of language in their day-to-day discourses on social and since they are members of their individual societies or communities, studying the language use of interactants on social media becomes a task for sociolinguists. Sociolinguistics is generally defined as the relationship that exists between language and society (Wardhaugh 2010; Agbedo, 2015). Variationists examine the language variation and change manifesting in the posts and/or tweets of interactants. Speech act analysts will preoccupy themselves with Facebook Acts, Instagram Acts, and Twitter Acts. Conversational analysts examine the turn-taking patterns, adjacency pairs, and the procedures of initiating and ending interactions. Ethnographers using the ethnography of communication model seek to reveal the norms of interactions and the principles that guide any communicative event on social media. As such, the social media has provided another area of research for linguists. Crystal (2006) notes that researchers in the field of computer/electronically-mediated discourse analysis must be well-informed with the changes that occur on social media if they want their researches to be current and relevant.

Therefore, the present study analyses networking in Twitter from Habermas' communicative action perspective. A study from this perspective becomes imperative because in the post-truth era, a time when alternative facts spring up every day, people's post on social media need to be verified in order to discern if they align with the 'social world' or deviate from

it. More so, individuals do not often verify information, which they share on social media, which does not concur with the truthfulness aspect of Habermas' theory of communicative action. In this study, tweets obtained from Twitter and some of the comments on these tweets will be analysed.

On the other hand, Twitter as one of the social media platforms is where users post short messages of 280 characters (Bailey, 2018; Habtoor & Almutlagah, 2018). According to Alvidrez and Rodriguez (2016:2):

Twitter's speed and reach have made it a communication tool used widely by public figures to attract the attention of users, creating emotional bonds with their followers and, ultimately, mobilizing people to undertake a concrete action (for example: attending a film premiere, making donations for charitable causes, voting on election day).

In corroborating the above assertion, Alaslal (2018) claims that Twitter is not the only social media service, but it stands out because of its message size, which has a balanced and comparable corpus. He further remarks that Twitter provides a platform for the collection of data for most researches because millions of tweets are published on daily basis from individuals, groups and government agencies. Another feature that distinguishes Twitter from other social media platform, notes Alaslal (2018), is that most of Twitter's data and tweets are available to the public, even to those who do not have Twitter accounts.

The above explication makes Twitter a potent source of data collection for sociolinguistic research. The general objective of this study is to undertake a sociolinguistic analysis of networking in Facebook and Twitter from Habermas' theory of communicative action perspective. In specifics, the research seeks to:

1. identify the recurring action(s) in Twitter networking discourses;
2. examine the world(s) portrayed by interlocutors (networkers) on Twitter;

This study is limited to selected tweets and their comments on Twitter. The tweets border on xenophobic attacks on Nigeria by South Africans. Xenophobia is a latent or obtrusive dislike of foreigners. Xenophobia is a social vice that is as old as social history. It is based on the politics of exclusion, which is a feeling that foreigners are different from the nationals and so should have a lower status than that of the nationals (cf. Matunhu, 2012).

Empirical studies

Kim, Li, Weber and Oh (2014) in their research on a sociolinguistic analysis of Twitter in multilingual societies examined the interplay of language and network structure in diverse multilingual societies and quantifying the degree to which users are the ‘bridge-builders’ between monolingual language groups. The research collected Twitter data from Qatar and Switzerland, and Quebec province in Canada. The findings of the research revealed that monolingual users cluster together while bilinguals do not. More so, users speaking local language have more influence than others. In addition, the language-mixing ration of bilingual users closely mirrors the mix of followership. The research also discovered that bilinguals express informative/political/debatable topics in a local language, while posting event/tour/enjoyment topics in the English language. Whereas this research drew its data from European countries, the present research’s data were drawn from posts made in Nigeria.

West (2015) researched on liking, commenting and non-response on Facebook from a sociolinguistic perspective.

The purpose of the study was to analyse audience behaviour on Facebook. The researcher combined ethnographic methods of data collection with the objective of interactional sociolinguistics and conversation analysis to illuminate the influences on members' choices between such options. From the study, it was discovered that 'Like' on Facebook functions as a quick and inexplicit back-channeling device that fills the second pair slot that a post creates, avoiding the hearable silence that otherwise exists when a post receives no response from the newsfeed audience. In addition, the research revealed that audience members comment on posts based on the present contextual aspects that the poster has made available in their post linguistically and phonologically. The research concluded that Facebook is a site of great importance to computer-mediated communication researchers due to its longevity and continued prominence among SNSs. The research of West and the present one are similar in that they examine messages on SNS from a sociolinguistic perspective. The two researches are different from the standpoint of analysis. The former used ethnography and conversational analysis for data analysis whereas the latter adopts theory of communicative action.

Ibe-Kalu (2016) conducted research on the language use of social networking sites (SNS) among students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The purposes of the study were to identify the various types of SNS and their features, how SNS enhances communication among students, and to determine the implication of the proficient use of the language of SNS on the students. The study made use of 244 respondents from four hostels in the University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The study made use of the respondents' individual posts on social media. The research discovered that the various types of SNS are Facebook, Blackberry Messenger, Twitter, WhatsApp, and Instagram, which have 150 million users each. The finding of the research also reveals that

students of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka make use of smileys/emojis, abbreviations, acronyms and code-switching during their interaction on SNS. The research also discovered that the implication of the proficient use of the language of SNS on the students is that it enables them to create new words, which enrich the vocabulary of the English language. The research, from its findings, refutes the claim that the language of SNS influences students in their day-to-day offline interaction. The research concluded that SNS is a sociolect in the sense that it can be faulted outside the online community of social networking. This research and the present one is similar in that they examine language use in SNS. Their difference lies on the path of approach. The former analysed its data descriptively whereas the former analyses its data with the theory of communicative action. In addition, the former situates its research on the University of Nigeria, Nsukka (UNN) students alone, while the latter makes use of data from tweets that border on xenophobia.

Habtoor and Almutlagah (2018) examined intra-sentential code-switching among bilingual Saudis on Twitter. The study made use of 12 bilingual Saudi females on Twitter who differed in age and education. Statistical and qualitative methods were used in analyzing the data. The finding of the research revealed that code-switching occurs frequently among Saudi users of Twitter. At the level of particular syntactic categories in Arabic code-switching, nouns were the most often switched elements in the corpus. The research also discovered that most inserted words in English were related to the internet and other social aspects. This research and the present one are similar in the sense that both obtained data from Twitter and analysed them from a sociolinguistic perspective. The difference lies in the fact that the former examines code-switching but the latter studies the communicative action of networking on Twitter.

Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework used in this study is Habermas' theory of communicative action. The theory of communicative action was put forward by Jurgen Habermas, a German, in his two-volume publications in 1984 and 1987. The theory of communicative action gears towards investigating the way individuals communicate in accordance with the opinion of others, on the one hand; and takes decisions alone without considering the consequences on the society on the other hand. In essence, the theory of communication demands people to say the truth in order not to create a 'modal confusion.' Habermas (1984) argues that an action is considered communicative when participants in a discourse communicate in line with the 'objective,' 'social,' and 'subjective' worlds. By so doing, they get to know one another through deliberations, argument, cooperation and by sharing their subjective experiences, desires and feelings. Habermas (1987:401) contends that under communicative action, individuals pursue different goals by engaging in different coordinated actions.

Furthermore, Habermas opines that most people may not always do things that aim toward a common goal but an individual goal; this he refers to as 'instrumental action.' Instrumental action talks about nonsocial situation, which is self-centered. In this sense, instrumental actors accomplish their set objectives by manipulating other social actors as well as material objects. This then implies that individuals who engage in post-truth uses it to manipulate people in order to make their opinions to be adjudged as fact. In contrast to instrumental action is 'strategic action.' In this kind of action, Habermas (1984) purports that strategic actors, instead of manipulating others, pursue their objectives by convincing

other actors because of the level of respect they have for them. This implies that social actors make use of deliberation and logical reasoning in pursuit of their goals.

Habermas' theory of communicative action recognises a three-world concept: 'objective,' 'social,' and 'subjective.' The objective world consists of 'the totality of what is the case' about entities and states of affairs, which agree or disagree with what is the case in the world. An actor can conceive something, which is not totally the case and may be right or wrong. Decision upon the outcome of his thoughts will be taken from the point of truth.

For the social world, Habermas (1984:88) opines that it comprises a "normative context that lays down which interactions belong to legitimate interpersonal relations." In effect, the social world is the sum total of the values, traditions, and principles of a society. Notwithstanding, actors can concur or digress from these norms. When this happens, they will be judged based on the logical defense they are able to give. In essence, decisions are communally approved.

The 'subjective world,' notes Habermas (1984:100), is "the totality of subjective experiences to which the actor has privileged access." In this world, the opinions and ideologies of an actor is made known to others.

In reacting to the theory of communicative action, Cecez-Kecmanovic and Janson (1999:186) observe:

Communicative action exemplifies the concept of communicative rationality inherent in human speech, which denotes a communicative practice characterized by actors' obligation to give reasons for or against validity claims raised, to challenge, accept or reject claims of others on the bases of the better argument.

From the above excerpt, it becomes glaring that Habermas' theory of communication is against individuals swallowing ideas or information hook, line and sinker. He advocates the application of sound argument and logical/practical reasoning in checking any idea or pieces of information. This will aid in confirming the veracity of the idea, opinion, or information.

Essentially, another aspect of communicative action theory as enunciated by Habermas is that anyone acting communicatively must raise validity claims and suppose that they can be vindicated. As such, the speaker claims to be uttering something comprehensible, offering a true proposition, expressing his intentions truthfully so that the hearer can trust the speaker, and choosing an utterance that is right so that the hearer can accept the utterance with respect to a recognised normative background. It is only when these validity claims are justified in terms of 'compressibility,' 'truth,' 'truthfulness,' and 'rightness' that communicative action can only occur correctly. Discerning an utterance that did not flout the validity claims can be done through 'rational reconstruction,' which implies using sentences and utterances to determine fundamental principles for understanding any practical use of language.

Methods

This research adopts the descriptive survey research design. The Social Networking Site (SNS) used in this study is Twitter because of their popularity and high number of users. A total of seventy (70) messages forms the data for the study. This SNS provided a platform from people to network and seek answers to their questions or communicate their ideologies to friends and followers. As people network on SNSs, they do so through the help of language. However, the data obtained from the selected SNS will be approached from

a communicative action perspective, which is an aspect of sociolinguistics.

Data analysis

Here, attempts will be made to achieve the objectives of the study.

Nature of actions in Twitter networking discourses

Under communicative action, Habermas identified two kinds of actions: instrumental (self-gain) and strategic (for the good of all). During the early days of September 2019, many Nigerians were stoned, maimed and burnt by some South Africans who claim that they do not want Nigerians in their country again. During this period, Twitter users who are also called ‘tweeps’ tweeted to communicate their opinions concerning the xenophobic attacks.

In Fig. 1 (see appendix), the poster (a Nigerian) reported that he lost his brother in South Africa to xenophobia and at the same time expresses his dissatisfaction to AKA’s (a South African rapper) statement that there are no victims. The tweeter concluded by saying that AKA will be the victim. This last statement presents the poster as an instrumental actor who has allowed his emotions to push him to say what he is not expected to say. The implication of “YOU WILL BE THE VICTIM Just wait!” used by the tweeter is that he hopes that Nigerians in South Africa will kill AKA in return. With this line of thought, the tweeter expects to have an eye for an eye scenario. This desire to have South Africans killed in return also manifested in Figs. 16, 21, 22 and 23. In Fig. 15, in reaction to the killings of Nigerians in South Africa, President Muhammadu Buhari was reported to have said “When you are in Rome, you do as the Romans”. This statement did not augur well with some Nigerians and in Fig. 16, a Nigerian replied “Does that justifies the killings?? I so much dislike

this president”. In reaction, another person replied, “What do you expect him to do. He should start a war against them”. The tweeter who expressed his dislike for the President was instrumental in his action because just as was observed in Fig. 1, he wants the President to tell Nigerians in South Africa to retaliate. Due to the fact that the poster was driven by personal emotions and not logical reasoning, he forgets to interpret the President’s speech in the context in which it was spoken. South Africans were killing Nigerians based on the claim that Nigerians do not respect the laws of the country and were involved in different illegal businesses. As such, President Buhari admonished Nigerians to respect the laws that govern the country where they reside.

Similarly, Figs. 21, 22 and 23 present reactions of some Nigerians to the picture that was taken when the envoy from South Africa came to apologise to Nigeria for the xenophobic attacks. Still in the line of thought of an eye for an eye, the tweeter in Fig. 21 lambasted the President for smiling and taking photos with the envoy that came from South Africa. The poster’s expectation was for Buhari to snub them or possibly flog them as suggested by a tweeter in Fig. 22. For the tweeter in Fig. 23, Nigeria does not need apology but the payment of damages. The emphasis on damages reveals the instrumentality in the action of the tweeter. He does not care about the life that were lost but for the properties that were damaged. A strategic actor would have known that mutual international relations between leaders of two countries affect positively the life of the citizens.

In Fig. 2, a South African remarked that he will not be intimidated or blackmailed by bed wetting boys. He equally opined that South Africa is a home for all Africans and demanded that they should kill him for defending an African brother (Burna boy). Inasmuch as the tweeter is a South African, he did not allow himself to be driven by emotions.

As a strategic actor, he recognised that taking another person's life is not the best option. This ideology was repeated in Fig. 40 about an Igbo proverb which says that the one who killed his brother is not a warrior. The build up to this tweet in Fig. 2 can be traced to the statements by AKA and Burna boy which appeared in Figs. 38, 39, 46-9. AKA was supporting the xenophobic attacks, which is a characteristic of instrumental action and in reaction, Burna boy condemns the attacks and described AKA as someone who is suffering from chronic mental retardation. The comments made by Burna boy made South Africans to insist that Burna boy must apologise to them before he would be allowed to come to South Africa to perform in any show. It was in this scenario that Julius Sello Malema remarked that Burna boy is welcomed in South Africa because reason should come before emotions.

Some South Africans were not satisfied with the above statement made by Malema. As such, they responded as instrumental actors by claiming that Malema is welcoming Burna boy because he is expecting money from Burna boy (Fig. 4). They accused him of supporting a person who is not a South African (Fig. 5) and told him to seek for votes from Burna boy in the coming elections (Fig. 4). The underlying feeling in these responses is that only South Africans are human beings, others are not.

Figs. 8 and 26 contain tweets that have instrumental actions. In Fig. 8, the tweeter referred to Nigeria as a shithole country who closed its borders. According to him, nothing happened when Nigeria closed its borders but when South African police do their jobs, it is called xenophobia. In Fig. 26 as well, another South African remarked that when other countries deport migrants, nobody makes an issue of it but when South Africa deports, everyone cries xenophobia. The implicit information concealed by the two tweeters is the

difference between the activities of South Africans and other countries over a particular issue. This difference was provided by a South African who was strategic enough in Fig. 27 to reveal that the difference is the violence. If done legally, there is nothing wrong. The poster entrenches his instrumental action by supporting citizens to take laws into their hands when the leaders fail them in Figs. 28 and 30. In Fig. 30, he asserted, "...When nothing works people take the law into their own hands. Look deeper!" However, the poster in the first part of Fig. 28 acted strategically by asserting that it is lawful for a government to deport people legally but it is xenophobic when citizens brutally attack foreigners and looting their shops without due process.

The person that tweeted the messages in Figs. 12 and 13 performed a strategic action. He condemned the attack of refugees on South African police and at the same time provided a solution for the menace. His solution was that human rights activists must advise refugees to respect South African laws because an attack on the police is an attack against the state. From the tweet, the poster did not recommend a reprisal attack on the refugees but he recommended a massive sensitisation for the refugees so that they will understand that it is immoral to bite a finger that fed them. This is the opposite of the intention of ex-Niger militants in Fig. 24 who vowed to invade South Africa with over 2,000 Coast Guard officers and 10,000 ex-militants.

The tweets in Figs. 31, 32, 34, 36, 41, 42, 44 and 45 contain strategic actions because those who tweeted them have the interest of the masses at heart. In Fig. 31 for instance, the tweeter stated the fact that xenophobic attacks do not stop poverty, inequality and racism. The tweeter of Fig. 32 concurred by saying that peaceful coexistence is a veritable factor for economic development. This feature of placing rational reasoning before emotions is characteristic of

strategic action whereas statements which are borne out from emotion-laden heart is characteristic of instrumental action.

The world(s) portrayed by interlocutors (networkers) on Facebook and Twitter

Habermas' theory of communicative action identified a three-world concept of objective, social and subjective worlds. Individuals operating in the objective world argues based on truth and facts. Social world comprises the norms that govern a group of people and individuals operating in subjective world create alternative facts that are based on personal feelings and emotions. The tweet in Fig. 2 opened an avenue for participants to reveal the world they operate in. The tweeter himself, through the tweet, indicated that he belongs to the objective world. The tweet in Fig. 25 was borne out of strategic action and expected objective responses that will abide by the validity claims. The tweets in Fig. 31 and 32 are objective because the commenter outlined key issues that are factual and not based on feelings.

In Figs. 31, 34 and 40, the tweeter operated in the objective world because the social world kicks against killings. There is nothing good that comes with killing one another. This was the central theme of the two tweets. In line with the truthfulness validity claim of communicative action, the statements are truthful Due to the fact that the tweeter (Fig. 34) backed up her claim with the facts, the tweeter operate in objective world.

The tweet in Fig. 8 and 26 shows that the poster is operating in the subjective world. The social world frowns at. Those who justified an eye for an eye approach argued based on personal feelings and alternative facts instead of truth and facts. Those who advocated a mature and peaceful way of solving the problem demonstrated that they operate in the

objective world because: “The difference is the violence. If done legally there is nothing wrong” (Fig. 27).

Conclusions

This paper has examined the nature of actions and the three-world concept in the networking discourses of some selected Facebook and Twitter users. These actions and the three-world concept of Habermas’ theory of communicative action emanate as people network with one another to discuss things that concern them. One striking thing derived therefrom is that users who undertake strategic action put the interest of the people in mind whereas most of the people who undertake instrumental actions are driven by personal feelings and emotions. From the data, there is no much difference on the numbers of people who operate in the objective world and those who operate in the subjective world.

Twitter as well as other Social Networking Sites serve as platforms for people to reveal their ideologies. SNSs have proven to be good platforms for generating data for sociolinguistic analysis. The time has come in the academia when researchers will no longer depend on questionnaires because the answers to research questions can be elicited from SNSs users. The study recommends that further researches from other aspects of sociolinguistics and pragmatics be conducted in order to tap into the benefits SNSs have for sociolinguistics in particular and linguistics in general.

References

- Agbedo, C. U. (2015). *General linguistics: Historical and comparative perspectives*. Nsukka: KUMCEE Ltd.
- Alaslaa, S. A. (2018). A sociolinguistic study of code choice among Saudis on Twitter. A PhD dissertation, University of Michigan.

- Alvidrez, S. & Rodriguez, O. F. (2016). Powerful communication style on Twitter: Effects on credibility and civic participation. *Media Education Research Journal*, 24(47), 89-97.
- Bailey, G. (2018). When social media meets sociolinguistics: Using Twitter to study language variation and change. Retrieved from https://personalpages.manchester.ac.uk/staff/george.bailey/twitter_workshop/twitter_slides.pdf on 03/10/2018.
- Boyd, D. & Ellison, N. (2007). Social network sites: Definition, history, and scholarship. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 13(1). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00393.x>
- Breeze, R. (2011). Critical discourse analysis and its critics. *Pragmatics*, 21(4), 493-525.
- Brown, P. (1976). Women and politeness: A new perspective on language and society. Review of 'Language and woman's place' by R. Lakoff'. *Reviews in Anthropology*, 3, 240-249.
- Brown, P. (1980). *How and why women are more polite: Some universals in language use*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cecez-Kecmanovic, D. & Janson, M. (1999). Communicative action theory: An approach to understanding the application of information systems. *Proc. 10th Australasian Conference on Information Systems*. Retrieved from <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/29d6/> on 20/4/2018.
- Crystal, D. (2006). *Language and the internet* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Fairclough, N. (1989). *Language and power*. London: Longman.
- Fraser, B. (1990). Perspectives on Politeness. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 14, 219–236.
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action – reason and the rationalization of society (Vol I)*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1987). *The theory of communicative action – the critique of functionalist reason (Vol II)*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- Habtoor, H. A. & Almutlagah, G. F. (2018). Intra-sentential code-switching among bilingual Saudis on Twitter. *International Journal of Linguistics*, 10(2), 1-18.
- Ibe-Kalu, M. N. (2016). Language use of social networking sites among students of University of Nigeria, Nsukka. B.A. project, Department of Linguistics, Igbo and other Nigerian Languages, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Kim, S., Wei, L., Weber, I. & Oh, A. (2014). Sociolinguistic Analysis of Twitter in Multilingual Societies. Retrieved from <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/266661025> on 4/10/2018.
- Lakoff, R. (1973). The logic of politeness; or minding your p's and q's. *Papers from the 9th Regional Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society*, 292–305. Chicago: Chicago Linguistic Society.
- Lakoff, R. (1979). Stylistic strategies within a grammar style. *Academy of Science Annals*, 327, 51–78.

- Matunhu, J. (2012). Re-visiting the May 2008 xenophobic attacks in South Africa. *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies (AJCJS)*, 5(1&2), 95-108.
- Marwick, A. & Boyd, D. (2014). Networked privacy: How teenagers negotiate context in social media. *New Media & Society*, 1-17. doi:10.1177/1461444814543995.
- Reiter, R. M. (2000). *Linguistic politeness in Britain and Uruguay: A contrastive study of requests and apologies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- van Dijk, T. A. (1995). Discourse semantics and ideology. *Discourse & Society*, 6(2), 243 -289.
- Varis, P. & Blommaert, J. (Eds.). (2015). Conviviality and collectives on social media: Virality, memes and new social structures. *Journal of Language and Politics*. Retrieved from https://www.tilburguniversity.edu/upload/83490ca9659d49a097dbff1f8978062b_TPCS_108_Varis-Blommaert.pdf on 03/10/2018.
- Wardhaugh, R. (2010). *An introduction to sociolinguistics* (6th ed.). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- West, L. A. (2015). Responding (or not) on Facebook: A sociolinguistic study of liking, commenting, and other reactions to posts. A PhD dissertation, Faculty of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Georgetown University.
- Wodak, R. (1996). *Orders of discourse*. New York: Addison Wesley Longman.

APPENDIX: DATA

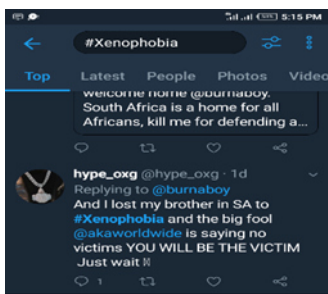


Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



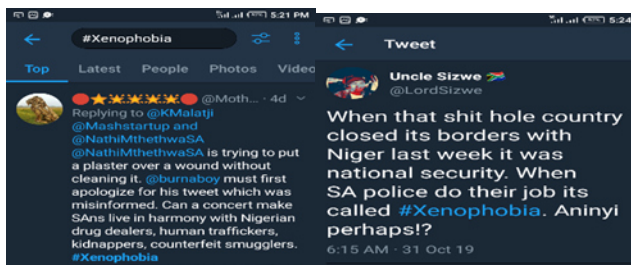


Fig. 7

Fig. 8



Fig. 10

Fig. 9



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

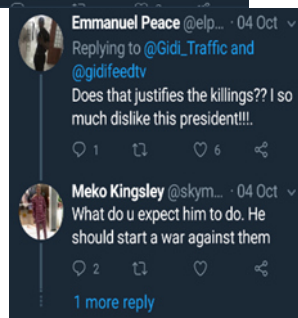


Fig 17

Fig. 16

Fig. 17



Fig.

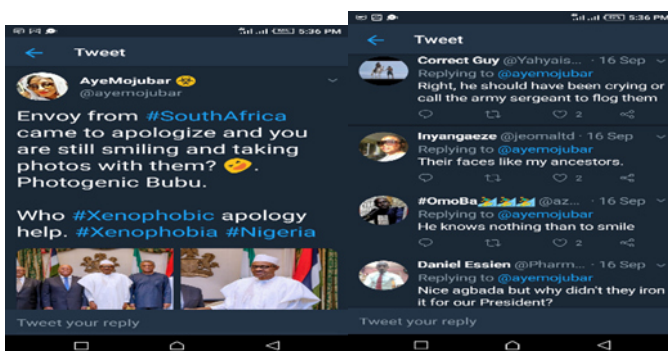
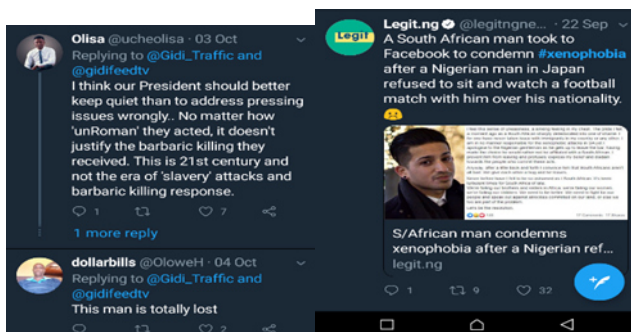


Fig. 19

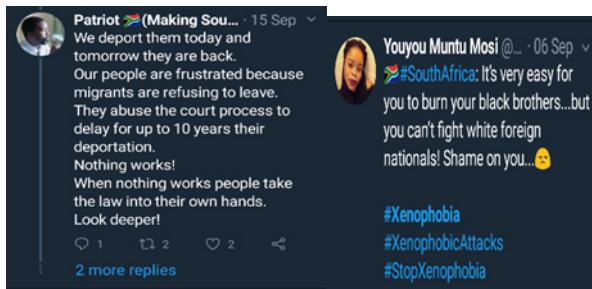
Fig.

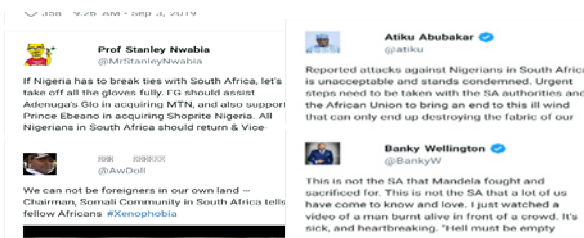
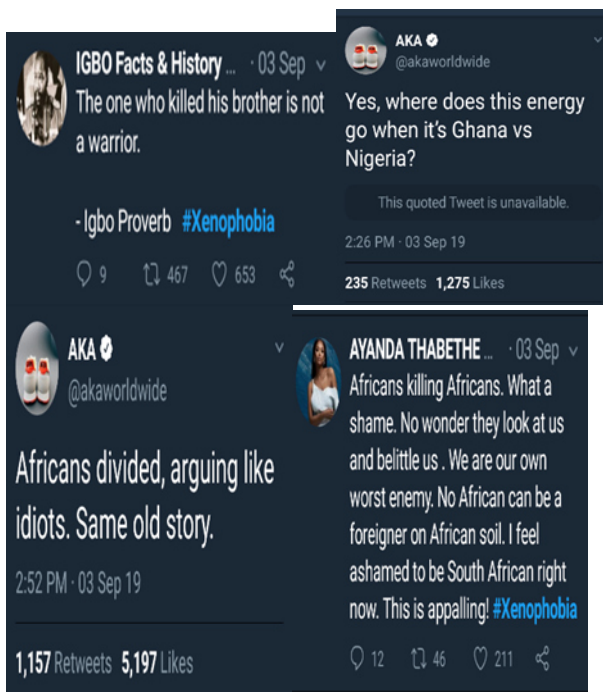




Fig. 21









Burna Boy
@burnaboy

And @akaworldwide i knew you was retarded but I didn't know it had gotten this bad. Next time I see you you better have a big security bro, On Gambos Grave ur gunna need it.

7:41 PM · 03/09/2019 · Twitter for iPhone



Burna Boy
@burnaboy

But Today After watching the Killing of my people in South Africa the same way we have all watched it happen a few times in the past. FUCK ALL THAT! I personally have had my own xenophobic experiences at the hands of South Africans and because of that.....

7:19 PM · 03/09/2019 · Twitter for iPhone