



## Book Review

Reviewer: Peter, Ada Sonia, Ph.D.

### **Pragmatics of Nigerian English in Digital Discourse**

Innocent Chiluiwa, Presley Ifukor & Rotimi Taiwo (Eds)

Muenchen, Germany: LINCOM GmbH, 2014 100pp, €58.80 (paperback), ISBN 9783862885336

*Pragmatics of Nigerian English in Digital Discourse* edited by Chiluiwa, Ifukor and Taiwo is a book that conveys new insights to existing knowledge in pragmatics in digital communication. What this book captures better than any single book of pragmatic study is the intercultural dimensions of meaning and communication that the various authors bring to bear. In particular, the authors show how Nigerians from the south-west region demonstrate their “Nigerianess” in the digital discourse context. According to the editors the book not only illustrates aspects of Nigerian English and how it is constrained by information technologies but also reflects scholarly attempt “at harnessing research results in the investigation of intercultural pragmatics of Nigerian English in the context of Computer Mediated Communication.” This is clearly visible in each chapter of the book. The import of these new meanings emerging from Nigerian English is essential to the explication of African Cultural Revolution and identities.

Written in eight chapters, the contributors adopt pragmatic approaches and theories such as politeness, speech/pragmatic acts, relevance and Gricean pragmatics to examine digital communicative activities specifically on *Facebook*, *Twitter*, *Weblogs*, online chats, mobile telephony and E-learning processes. Although the book does not extend to online behaviours of Nigerians on *YouTube* (another important digital platform) where Nigerians respond to indigenous terrorist video uploads, the book’s application of the theories of pragmatics to some possible explanation of indigenous terrorist activities on the Internet is highly commendable. This is an integral but important analysis of how Nigerians respond to current social issues with new words and collocations emerging from the need to express concepts specific to the culture of the Nigerian society. It is also important to note that the chapters in the book have the kind of scientific coherence as any good qualitative study.

From the opening chapter entitled “Tweeting the 2011 bombings in Nigeria: Pragmatic strategies in Nigerian English,” Innocent Chilwa and Adegoke Adetunji reveal that writers on the Nigeria’s security situation, (many of them writing in Standard Nigerian English, or as direct translations of local languages and loan words from local languages), deploy specific pragmatics acts such as accusation, condemnation, denunciation of violence and blame on Islam as a religion. Presley Ifukor (in the chapter two), presents the social identities and “Nigerianess” of net-citizens (bloggers) with some recurrent linguistic features of Nigerian English in digital discourse that they use; also illustrating the nativisation of digital nomenclature, shortening practices, linguistic hybridity, code switching, intertextuality and inspirational invocations.

Titilade Oyebade in chapter three examines digital competences of young Nigerian elites by systematically analysing the pragmatic features of online discourse that they produce in e-learning platforms. She illustrates this using Levinson’s *activity types*. Chapters four, five and six focus on politeness and impoliteness strategies that are common in Nigerian English. For instance, Funmi Olubode-Sawe in chapter four unveils some of the commonest strategies used by the Yorubas for negotiating politeness, referred to as “Yoruba relational

strategies.” This is against the well known theory by Brown and Levinson.

Esther Oluделе and Oluwatomi Adeoti in chapter five examine Locher and Watts’ relational point of view of politeness and identify eight common forms of “psyching”- some types of norm-based politeness strategies present on Facebook by Nigerians. Rotimi Taiwo in chapter six examines trolling in Nigeria’s most popular online community (i.e. *Nairaland*). He argues that due to the high degree of anonymity associated with the Internet, online communication is increasingly being used to initiate and sustain trolling in form of sarcasm, vulgarity, threadjacking etc, which constitutes impoliteness in the Nigerian context. In chapter seven, Titi Fola-Adebayo applies Gricean pragmatics to the analysis of web conversations and blog entries of Nigerian sophomores and juniors. Here, features of Nigerian English are realized as instances of linguistic and creative nativization. The book ends with Taofik Adesomi’s study of relevance in chats among selected Nigerians applying the relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson.

*Pragmatics of Nigerian English in Digital Discourse* is recommended for use by both the undergraduate and graduate students and early career researchers in the areas of Internet Linguistics, Pragmatics, New Englishes, Sociolinguistics and Applied Linguistics. Future pragmatic studies of Nigerian

English in digital discourse may consider analysing digital discourse among Nigerians on online video

platforms such as Skype, YouTube, etc.