

# Emerging Trends and Challenges in English Literature, Art and Culture

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## Preface

*“We have a duty”*

**D**r. Gurpreet Kaur’s volume *Emerging Trends and Challenges in English Literature, Art and Culture* collects more than 60 essays by research scholars and academics from places as far-flung as Bangladesh, Canada, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Nigeria, and a wide range of India’s Pradeshes, including contributions from some of the Seven Sister States in the Northeast.

A good number of the discursive pieces assembled here are composed by early career academics. Consequently, the book is fresh—and refreshing. I say this because *the* keyword that emerged—that came to have the greatest impression upon me—when I finished apprising the manuscript was, is, *hope*. As such, the volume doesn’t really conclude. Even a mildly assiduous reader, I feel, would not, could not, just simply close the book and wash her hands of it. *Hope*, here, is infectious. And thus forward looking; I see this *hopefulness* as signifier of an affective turn in contemporary cultural criticism in Englishes. The emerging voices captured in Gurpreet Kaur’s collection *Emerging Trends and Challenges in English Literature, Art and Culture*, many by PhD research scholars, and many co-authored, belie the cynicism & suspicion (& anomie!) that can come to envelop—or, regrettably, even to characterise—the dispositions of more established scholars in the humanities working on and across similar texts, tactics, and themes.

Kaur’s essay compendium had me actually looking forward to reading such texts as the Gayatri Spivak translated and introduced *Imaginary Maps: Three Stories by Mahasweta Devi* (1995), a book that would otherwise have long-remained resting on my bookshelf stealthily sidestepped, its exuded aura of “difficulty,” of “complicity,” ever more censuring me for my complacency, for having all-but conceded my social conscience/consciousness.

In Spivak’s opening piece, the Mahasweta Devi-featuring “The Author in Conversation” (ix-xxii), Devi, who takes pride in herself as

“an Indian writer, not a Bengali writer” (xix), reminds readers that one-sixth of the total population of India is tribal, and that “India belonged to these tribals long before the incursion of the Aryan-speaking peoples” (ix). The tribal descriptor “for Hindu,” Devi explains, “is Diku,” which translates to “outsider” (ix) — a condition that should give substantial pause to cultural critics from around the globe. As privileged “strangers” or “interlopers,” Devi makes plain, it’s our duty to recognise and to “communicate the agony of the tribals” who, after all, are *representative* “of marginalized people all over the world” (xxi). “Whatever has come in the name of development,” Devi accentuates, “has spelled disaster for the tribes” (xxii).

“Decolonization,” Spivak and Devi acknowledge, “has not reached the poor” (xx). Another way of seeing (and saying) the same is: we are impoverished as a result of the normalized exploitation of subaltern agents. We are impoverished, Spivak and Devi stress, by the perpetual top-down silencing of “responsible,” “sensitive,” and “civilized” indigenous persons “who have never been given any responsibility by the rulers” (xiv). Devi recognizes that as “a creative writer [she] should have a social conscience,” that she indeed has “a duty towards society” (xvi). Employing the second-person plural, Devi at once interpellates her interviewer (Spivak) and her reader (us) when she observes “You are useful to the tribals because of the journalistic exposure that you immediately give to every act of exploitation and discrimination that [tribals] have to suffer” (xv). Devi’s, Spivak’s, our “social duty” is to “hammer upon that pride, break that pride” (xvi). That pride: the caste, class, colour, and gender prejudices our privileged silences negatively sanction and perpetuate.

In her “Translator’s Preface” (xxiii-xxix), which follows Spivak and “The Author in Conversation,” Spivak deconstructs her own positionality as discursively informed tribal spokesperson/liaison. She carefully clarifies that “no amount of raised consciousness field-work can ever approach the painstaking labor to establish ethical singularity with the subaltern” (“Preface” xxiv). In other words, the engine of responsible and accountable subaltern engagement may be rendered by the Ancient Greek word for truth, *aletheia*, which literally translates to “unconcealedness.” As Spivak proclaims, “we want to reveal and reveal, not conceal” (xxv). “Yet on both sides,” she concedes, “there is always a sense that something has not got across” (xxv). In spite of (critical) commitments to “frank and open exchange,” “it is impossible

for all leaders (subaltern or otherwise) to engage every subaltern in this way, especially across the gender divide” (xxv).

Thus, for instance, in a similar mode to the famous conclusion Frantz Fanon comes to, the machete murder the teenage cowherd Mary Oraon commits upon her Tehsildar in Devi’s “The Hunt” (1-17) in order to preserve not only her virginity but also her personhood—and this on her wedding night, no less! Readers learn at the end of the first part of the three-part story that the arrival of Tehsildar Singh to Kuruda village “troubled” “Mary’s life” (6). So, after providing several unheeded warnings, Mary, who resolutely affirms “I don’t want such a life” (3),<sup>1</sup> Mary, who guards her “inviolable constitution” (5), Mary, who rails against being confined/codified as a “worker captive” (3), effectuates a bloody tableau in a dark ravine.

Mary’s “biggest kill” (17) mirrors in small “the naked savagery” and “bloody exploitation of women” (“Conversation” xii) in the bonded labor system that Devi portrays in her tribal Indian stories. Devi explains that in inaccessible districts, “from Kashmir to the Indian Ocean,” “with more than forty thousand bonded laborers in each of them,” the bonded labor system, introduced by the British, survives (xii). The colonizers<sup>2</sup> “created a new class,” she elucidates, “which took away tribal lands and converted the tribals into debt-bonded slaves” (xii).

As Devi knows, “as far as the tribals and the oppressed are concerned, violence is justified” (xviii). As Mary shows, “When the system fails an individual has a right to take to violence or any other means to get justice” (xviii). As Spivak echoes, pinpointing Devi’s “Douloti,” *who does have such a life*, “one of the bases in women’s subalternity (and indeed in unequal gendering on other levels of society) is internalized constraints seen as responsibility, and therefore the very basis of gender-ethics” (“Preface” xxvii).

It’s our collective responsibility, so the short, hopeful pieces in this critical volume expose, to continue hammering down on asymmetrical distributions of power. Every reading, so the late Harold Bloom famously averred in *The Anxiety of Influence* (1973), is *misprision*. In the context of Kaur’s *Emerging Voices*, which invests its readership in

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<sup>1</sup> ... the very outcaste *kamiya* (or bondslave) life that quickly kills the heroine in *Imaginary Maps*’ second story, “Douloti the Beautiful” (19-93).

<sup>2</sup>And we remember, pace Devi and Spivak, that “Decolonization has not reached the poor” (“Conversation” xx).

a catholic range of topics across continents, disciplines, and genres, we might review our understanding of Bloom's recourse to the term *misprision*, from the Old French *mesprendre*, to misunderstand. Bloom, of course, employs the term as a psychic means for young poets to efface their belatedness. By adroitly misreading one's influences, one may improve upon them. Ergo, the belated poet may best her precursor, effectively killing said anxiety-producing influence in order, figuratively at least, to supplant them. Misprision, then, is purpose-directed misreading. And said maladministration, as English legal practice constitutes it, concerns the neglect or violation of an official duty.

As researchers, as educators, as facilitators, it's our collective duty—whether working on Englishes, the bhashas, Dalits, Hijras, the media, CMC, food, comics, posthumanism, ecology, womanism, malady, confinement, Maoism, digital art, relevance theory, translation, subaltern studies, YAL, dispossession, innocence, creative nonfiction, biopolitics, queer cultures, pop culture, or any of the other key concerns in this compendium—it's our collective duty to explode the institutionalized/institutionalizing exploitations in the making all around every one of us. It's our duty as privileged academics, as responsive and accountable arbitrators of the public sphere, to get as much *across to as many individuals as we can*. We must work towards reconciling artificial aporias, that is, towards exposing the manipulative disjunctions purposely engineered to dispossess (and balkanize) growing swathes of the global population. It's our duty, in short, to carry on the good work of discursively dismantling repressive maladministrations.

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# **Disruptive Linguistic Elements in Social Media Communication in Nigeria**

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&

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## **Introduction**

Communication can be described as the interaction between people. Conventional communication involves face-to-face interaction, but in social media, communication occurs when someone is responds or comments on others' status or initiates conversation with someone else (Othman, Apaudi, & Noah, 2016). Communicating via the social media has become a normal occurrence in recent times because it is cheap, available and easily accessible. In Nigeria and the world at large, almost everyone in the community is connected. McLuhan (1964) had used the term 'a global village' to explain the phenomenon of the expanding and shrinking world due to pervasive technological advances that allow for instantaneous sharing of information. Social media platforms have made it possible to disseminate information from the convenience of one's homes or phones to other parts of the world. This trend has made many individuals to rely heavily on information shared on social media. And since interaction on social media is a constant activity, people deploy writing as one of the skills by which they interact with others. The present generation of youth is greatly attached to the internet and social networking; they spend most of their time composing text messages as part of their daily routine; a practice which records positive as well as negative effects. To put it differently, social media is deployed in a variety of ways ranging from entertainment to socializing and information-seeking. Thus communication, an essential force of human existence is used for information dissemination and the creation of awareness and as a human endeavour, employs language as its driving force to portray such realities.

Writing in any language, particularly English language, requires special expertise for effective communication. It has been observed that most users of social media platforms or 'netizens' no longer pay attention to the laws that regulate language use. It would not be out of place to argue that a new type of English has been produced. This development is prompted by the fact that different systems of communication require different styles. Posts on social media can be analyzed by applying language/linguistic theories and for this purpose; this study considers the relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson (1986) an appropriate tool in the data analysis because it makes it possible to draw many conclusions from a text or an utterance.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Relevance theory**

Relevance theory is a cognitive theory of pragmatics developed by Sperber and Wilson (1986) as a framework for understanding the interpretation of utterances in cognitive linguistics and pragmatics. The theory is based on Grice's (1975) Cooperative Principle (CP) which has the basic idea that in interpreting an utterance, hearers assume the Cooperative Principle and the maxims have been observed.

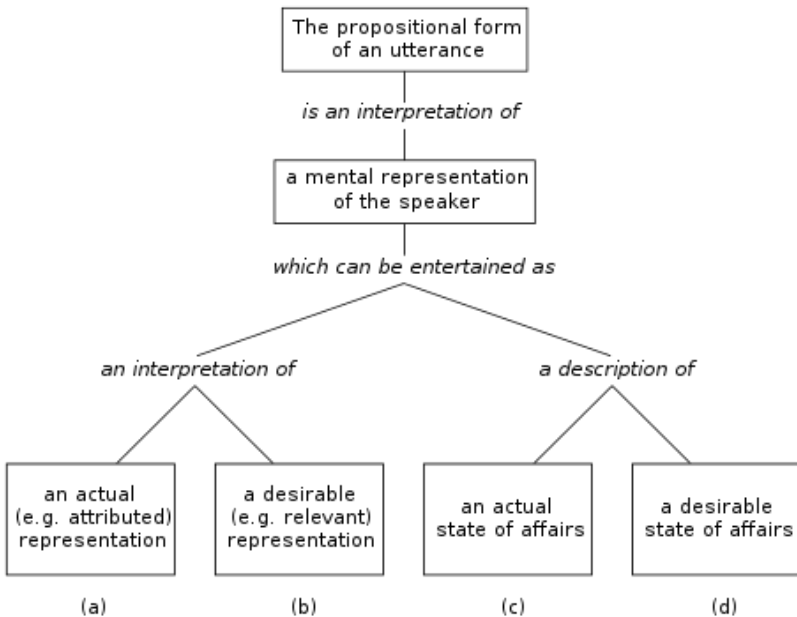
Other key ingredients of relevance theory are that utterances are ostensive (they draw their addressees' attention to the fact that the communicator wants to convey some information) and inferential (the addressee has to infer what the communicator wanted to convey, based on the utterance's "literal meaning" along with the addressee's real-world knowledge, sensory input, and other information). Relevance theory aims to explain the well recognised fact that communicators usually convey much more information with their utterances than what is contained in their literal sense. To this end, Sperber and Wilson argue that acts of human verbal communication are ostensive in that they draw their addressees' attention to the fact that the communicator wants to convey some information. In this way they automatically assert that they are "relevant" to their addressees.

Relevance theory is based on a definition of relevance and two principles of relevance: a Cognitive Principle (that human cognition is geared to the maximization of relevance), and a Communicative Principle (that utterances create expectations of optimal relevance). This study is underpinned on the aspect of the theory which sees communication between humans as cooperative exchanges of

information. The theory submits that communication with someone takes place when relevant information is offered.

Levinson (2000: 55) asserts that Sperber and Wilson's notion of relevance is 'a very inadequate characterization of what pretheoretically would generally be considered the nature of relevance'. This summation may appear to criticize the theory on its inadequacy but does not necessarily imply that it is not relevant. Cognitive Principle of Relevance posits that human cognition tends to be geared to the maximization of relevance (Sperber & Wilson 1995) while Communicative Principle of Relevance avers that every act of ostensive communication communicates a presumption of its own optimal relevance (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

Consequently, the study champions the Sperber and Wilson (1986) 'concept of interpretation' as shown in the table as the tool for data analysis.



(Sperber & Wilson 1986/1995, 232)

In the diagram, the concept of "interpretation" (or interpretive resemblance) is intended to accommodate not only literal interpretations but also the cases where a concept in the thought the

speaker intends to communicate or departs in certain ways from a concept expressed by the utterance.

### **Conceptual Review**

**Disruptive:** Adler et al. (2013) portray language as rule-governed and summarize the rules as follows:

- i. *Phonological rules* govern how sounds are combined to form words.
- ii. *Syntactic rules* govern the way symbols can be arranged.
- iii. *Semantic rules* help us understand the meaning of individual words.
- iv. *Pragmatic rules* tell us what uses and interpretations of a message are appropriate in a given context.

They describe the departure from these rules as disruptive language and restate that even when there is understanding conflict still occurs. We have observed that one of the most notable ways that social media has influenced the English language is through the appropriation of existing vocabulary. Words that had existing meanings have now been given other meanings in an online context, which then spills over into verbal communication with the result that when these new words are used on social media, the existing language is used less. As a result, the negative effects that social media changing language push to create obstacles to communicate, become poorer in vocabulary, and have a possibility to return to communication through symbols.

**Social Media:** This term is used to refer to a computer-based technology through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, photographs and other contents with other people Dollarhide (2021). The largest social media networks include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. which are basically intended for the purpose of socializing as well as getting current information on events. The social media is used to document memories, learn about and explore things, advertise oneself, form friendships and maintain such friends.

According to Rainie and Wellman (2012), communication can be done more privately on these platforms than in real life and everyone can be a content creator. Content creation provides networked individuals opportunities to reach wider audiences; it can affect their social standing and be used to gain political or other forms of support. It is a fact that internet users spend much time on social media; as a result, the centre of power is shifted from the traditional media to the peripheral area. Additionally, Raine and Wellman (2012) opine that it

affords users the opportunity to share any personal information they desire with other members.

## **Literature Review**

### **The Function of the English Language on Social Media Platforms**

The emergence of social media has revolutionized human communication and language use. To competently utilise social media, every internet user has to be versatile. English language is a universal language used to inform, interact, educate, entertain, and network on social media platforms. Linguists attest that the English language has adapted incredibly well, swiftly and easily to change, especially on social media. Even a native speaker of the English language today needs a new set of critical and interpretive skills for linguistic competence on these manifold platforms as there are about two hundred social platforms and, though similar in purpose, each offers a unique style of interaction and communication. Indigenous varieties of English (e. g. Nigerian English) are used in each society or regional interactions.

In most cases, Standard English is discarded in favor of personalized expressions in their interactions with their friends, profile updates and news feeds. Language is dynamic and always renews itself; this explains why new words constantly emerge even on the social media. According to Crystal (2011a), language change includes changes in vocabulary, orthography, grammar, pragmatics, and style. Changes in form and usage have caused some linguists to think of it as a new language called “Internese” (Abdu & Rashad, 2018).

As the number of internet users increase rapidly around the world, the cultural background, linguistic habits and language differences among users are brought into the web at a much faster pace. According to Johnson (2019), Zimmer observed that it is helpful to know the meanings of the abbreviations but most of them stay within the world wide network or text message bubbles. He asserts that the online language represents and shows the way people come up with new forms of interactions without anyone telling them how it should work. He expresses the opinion that when we deal with these digital forms of language, the rules can be loose as there is no guidebook.

### **Pragmatics and Communicative Principle of Relevance**

According to Nazir (2017), the Relevance Theory of Sperber and Wilson (1986) believe that the hearer/reader/audience will search for meaning in any given communication situation and having found the



meaning that fits their expectation of relevance, will stop processing. This explanation takes into consideration, the second method of communication which takes into account implicit Works Cited.

The knowledge of pragmatics helps one to contextualize (situate in the right context). This study attempts to explore the fundamental role that context plays in meaning explication and thus adopts (Sperber & Wilson, 1986/1995: 119) relevance theory which asserts that “people have intuitions of relevance; that they can consistently distinguish relevant from irrelevant information, or in some cases, more relevant from less relevant information”. In order to clarify their theory, they reiterated that information can be relevant in one context and not in another and surmised that an assumption is relevant in a context if there is some contextual effect in that context.

Mey (2001) posits that context is a dynamic and not a static concept in which the linguistic expressions of their contexts become intelligible. Context is valuable in pragmatics because it tells what people mean in a particular context. Context is constructive to our study because it communicates the reason behind the choice of certain words over another and provides a pragmatic explanation to an utterance. Sperber and Wilson (1986) assert that new information is relevant in any context in which it has contextual implications and the more contextual implications it has, the more relevant it will be. This position further emphasizes the connection between relevance theory and context in pragmatics.

### **Research Methodology**

Data for this study comprised forty posts which were purposively collected from online social media platforms namely: Facebook, Instagram and Twitter from 2020 to 2022. The sampled data were subjected to qualitative analysis by employing the theoretical tenets of Sperber and Wilson (1986). The theoretical approach of Sperber and Wilson was complemented by implicature and contexts which are pragmatic elements since the relevance theory is an offshoot of Grice’s (1975) theory of conversational implicature. The selected data have been numbered 1 to 40 for ease of analysis and each text was subjected to analysis based on the Sperber and Wilson (1986) ‘concept of interpretation’ which emphasises literal interpretations and instances of concepts in the thought the speaker intends to communicate.

## Data Analysis

### Disruptive Linguistic Elements in Social Media Communication in Nigeria

**Table 1-10**

S/ N	Disruptive Elements/ Propositional form of utterance	Interpretation/Desirable state of affairs
1.	Seems yahaya bello thinks he can scam Nigerians	The sentence is grammatically correct but the lexical item 'scam' shows the referent in uncomplimentary terms which is probably based on his antecedents.
2.	Am not surprised	The sentence is a response the above. It means that the referent has already been identified as someone capable of scam.
3.	Well lemme just read comments sha	'lemme' and 'sha' are disruptive elements which suggest acquiescence to the previous posts. It implies that the writer has better things to do than to discuss Yahaya Bello
4.	coz if I write anything now	The word 'coz' is the informal form of 'because' and can be used in an informal setting. The incomplete sentence implies that he is not interested in making any comment.
5.	Lia dat what how the present president keep saying	The grammatical error makes it incomprehensible but an aspect of it still communicates some information that is relevant. Although, 'lie' is wrongly spelt as 'lia' the entire sentence is meant to portray the present president as a liar who does not perform but 'keep saying'.
6.	that's how u guys will start misleading people.	This is apparently a rejoinder to the previous comment and it is obvious that he is a loyalist of the president because he believes the posts mislead people.
7.	My interaction with PDP leaders	'My interaction with PDP leaders' is a noun phrase which expectedly should not convey much sense but from the information one can infer that the person is a power broker who associates with PDP leaders.

8.	Lmao	‘Lmao’ is an abbreviation in digital communication for ‘laughing my ass off’. It usually indicates that something is funny which means the writer finds the situation amusing. Abbreviations save a lot of effort and thus become a quick way to communicate one’s thoughts.
9.	Lol	‘Lol’ which means ‘laugh out loud’ or ‘lots of laughs’ also convey the writer’s amusement at a post or comment.
10.	Y’all	The contraction of ‘you and all’ to ‘y’all’ does not communicate much in isolation but one can only conjecture that it refers to everyone who had commented on that particular post.

*Source: Field Study, 2022*

**Table 2: Number 11 - 20**

11.	Mark ur words	The sentence has ‘ur’ as a disruptive element. The entire sentence serves as a warning to another interactant to watch his comment.
12.	Lmao man's gone diaspora	This comment hints at the president’s incessant travels which the writer finds hilarious hence the abbreviation, ‘lmao’. On the other hand, ‘diaspora’ is a disruptive element which informs the reader of the president’s penchant for travelling; an activity which is described as ‘gone diaspora’ to mean long absence from his country.
13.	Asap	Although ‘Asap’ is an acceptable form of initialism it is disruptive as it does not fit into the pattern of formal exchange. The reader can however interpret that there is need for quick response.
14.	Ifb	‘Ifb’ for ‘I follow back’ is disruptive for a novice on social media but signals that both Instagram users can exchange information without restrictions. Also, a high volume of ‘ifbs’ shows immense recognition.

15.	Dm	‘Dm’ which means ‘direct message’ is used to encode a desire for privacy in the social space.
16.	You shouldn’t be here talking atall	The deictic expression ‘here’ in the sentence implies that the writer and the referent both share the same space, a fact the writer detests as emphasized by ‘atall’ which is a disruptive element.
17.	No wonder Aminu Masari is praising General Buhari	This sentence is a backhanded comment on Aminu Masari who is ‘praising’ Buhari, an idea that the writer finds offensive as conveyed by the phrase ‘no wonder’.
18.	Bae	‘Bae’ is an acronym for before ‘anyone else’ is a disruptive expression that has found its way into the social media. It is used both as a term of endearment between people in a relationship and a compliment to the addressee.
19.	FTW	‘For the win’ which does not seem to contain any meaning, is what ‘FTW’ stands but it is relevant when the appropriate interpretation is applied particularly as it is used to cheer a winner, that is, a person who has overcome several obstacles.
20.	SMH	‘SMH’ which is what is used in the place of ‘Shaking my head’ is disruptive but apt way of showing disapproval on social media because to shake the head in real life equally shows disapproval.

*Source: Field Study, 2022*

**Table 3: Number 21-30**

21.	Isorite	‘It is alright’ is the appropriate form of the word ‘isorite’ but in social media it has some connotation. It is used sarcastically to suggest that one should continue with whatever the one thinks is right.
22.	YOLO	The acronym ‘YOLO’ for ‘You only live once’ suggests that one should be happy

		because opportunity wasted can never be recovered.
23.	Vryhrt aching	The abbreviations do not conform to the acceptable form and the sentence is not correct. The lexical items nevertheless convey a sense of great pain which is relevant in the context of the discourse.
24.	So what's your point bruh?	The word 'bruh' suggests that the referent is not known to the writer otherwise he would have stated his name. This leads one to deduce that they are not friends particularly as the question sounds hostile.
25.	#2023! ENUF IS ENUF!	'#2023!' The '#' tag symbolically represents the next election year. The writer was able to convey his disenchantment with the state of affairs thoughts with the disruptive elements 'ENUF IS ENUF!'
26.	Fb	'Fb' relays no message other than that it identifies Facebook and may then be considered relevant since it is a response to a previous post.
27.	U dat is justifying the truth, go nd call d president and get d results u want!	Although 'U', 'dat', 'nd' and 'd' are all distorted forms of what they represent, the reader can still generate some information because the sentence is relevant to the subject of discussion.
28.	Dt cld have bn presented cos our ogaknw dt was the norm	This is similar to the one above. There are several disruptions but in all, the idea has been communicated. The writer believes that the 'oga' (a Nigerian word for boss) should have been informed of certain events in the office.
29.	Most of you idiat pushing for seat at home	Ordinarily, the sentence 'Most of you 'idait...' is not correct but in Nigeria, particularly in the East, seat at home' (sic) is understood to mean a boycott of an occasion. The word 'idiat' is misspelt probably due to ignorance but the

		pronunciation serves as a clue to what the writer intends.
30.	I thot I was the only one seeing it	This sentence affirms the fact that he and other people have the same opinion concerning the matter hence the words ‘thot’ (thought) and ‘seeing’ (point of view).

*Source: Field Study, 2022*

**Table 4: Number 31 - 40**

31.	Thanks guys for putting off the mic	This is an oblique reference to when someone was told to “off the mic” in order to suppress some information. Here, the writer appreciates his friends for not amplifying the matter having put off the ‘mic’.
32.	Omg	Omg connotes endless possibilities. It is an abbreviation for Oh my God or oh my goodness. It is used to that something is considered surprising, shocking or interesting.
33.	What a joke mtsw	This expression does not conform to any rule; it lacks punctuation marks. One can only assume that the writer spelt ‘mtchew’ incorrectly. In all, the message of dissatisfaction and contempt is successfully transmitted.
34.	Please volume can’t hear you from this side	‘Please volume...’ is a disruption of grammar as the writer changed the word order from noun to verb. In spite of this breach, the co-text and context make the sentence coherent.
35.	Mitchew	It is a misspelt form of ‘Mtchew’ which shows contempt.
36.	What kind of people r even this	The question employs ‘r’ in the place of ‘are’ and does not have a question mark. It is able to pass a message of complaint across as emphasized by the phrase ‘even this’.

37.	Referendum is the only dialogue IPOB will accept, bcosbiaframost be restored.	The deviant ‘bcos’ is supposed to be the contracted form of ‘because’ which may be an error in writing. Despite this lapse, the information is relevant because it communicates to the reader that IPOB is desirous of a referendum.
38	U people are killing una sef over nothing	The message behind this sentence is that the people are bothered about issues that do not concern them. Una sef is pidgin but pronounced as ‘self’ so shows that it is reflexive.
39	TFW	‘That feeling when’ requires an ellipsis so that the reader will know that there is something left unsaid. But in this case, an imaginative reader can still detect that there is an omission somewhere so the message is not lost entirely
40	Come carry your friend	“Come carry your friend’ is an expression that is used when someone does or says something unpleasant and the other person sardonically refers to the person in question as ‘your friend’.

*Source: Field Study, 2022*

## **Discussion**

Having applied the Relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson (1986) in the data analysis, it was observed that most social media users rely on abbreviations and acronyms. In most cases, these were not presented accurately so much effort was required to decipher the meaning of certain posts. As Johnson (2019) emphasized, there is no guidebook consequently, people write without adhering to any rule. The implication is that the disruptive form of language equally spreads fast. From the data analysed, it was observed that the disruptions go beyond lexical items. They are noticeable at the orthographic, syntactic and semantic levels.

It was stated that most writers favour acronyms which sometimes do not adhere to known rules. One of the findings reveals instances of wrongly spelt words. For example, the word ‘idiot’ was spelt as ‘idiat’ and ‘at all’ was written as one word ‘atall’ both of which do not conform to the approved orthographic representations.

According to Zimmer, (2009), the language of social media belongs those who use it; so, they can give it a distinct identity by developing some of their own lexicons. It has been observed that certain words are morphologically derived from other climes to give a new and robust vocabulary which has been subsumed and described as internet slang. Some Nigerian words have been modified to have new status as almost everyone becomes familiar with such words. This explains why words such as ‘oga’, ‘sha’ and ‘una sef’ are used and understood by other netizens. It has also been observed that some people who do not speak Nigerian Pidgin are able to decode the meaning of these words because of the surrounding words.

This paper has established that the texts are worth listening to and are easily understood in spite of some disruptive expressions which did not conform to standard because the information conveyed was both relevant and comprehensible.

According to Sperber & Wilson (1987) information is relevant to you if it interacts in a certain way with your existing assumptions about the world. It was obvious from the data analysis that social media users have shared beliefs that already existed among them as they understood one another regardless of the linguistic disruptions. They also posit that a speaker producing an utterance has two distinct goals: to get the addressee to understand her meaning, and to persuade him to believe it. The addressee has two corresponding tasks: to understand the speaker’s meaning, and to decide whether to believe it. The first task involves the pragmatic ability to infer the speaker’s meaning from linguistic and contextual cues, by identifying the overtly intended cognitive effects. The study established that these two conditions were fulfilled as the writer/ speaker satisfactorily got his message across to the reader/ hearer to understand and believe the contents of the texts.

As stated, a relevant utterance is one from which many conclusions can be drawn based on the information contained in the utterance together that is triggered by its relevance, real-world knowledge, and sensory input, to infer conclusions about what the communicator wanted to convey. Consequently, it was easy to interpret and describe the import behind the different texts as a result of the information content which are relevant and communicate explicit opinion on matters that concern them.

## **Conclusion**

The study submits that the texts disseminated via the social media communicate explicit and implicit meanings which the relevance



theory simplifies. This paper attempted to investigate the importance of texts posted on the social media platforms namely the Instagram and Facebook and applied the relevance theory of Sperber and Wilson (1986) as the theoretical underpinning for the analysis of data. The study revealed that texts have the capability of communicating the intentions of the writers.

The study reveals that there is a close link between the users of the social media as they interface on a daily basis. This can be observed in the way communication is disseminated between the different the users. Although most of these productions are uniquely creative, they violate the norm of Standard English to the extent that users no longer consider it necessary to distinguish between formal or informal use. The study therefore concludes that more research still needs to be done in order to correct the anomalies observed in the use of language.

### **Recommendations**

1. Future research may be undertaken to investigate points at which the capacities for communication might not be hindered due to poor communicative skills.
2. Every language user is expected to learn and understand the dynamics of language and have the capacity to distinguish between formal or informal usage due to the fact that people now write without regard for correct grammar.
3. Concerted effort should be made to ensure some form of uniformity such that specific words or expressions will have the same usage and meaning particularly as anything posted can be read by anybody anywhere.
4. English language instructors at the tertiary and university levels need to be made aware of the implications of this study because it will compel them to teach their students to write properly.
5. The use of cliché and hackneyed phrases or technical language should be avoided to facilitate better communication.

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