




Blurring Boundaries: The Impact of Digital Communication on Academic Discourse and Student Motivation

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Abstract: This study explores the evolving relationship between shifting patterns of academic discourse and student motivation within the context of Nigerian tertiary education, where digital communication technologies are increasingly transforming linguistic practices and pedagogical interactions. Anchored in the theoretical frameworks of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and established motivational theories, the research investigates the influence of popular digital platforms, such as WhatsApp, TikTok, and Instagram, on language use and communicative norms in academic environments. Specifically, the study examines the implications of informal linguistic features, such as abbreviations, emojis, slang, and non-standard syntax, on both student–lecturer and peer-to-peer interactions, as well as their broader effects on learning behaviors and academic writing practices. The analysis is grounded in authentic linguistic data drawn from classroom discourse, examination scripts, and social media interactions, allowing for a contextualized examination of how digital discourse permeates formal educational settings. Findings reveal an increasing convergence between informal digital communication and traditional academic language, thereby raising important questions about the shifting boundaries of scholarly expression. On one hand, the adoption of familiar, digitally mediated linguistic forms appears to enhance student motivation. These forms render academic discourse more accessible and less hierarchical, contributing to increased participation, ease of self-expression, and a sense of inclusivity within

learning communities. However, the study also identifies pressing pedagogical concerns. The normalization of informal discourse within academic settings may compromise linguistic precision, weaken students' ability to code-switch appropriately, and erode the formality and clarity traditionally associated with scholarly writing. Such trends pose potential risks to academic standards, particularly in contexts where rigorous communication skills are essential to educational outcomes and professional development. The study concludes by advocating for a balanced and pedagogically informed response to this linguistic shift. It recommends that educators leverage the motivational benefits of digital communication, such as enhanced engagement and student-centered interaction, while explicitly addressing the need for formal academic language proficiency. By adopting such measures, educators can foster a more responsive and inclusive learning environment that embraces the realities of contemporary communication without compromising the foundational values of academic discourse.

Keywords: *Critical Discourse Analysis, Student's motivation, Academic discourse, Digital Technologies, Informal language.*

1. Introduction

Language is more than a medium for communication; it serves as an essential marker of identity, a conduit for social interaction, a mechanism for constructing reality, and a tool for shaping power dynamics. In academic contexts, language also plays a critical role in fostering motivation and learning. This study examines the intersection of linguistics and education, specifically analyzing discourse patterns employed by Nigerian students and their impact on student motivation within the academic sphere.

Existing diachronic studies on education in Nigeria have extensively explored the motivations behind formal education. Prior to missionary influence, education was largely informal and oral, with fables, folktales, legends, and myths serving as primary teaching tools. However, with the advent of missionary-led education, schooling was predominantly religious, and institutions were established to train local leaders, including school headmasters, catechists, and clergy. The curriculum centered on English grammar—dictation, writing, reading, and spelling—where the motivation for learning was primarily linked to spiritual salvation, proximity to missionary leadership, and social prestige. Over time, colonial policies, Western education, and educational expansion broadened the scope of formal education [see cf. Iman (2012), Sulaiman (2012), Evgeniou (2022), Okoh (2006)]. Proficiency in English became a gateway to career opportunities, upward social mobility, and international prospects.

The acquisition of English in Nigeria has long been influenced by integrative and instrumental motivations, as observed in Mehmet (2020), Snow and Uccelli



(2015), and Julian and Dauba (2024). The socio-educational model defines integrative motivation as the desire to learn a language to engage with the target language community, while instrumental motivation focuses on practical benefits such as career advancement and academic success. These perspectives provide valuable insights into why individuals not only learn English but also pursue formal education.

In recent years, the traditional motivation for acquiring proficiency in English as a means of securing positions in government agencies has declined. The number of graduates entering the workforce far exceeds available employment opportunities, prompting many young Nigerians to explore entrepreneurial ventures instead (Okpaneka, 2024). Furthermore, Nigeria's socio-political and economic challenges have contributed to a decline in motivation among students. As a result, some individuals enroll in educational programs merely to be considered formally educated, rather than driven by genuine learning objectives. This diminishing motivation has adversely impacted the Nigerian educational system, as many students now perceive education as an obligatory pursuit rather than a meaningful endeavor.

The contemporary Nigerian academic landscape is increasingly shaped by the rapid expansion of digital technologies and the growing influence of social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter. The widespread accessibility of affordable technology and the pervasive adoption of social media among young Nigerians have introduced new dynamics into educational settings, often redefining traditional motivations for formal learning.

This study shifts the focus from conventional motivations for language acquisition to discourse, defined as "language in use" [Brown & Yule (1983)], within the Nigerian academic environment. It explores how discourse extends beyond linguistic structures to serve as a strategic tool for facilitating learning and enhancing student engagement, particularly in an era where technology plays a crucial role in shaping communication practices. By examining the synergy between academic discourse and evolving communication patterns influenced by technology, this research seeks to uncover ways to leverage these changes to improve student motivation.

Ultimately, this paper introduces a novel perspective—examining language as discourse—within an educational context profoundly shaped by digital advancements and the widespread influence of social media platforms. The compelling and often distracting nature of social media presents challenges for educators striving to maintain student interest and engagement. In an environment where attending school is frequently perceived as a mere obligation rather than an



intrinsically or extrinsically motivated pursuit, discourse emerges as a critical factor in redefining educational engagement.

Drawing on a critical discourse perspective and motivational theory, this study analyzes the nature of present-day discourse and explores strategies for harnessing its potential to enhance student motivation in the Nigerian academic context.

The objectives of this study thus are geared towards:

- examining the linguistic and extra-linguistic features from social media that are becoming integrated into academic discourse.
- investigating how the influx of social media affects traditional academic communication patterns between students and lecturers.
- evaluating whether linguistic influences from social media contribute to or hinder effective learning.
- assessing whether academic institutions should adjust their linguistic register to accommodate modern communication styles or reinforce traditional approaches.
- proposing strategies to balance social media with traditional educational methods

The advent of diverse and monetized social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, and Instagram have significantly altered the focus and engagement of the younger population, often at the expense of formal education. These platforms not only captivate attention but also shape behavioral patterns, influencing how students communicate, respond to situations, and perceive their environment. This paradigm shift has left many educators in Nigeria grappling with the challenge of connecting with their learners, resulting in frustration, discontentment, and difficulty in effectively managing and motivating students.

This problem is further exacerbated by Nigeria's ongoing socio-political and economic instability, which has left students with limited prospects and dwindling enthusiasm for academic pursuits. Rather than utilizing social media and AI tools as means to enhance learning, many students misuse these resources, frequently copying and pasting content without proper comprehension or critical engagement. The over-reliance on AI tools has raised concerns among educators, who note that such practices undermine genuine learning processes and intellectual growth. Moreover, the cultural and linguistic trends propagated by these platforms have infiltrated academic discourse, creating a widening gap between the expectations of formal education and the realities of students' everyday communication styles. As



a result, educators find themselves caught in a dilemma, struggling to adapt their teaching methods to this new dynamic while maintaining academic standards. This paper seeks to explore how critical academic discourse can serve as a bridge, fostering a more productive synergy between digital engagement and students' motivation to learn. By addressing the challenges posed by this shift and identifying strategies to harness these tools for educational advancement, this study aims to contribute to improved student-teacher interactions and a reinvigoration of the learning process.

2. Theoretical Framework

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) serves as a foundational framework for examining the intricate relationship between discourse and students' motivation within the Nigerian academic landscape. This study hinges on the linguistic influence of social media and its impact on communication between students and lecturers as well as student and student. CDA is employed to describe, interpret, and explain evolving linguistic registers within educational discourse, particularly in the context of digital interactions.

The theoretical grounding of this study is anchored particularly on the work of Norman Fairclough (1989). Teun van Dijk (1993) and Ruth Wodak (1997) whose contributions, dating as early as the 1990s, laid the foundation for CDA as Kamalu and Osisanwo (2015), Allagbe and Amoussou (2018) and Sapoka (2024) account. Van Dijk's perspective on CDA emphasizes its role in addressing social problems, political issues, and matters concerning power, dominance, and hegemony. Fairclough's approach upon which this paper focuses, is rooted in Hallidayan linguistics, examining language within social contexts, viewing it as a form of social practice that can be systematically analyzed through description, interpretation, and explanation. Wodak, on the other hand, adopts a historical-discursive approach, focusing on the intersection between language and societal change.

Building upon Fairclough's paradigm, this study explores how language reinforces social discourse patterns facilitated by monetized success on social media. Specifically, it considers how students' performative practices—such as posting content for financial or social validation—may redefine the academic motivation paradigm. Fairclough's approach is particularly relevant, given the increasing shift toward student-centered learning, which emphasizes interactive engagement and peer collaboration, aiming to reduce teacher dominance in modern pedagogical practices.

CDA provides a framework for interrogating students' motivations for shifting between linguistic registers. This study investigates whether such shifts



occur for engagement, clarity, or social adoption and whether they signify linguistic flexibility or contribute to the erosion of academic standards. Furthermore, CDA enables an exploration of whether these linguistic tendencies enhance or disrupt traditional academic discourse, while also allowing institutions to balance linguistic evolution with the preservation of academic integrity.

Motivation is a critical factor in the process of language acquisition, as emphasized by Kebabian (2006). Social psychologists were among the first researchers to systematically investigate the role of motivation in second-language learning, recognizing the influence of social and cultural factors on the learner's ability to acquire a new language. Their interest led to the development of several models that highlight the affective dimension of language learning, including Krashen's (1981) Monitor Model, Schumann's (1986) Acculturation Model, and Gardner's (1985) Socio-Educational Model.

Gardner's conceptualization of motivation integrates effort, desire, and a favorable attitude toward the language-learning process. According to Gardner, motivation can be categorized as either integrative or instrumental. Integrative motivation refers to a learner's willingness to interact with speakers of the target language and, in some cases, to fully integrate into their linguistic and cultural community. Instrumental motivation, on the other hand, is rooted in practical goals such as securing better employment opportunities, earning a higher salary, or passing examinations.

Building on Gardner's framework, Noels et al. (2000) expanded the Socio-educational Model by incorporating insights from cognitive theories, including the Self-determination Theory, the Attribution Theory, and the Goal Theory. The Self-determination Theory emphasizes the importance of autonomy in learning, arguing that individuals should experience a sense of personal choice in initiating and regulating their actions. Motivation is classified into intrinsic and extrinsic within this theory. Intrinsic motivation is driven by internal rewards such as curiosity, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction, whereas extrinsic motivation is fueled by external factors such as receiving praise, earning high grades, or meeting societal expectations. This perspective shifts the focus of educators from directly motivating students to creating an environment where learners can cultivate their own motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is subdivided into three distinct categories:

- Intrinsic Motivation – Knowledge: The pleasure derived from acquiring new information. This type of motivation increases the drive to explore further opportunities to gain knowledge.



- **Intrinsic Motivation – Accomplishment:** The satisfaction associated with achieving learning goals. Here the individual sets goals and aims to achieve them. Satisfaction is attained when those goals are achieved but frustration begins when the target is not met. For example one may choose to accomplish straight As in a semester.
- **Intrinsic Motivation – Stimulation:** The joy experienced while engaging in learning activities. This kind of motivation emanates when one gets to do the things one loves. For instance when one gets a dream course at the university.

Similarly, extrinsic motivation is divided into three forms:

- **External Regulation:** The individual's actions are influenced by tangible external rewards or penalties. If the incentive for learning is removed, the activity may cease. An instance could be when a student is promised a brand new car if he/she is able to graduate with a First Class. Once that incentive is removed, it would drastically reduce such student's motivation to aim for excellence.
- **Introjected Regulation:** Learning occurs due to internalized external pressure, such as the fear of embarrassment or societal expectations.
- **Identified Regulation:** The learner engages in language acquisition because they recognize its importance in achieving valued personal goals. Here, language can be seen as a means to an end.

Beyond intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, amotivation is a state in which an individual lacks the intention to learn due to a perceived disconnect between effort and outcomes. Noels et al. define amotivation as a form of learned helplessness, where individuals feel that their efforts have no meaningful effect on the desired outcome. In this case, the learner neither possesses intrinsic nor extrinsic motivation to engage in the learning process.

Historically, the motivation to learn English has been driven by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. As earlier read, during the colonial period, Nigerians were instrumentally motivated to learn English as a means of gaining favor from colonial administrators, securing employment, and integrating into global affairs. Additionally, intrinsic motivation played a role, as some individuals sought personal growth and intellectual fulfillment through mastery of the language.

However, in contemporary Nigeria, several socio-economic and technological shifts have altered traditional motivational patterns in language learning. The country faces high unemployment rates, which may affect learners'



instrumental motivation. Furthermore, the rise of social media has introduced new linguistic trends that challenge conventional language-learning norms. The English lexicon has expanded tremendously, especially with what Nigerians may identify as the GEN-Z trend. A trend where among other things digital platforms are made to accommodate diverse linguistic innovations, including slang, hybrid languages, and alternative communication styles. This development raises questions about the evolving role of English in educational discourse and the extent to which digital communication influences language acquisition and motivation.

Motivation remains a crucial component in learning generally in the academic setting as evidenced by various psychological and cognitive models. However, with the dynamic transformations in the labor market and the proliferation of digital communication, new motivational frameworks must be considered in assessing language acquisition trends. Future research could explore how contemporary socio-economic factors and technological advancements impact learners' motivation to acquire a second language, particularly within multilingual and digitally interconnected societies.

3. Review of Literature

As previously established, discourse refers to the process through which language functions as a tool for performing actions such as motivation, negotiation, speculation, and more. In academic settings, discourse evolves into a specialized medium characterized by formal, precise language, critical reasoning, and carefully structured arguments. Academic discourse, according to IELTS (2023), represents the distinct communication style used within educational contexts and encompasses several writing styles, including expository, argumentative, descriptive, and analytical approaches. These styles are tailored to specific academic purposes, ensuring clarity and depth in conveying knowledge. This definition focuses more in-depthly on writing and gives less concern to the spoken aspect which could be formal or semi-formal. The term context should encompass the physical location of the school and the social media space where conversations are being held among members of the school community.

Academic discourse derives its significance from the multifaceted functions that language performs in educational contexts. Language serves as the primary tool for facilitating the exchange, development, and dissemination of knowledge. It enables communication between educators and students, supports instructional processes, and fosters critical thinking and reflection. Additionally, academic discourse plays a role in evaluation, cultural socialization, and even motivation—empowering educators to inspire and engage students effectively (Microsoft, 2025).



These functions underscore the integral role of language in shaping academic activities, from classroom interactions to the broader scholarly discourse.

The foundation of academic discourse is deeply rooted in linguistic interactions, which form the cornerstone of education. Schooling, as research highlights, relies heavily on communication patterns that are unique to academic environments. For instance, a discourse analyst may seek to identify the nuances that set apart classroom discussions from everyday conversations. These nuances, as shown in academic studies, reflect the deliberate and systematic structure of language use in schools. A prominent aspect of this framework is the interaction between teachers and students, which significantly affects how concepts are conveyed and understood during instructional activities. In his work, Adger (2008) identifies these interactions as pivotal, shaping the flow of ideas and influencing the learning experience.

Moreover, the role of language in academic discourse extends beyond transactional classroom communication; it serves as a powerful tool for fostering or inhibiting students' motivation. For instance, Sapkota (2024) argues that the way language is used in educational settings has a profound impact on students' attitudes toward learning. Whether language builds motivation or fosters resentment depends largely on how it is employed by educators. Teachers often assume the role of motivators and facilitators, a role that, according to the same study, influences students' belief systems and attitudes. This dynamic can determine the success or failure of classroom interactions, underscoring the critical link between language use and academic outcomes.

Further insights into the concept of academic discourse reveal its multidimensional nature. Academic discourse, as Snow and Uccelli (2015) explain, is defined by three key dimensions: linguistic proficiency, coordinative competence, and sociocultural/psychological proficiency. Linguistic proficiency pertains to the mastery of grammar, semantics, and syntax, which form the backbone of academic communication. Coordinative competence refers to the ability to select language that aligns with the specific context of discourse, ensuring that the choice of vocabulary and sentence structure effectively serves the communicative intent. Finally, sociocultural and psychological proficiency addresses the broader ability to navigate the social and cultural contexts of academic communication. This dimension involves understanding the psychological underpinnings of interaction, such as how language fosters connections or resolves conflicts in academic settings.

In summary, academic discourse is a complex construct that integrates language proficiency, contextual adaptability, and social awareness. It serves as the



medium through which knowledge is constructed, shared, and internalized within educational settings. By fostering critical thinking and effective communication, it plays a central role in shaping the academic experience. The functions of language within this framework underscore its transformative potential, influencing motivation, collaboration, and intellectual growth across various dimensions of learning (Microsoft, 2025).

The impact of social media on young individuals has been extensively studied, with researchers such as Jesse and Gudu (2023), Ezeudo (2024) and Dembe (2024) highlighting both the benefits and drawbacks of social media use. On the one hand, social media provides opportunities for access to learning materials, enhances communication, facilitates collaborative learning, and generates financial gains. However, it also poses challenges such as cyberbullying, mental health concerns, distraction during learning, misinformation, addiction, and superficial reading habits.

The linguistic impacts of social media are also noteworthy. Dembe (2024) notes the rapid spread of new words, phrases, and communication styles on social media platforms, which has democratized language change and led to an influx of linguistic trends. The observations are: sentences and phrases are becoming shorter, with abbreviations and acronyms becoming the norm, and a general decline in vocabulary and grammar. Ezeudo (2024) adds that social media has expanded vocabulary and introduced new language use practices, prioritizing brevity and informality, simplifying grammar and syntax, and leading to an overreliance on technology.

This paper hopes to examine the linguistic nuances of social media, specifically the impact of these changes on academic discourse. It seeks to investigate whether the linguistic features of social media, such as the use of abbreviations, acronyms, and informal language, have a positive or negative impact on academic writing and communication. By exploring these linguistic nuances, this study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the role of social media in shaping academic discourse.

The significance of this study lies in its potential to inform educators, policymakers, and young individuals about the impact of social media on language use and academic performance. By examining the linguistic features of social media and their impact on academic discourse, this study can provide insights into how social media is shaping the way we communicate and learn. Ultimately, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationships between social media, language use, and academic discourse.



In conclusion, the impact of social media on young individuals is a complex and multifaceted issue. Although, social media provides many benefits, it also poses significant challenges. This study aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the linguistic nuances of social media and their impact on academic discourse, to inform strategies for effective communication and learning in the digital age.

4. Method of Data Collection

Data were retrieved based on their ability to reflect how discourse is shaped by social and institutional conventions. The data help readers understand the broader societal and ideological influences that shape academic discourse, textual analysis is further explored to reflect Fair Clough's approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. In other words, linguistic features were considered based on their ability to reflect linguistic performance, coordinative performance, and sociocultural/psychological proficiency. The researcher also studied naturally occurring conversations in some tertiary institutions and made sure to record them with the aid of some academic and non-academic staff members of the school community. In order to ensure a naturally occurring situation, students were initially not informed of the recording until after the conversation was done and their authorized permission was granted for the recording to be used for analysis for the purpose of this study. More so, some data were retrieved from the examination booklet of some students and social media conversation between some members of staff and students. Prominent features were highlighted for qualitative analysis.

Table 1.

Data Analysis and Presentation

TEXT	INTERLOCUTORS	CONTEXT	DISCOURSE FEATURE
1. Lecturer: Please, reschedule our meeting for another day. Student: Ok, <i>wbt</i> Thursday?	Lecturer - Student	WhatsApp (social media) typed -	Innovative Acronym



2.	Lecturer: Write out your current level of study in front of the colon provided for level on your booklet. Student: 100 <i>LVL</i>	Lecturer Student	- Examination Hall - written	Acronym
3.	Course Adviser: You have no C.A. how do you hope to pass well? Student: I just resumed <i>buh</i> I can write the exam	Lecturer Student	- Office spoken	- Replacement of regular phonemic symbol and inappropriate choice of grammar
4.	Member of non-academic Staff: The time table will be published anytime soon. Student: So <i>wen</i>	Students' Affairs Officer-student	WhatsApp (College Chat Group)	Reduced spelling, syntactic restructuring
5.	Student: I <i>want</i> you to sign my form. H.O.D.: Why? Are you my boss?	Lecturer Student	- Spoken	Unintended choice of words for power pattern displacement
6.	Student A: Have you seen your Course Adviser? Student B: Not really, am a <i>lil</i> busy	Student Student	- Spoken	Replacement of contracted form and shortened lexis
7.	<i>Sharp</i>	Student (himself)	Examination hall	Innovative meaning
8.	<i>Achalugo</i> please!	Students Lecturer	- Classroom	Code-mixing / social media slang from the Movie 'Love in Every Word'
9.	<i>Gbe! Gbe! Geh! Geh!</i>	Students	School environment	Onomatopoeia /dance trend on TikTok



10. <i>On God!</i>	Student Nonacademic member of staff	-	School environment	Slang from social media
11. <i>Based on Logistics</i>	Student Student	-	School cafeteria	Slang from social media personality Efe (winner of Big Brother season 2)
12. <i>I will come and settle the two of you, you are doing well.</i>	Student Lecturers	-	Office	Deviation from Standard English, incorporation of Nigerian Pidgin and social media pattern from Mr Macaroni
13. Good morning ma♥	Student Lecturer	-	WhatsApp chat	Emoji insertion
14. <i>Dorrrh! She was talking to me not you</i>	Student Student	-	Office	Slang
15. I <i>sha</i> know I'll pass this exam	Student Student	-	Cafeteria	Innovative discourse /social media expression from Aproko Doctor st
16. <i>There is God o!</i>	Student Student- lecturer	-	School environment	Nigerian English / meme on Facebook derived from the former Nigerian First Lady Patience Jonathan
17. <i>Kpor kri kpor!</i>	Student- student		Lecturer's office	Social media expression from Oga Sabinus
18. I'm coming <i>now now</i>	Student Admin. Staff	-	Admin. Block	Nigerian variety of English prominent in contents on social media
19. <i>Shebi</i> it's Monday you asked us to come.	Student Admin. Staff	-	Admin. Block	Nigerian variety of English prominent in contents on social media



On the data table above, acronyms and abbreviations are on display in numbers 1, 2 and 4. Appropriately, acronyms or abbreviations are used for longer words and names of organizations but in this context, ‘what about’ is shortened to ‘wbt’ ‘when’ is abbreviated to ‘wen’- shorter words acronyms create a distortion in the regularized pattern of acronyms. One might accommodate this as a social media discourse especially based on the context of the situation, however, academic discourse extends beyond discourse used in the physical setting of the school community to any context of academic conversation, here, the participants involved highly influence how language should be used. It might have been acceptable if the participants were ‘student - student’ and not ‘student - lecturer’. The use of ‘LVL’ in an examination context as well, shows the transfer of social media culture to formal context. It creates informality in a serious academic situation such as an examination. ‘so wen’ as seen in text 4, shows informality and a drift from the standard variety. Although the motivation behind these patterns could be to prioritize speed, this trend underscores students’ ability to demonstrate what Snow and Uccelli (2025) term linguistic proficiency and coordinative proficiency as well as an inability of students to use language appropriately relevant to the context. There should be a clear-cut dichotomy between language used in academic social media discourse and regular social media conversations. In other words, not every social media nuance should be accommodated in the academic discourse so that students can aspire towards proficiency in English.

In texts 8 and 15, there are instances of code-mixing and/or code switching. In other words, an inclusion of cultural elements into academic English discourse. In 8, the students are trying to plead with a Yoruba lecturer of English Language by calling her ‘Achalugo’. ‘Achalugo’ gained popularity because of the movie ‘Love in Every Word’ produced by Omoni Oboli (2025). The lexis became a trend on social media and the students adopted it to pacify the lecturer. As seen in 15, the influx of ‘sha’ is from Pidgin. The trend of adding it into the English structure is a factor of ‘Aproko Doctor’- a doctor that brings content on social media to create awareness. Previously ‘sha’ was used to show uncertainty however with the ‘Aproko Doctor’ trend, ‘sha’ has gained popularity and it is used to demonstrate certainty. In these instances, the linguistic motivation for students is to feel relaxed in the school environment however, the last datum with the use of ‘sha’ presents a conscious drift from the standard variety to a non-standard variety of English even though it is used for peer engagement. Students are to aspire towards professionalism with the use of English. Code-mixing can contribute to peer identity



where students feel a strong bond through shared linguistic practices. However, this may impair their ability during formal assessments or professional engagement.

Slang and informal expressions are seen in ‘On God’, ‘Doorh’, ‘Kpor kri kpor’ and ‘Based on Logistics’. The borrowing from social media culture tends to shape academic interaction in a casually expressive way. The lastly mentioned is a trend popularized by Efe who won Big Brother Naija Season 2. He redefined the meaning of this linguistic expression and made it almost meaningless thus, it was an ordinary addition to every statement most persons had to make, not necessarily carrying any meaning. The aforementioned data can also be considered as slang. The motivation is to have democratized language change as Dembe (2024) identifies. Nevertheless, these features may undermine students’ ability to fully articulate their thoughts in a structured and precise manner which is a key aspect in academic discourse. ‘Kpor kri kpor’ is an expression from the social media influencer Oga Sabinus. It has no indigenous affiliation or English roots. It happens to be an expression added to any situation considered as a joke. The motivation behind this is intrinsic because they want to show they are fans of these content creators. Nevertheless, such extra linguistic features may hinder communication especially in a linguistic landscape where Nigerian English is not prioritized.

Data 5 and 12 were employed by innocent students who did not consider the implications of their word choices. ‘I want you to sign my form’ illustrates power dynamics especially with unintended word choices. The absence of modals used to express politeness causes such a statement to challenge authority and the existing power dynamics as the lecturer being the instructor and the student being the addressee. The existing power dynamics would not have been challenged in other words if the statement was presented with modal verbs such as could, can or an addition in the end or at the beginning - please to express politeness. Datum 12 carries an influx from Pidgin “to settle” which has the negative connotation of bribery. The popular slang from a social media content creator - Mr. Macaroni - you are doing well is used to show satisfaction and gratitude to younger persons. Such discourse patterns show power dynamics used to challenge authority. Although the motivation of the lastly mentioned datum would have been to gain familiarity with the lecturer, it transmits the wrong meaning this may in turn erode students’ confidence in their ability to engage with more formal structures.

In addition to these, data 3 and 6 manifest a phonological feature of reduction - a simplification of words often in casual or rapid speech. While *buh* involves a consonant replacement; *lil* has a syllable reduction. In these scenarios however, speech is not rapid, the participants here are involved in a casual conversation. Motivated by influencers on social media who try to sound like native



speakers and students (who are fans of these content creators) tend to copy them. The implication for language learning students would be the inability to transcribe words phonemically.

There is God o was a statement by the then First Lady of Nigeria, uttered out of pain and affection for the abducted Chibok girls years ago. Somehow, Nigerian content creators turned it into a meme on social media to sell their jokes. ‘O’ is a sound peculiar to the Niger Delta region of Nigeria used for emphasis and assertion in some cases. It is therefore not uncommon to hear this Nigerian English in schools. As much as students would want to joke around, the linguistic culture of prioritizing Nigerian English can sometimes overshadow efforts to refine standardized English skills. Write an exam carries this Nigerian feature too. The standard British English would be to sit for an exam. These data show the gradual decline in literacy.

In 13, we see how a student uses a love emoji in the conversation with his lecturer who is a young female. Adversely, considering the context, it could prove unintended meaning. However, upon further research on this student's pattern of chatting with lecturers, we discovered that this was a norm. Hence, the implication is that the student has not understood that the academic context is a formal or semi-formal context where such emojis should not be employed. Although, such use of emoji sets a mood for cordial relationship between the lecturers and the students.

Sharp is a term commonly adopted by students to express shock or interest (when asked in the exam hall why the student reacted by saying sharp when he received the question paper, he said he was overwhelmed by the nature of the questions, they were according to him many). In this context we see a drift in meaning. At first the invigilator interpreted it to mean excitement and that the student probably knew all the answers but, English as they say is dynamic.

As seen in 9, those expressions are used to show excitement especially employed in a particular dance trend on social media. Students employed those when they were happy with their results or when they had exciting news or information. On the other hand the datum on 15 can be used generally for the fun of it or, for expressing shock. These discourse are extra linguistic expressions particularly seen on social media.

Datum 18 shows predominant features of reduplication in *now now*, a linguistic feature of Nigerian pidgin used to create emphasis. In the use of *shebi* as well, students incorporate pidgin. The motivation is to preserve elements of Nigerianism and expose peculiarities of Nigerians especially through language to the world. Hence these linguistic features are predominant both on social media and in the academic context.



5. Findings

This study has attempted a diachronic study on the underlying motivations driving students' academic discourse. In light of the growing influence of social media on communication within academic settings, a review of existing literature reveals a significant transfer of linguistic features from social media into contemporary academic discourse. These include the adoption of acronyms, innovative meanings, and other evolving language trends.

Beyond this linguistic shift, the study explores the connection between students' motivation and academic discourse. Findings indicate that the integration of social media language into academic interactions fosters a dynamic learning environment, enabling students to express themselves with greater ease. The informal nature of these linguistic features enhances relatability in academic discussions. However, this trend also presents challenges, as the dilution of academic rigor may ultimately lead to a decline in English language proficiency.

From a psychological perspective, motivation is predominantly intrinsic. Students engage more meaningfully with learning when it aligns with their social habits and modes of expression. Some incorporate social media discourse into academic conversations to cultivate an informal and engaging learning atmosphere, while others intentionally deviate from standard English as a form of resistance to institutional norms. A deeper understanding of these motivational factors can guide strategies aimed at reinforcing language proficiency while sustaining student enthusiasm for communication.

Modern educational approaches increasingly advocate for student-centered learning over traditional instructional methods. Nevertheless, maintaining a balance is essential, as unchecked informality in academic discourse may lead to a redefinition of communication standards within educational institutions. Future pedagogical strategies must consider this evolving linguistic dynamic to ensure that academic integrity and proficiency are preserved while fostering an inclusive and engaging learning environment.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study revealed that EFL teachers generally viewed Blooket positively. In line with these current trends, the Nigerian educational policy can adopt teaching strategies that align with students' digital habits such as collaborative online projects, academic blogging and multimedia presentations. Other strategies include problem based learning, gamification and interdisciplinary methods to heighten



motivation and make academic discourse more relatable, engaging, more appealing and relevant.

Additionally, educationists should reform the curriculum to reflect evolving motivations by integrating contemporary incentives into learning including practical skills development. Language should be improved beyond English proficiency, rather than focus on grammatical mastery, policies should emphasize language as a discourse tool- helping students develop critical thinking, persuasive communication and engagement strategies that align with modern day educational needs. This will establish a clear cut dichotomy between acceptable and unacceptable language used in academic discourses.

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This research did not require any ethical approval.

Informed consent

Human participants were involved in this linguistic study; however, ethical approval was not sought as the research posed minimal risk and did not require formal review under institutional guidelines.

