

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLEDGE

Language as a Tool for Inclusion and Development: A Critical Appraisal of its Use in Internet Social Networks

Alofe Vivian A.

PhD, Lead City University Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

Alao David O.

PhD, Lecturer, Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

Nwogwugwu Ngozi

PhD, Lecturer, Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

Alao Esther M.

PhD, Lecturer, Babcock University, Ilishan Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria

Abstract:

The third world had before the twenty first century failed to achieve sustainable development as a result of factors such as the deliberate exclusion of some segments of the society from policy formulation process, as well as inability to effectively integrate modernization processes of the West. Towards the end of twentieth and early twenty-first century however, globalization has been greatly facilitated by internet social network in the creation of a global village and the eradication of distance. Unfortunately, minimal attention has been paid to the role of language in this transformational process, as scientific and technological knowledge have been celebrated as the facilitators of communication across cultural boundaries. The paper a descriptive one, relied entirely on secondary data, comprising; published books, scholarly peer-reviewed journal articles, conference papers, relevant materials downloaded from the internet and evaluation of selected social networking sites. Using the sociolinguistic approach, the paper argues that internet social networking though entrenched in technological discoveries, is another social institution breeding on the rich resources of human language. The paper concluded that English language being the primary language used in most internet social networking sites facilitates the eradication of socio-economic distance, creating an atmosphere of inclusion. Governments of the third world nations should utilize it in harnessing the abundant human resources available to them to ensure the achievement of sustainable development.

Keywords: *Language, tool, inclusion, development, appraisal, internet social network*

1. Introduction

Development is regarded as the phenomenon that transforms societies as citizens are able to achieve the comforts of life. Over the years, the efforts of most third world countries, especially African nations, to achieve development following the attainment of political independence, has achieved marginal success. (Okeke & Idahosa, 2009). George-Genyi (2009) writes that available statistics on the African continent present a bleak picture for the future and the continent remains the least developed in the world. Several scholars have put forward the proposition that the inability of the third world nations to achieve sustainable development may be because of the high level of exclusion prevalent in those nations. The practice of democracy by the countries that claim to be democratic has been predominantly exclusive. Arowolo & Aluko (2010) write that several factors, such as cultural factors, violence, thuggery and intimidation, nature of political party formation, high election costs of participation in politics have been linked to the exclusion of women, the poor and the young people from the processes of decision making which are vital for the achievement of development. Policy frameworks to redress the anomaly have been ineffective as Cornwall & Goetz (2005) observe that 'engendering democracy' by adding women or multiplying democratic spaces is necessary but not sufficient to address historically and culturally embedded forms of disadvantage that have been the focus for feminist politics. The utilization of internet social networks in the mobilization of participants for the hugely successful democratic revolution that swept across most of North Africa between 2010 and 2011 brings to the fore the potency of the internet social networks as platform for inclusion of hitherto excluded groups in the processes of change leading to desired development. Following an understanding that majority of the African countries have English language as their official language, the study examined the role of Language as a tool of inclusion and development, through a socio-linguistic analysis of its use in the internet social networks. The study is sub-divided into five sections, the first is the introduction, followed by conceptual clarifications, theoretical framework, sociolinguistic analysis of language used in internet social networks, and finally conclusion and recommendations.

2. Conceptual Clarification

2.1. Language

Language has been recognised by various scholars as the hub of the human society. As a result of this, many definitions of language focus on its function as a tool for communication in the society. While language has several characteristics and performs other important functions in organised society, the ability of humans to make elaborate, complex and systematic use of it for the purposes of interaction sets them apart and higher than other creatures. According to Prasad (2009), “Language is a very common and easy source of communication. It is the basis of human civilization, which would have been impossible without it”. This idea is echoed by early scholars such as Sapir (1921), Bloch and Tager (1962), Hall (1969) and Wardaugh (1972). In more recent studies, scholars have also paid much attention to how humans use language for communication. Rothwell (2000:86) for instance defines language as “a structured system of symbols that communicates meaning”. Bloor and Bloor (2004, p. 5) in their discussion of how language is used to produce texts, claim that such could be “spoken or written for the purposes of communication by real people in actual circumstances”.

2.2. Inclusion

United Nations (1995) defined an inclusive society as a society for all, in which every individual, each with rights and responsibilities, has an active role to play. Atkinson & Marlier (2010) write that an inclusive society is one that rises above differences of race, gender, class, generation and geography to ensure equality of opportunity regardless of origin, and one that subordinates military and economic power to civil authority the capability of all citizens regardless of their social status to determine how social institutions function, is a hallmark of an inclusive society.

Marochi (nd) writes that democratic societies are concerned with the inclusionary capabilities of their institutional arrangements. It is expected that representative institutions (in a democratic society) should include the interests of the public. Inclusions are often materialized through emphasizing equality and equity and requests for quotas, descriptive or substantive representation. The agitations for inclusion of hitherto excluded groups have arisen following advancements in research on gender, feminism and multiculturalism, have led several scholars including to emphasize the need for inclusion of certain hitherto neglected groups in decision-making processes. Ranson (nd) argues that in pursuit of inclusion in modern societies the task has been to reconstruct a theory of citizenship which is grounded in the experience of heterogeneity and elaborates the need for different groups to enter a discourse in which they voice claims for their identities and interests to be recognized and accommodated in the public space. However, despite concerted attempts at ensuring the conduct of free, fair and credible elections and equality of all, most democracies still commit the sin of exclusion.

Levitas, Pantazis, Fahmy, Gordon, Lloyd, & Patsios (2007) write that social exclusion is a complex and multi-dimensional process. It involves the lack or denial of resources, rights, goods and services, and the inability to participate in the normal relationships and activities, available to the majority of people in a society, whether in economic, social, cultural or political arenas. It affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole’. Burchardt, Le Grand, & Piachaud (1999) emphasize participation in their definition, stating that an individual is socially excluded if he or she does not participate in key activities of the society in which he or she lives. Silver & Miller (2003) write that Social exclusion is (1) multidimensional or socioeconomic, and encompasses collective as well as individual resources, (2) dynamic or processual, along a trajectory between full integration and multiple exclusions, (3) relational, in that exclusion entails social distance or isolation, rejection, humiliation, lack of social support networks, and denial of participation, (4) active, in that there is a clear agency doing the excluding, and (5) relative to context.

2.3. Development

Development is a concept that has been subjected to varying definitions and interpretations. It is a highly contested, multidimensional and multifaceted concept and thus is looked at from many perspectives; social, political, economic and cultural. (Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011; Ngowi, 2009). Schumpeter (1934 cited in Jhingan, 2005, p. 4) defined development as “a discontinuous and spontaneous change in the stationary state which forever alters and displaces the equilibrium state previously existing.” Todaro (1985) views development as a multidimensional process involving major changes in social structures, popular attitude, national institutions, acceleration of growth, and reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty. To Seers (1970 cited in Havens, n.d), development involves increasing output in all sectors of the economy and distributing this output in such a fashion as to enhance the quality of life of the broad masses of the population.

Ogugua & Oduah (2007 cited in Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011) write that development means the integration and harmonization of the human potential in various aspects of life in a bid to ensure that man attains the best that life offers. Closely linked to this conception is that UNDP (1997) that development is about enlarging peoples’ choice. This brings to the fore the definitive statement of Oke (2004 cited in Fatile & Adejuwon, 2011) that whatever perspective is adopted in understanding development, the core is that it is people-centred. The summation is that development seeks to put human face to human affairs.

The parameters that can be used to assess whether there is development in a given area at a particular time and whether this development is increasing, stagnant or decreasing over time, are referred to as development indicators. They are Gross Domestic Product (GDP); Gross National Product (GNP); welfare of citizens; and provision of essential social services/basic needs. (Ngowi, 2009; Jhingan, 2005). Leading development scholars, such as Amartya Sen, Denis Goulet, and Dudley Seers, have expounded on this by arguing that more intangible goals, such as expanded ability to choose (including political as well as market freedoms), enhanced self-esteem, and self-actualization must be considered as development criteria. (Todaro & Smith, 2003). The implication is that when the economy is growing (GDP and GNP) without a commensurate increase in the living standards of majority of the citizens of the country, the country cannot be said to be experiencing development.

3. Internet social networks

Social networking site creates network communication among the user community. Social networking site serve as platform for communication purposes among people, organizations, interest groups, as well as avenue for acquisition and exchange of knowledge. Social networking websites are online communities of people who share interests and activities or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. They typically provide a variety of ways for users to interact, through chat, messaging, email, video, voice chat, file-sharing, blogging and discussion groups. (Jothi, Neelamalar & Prasad, 2011).

Internet social networks have facilitated increases in people's social capital, increasing contact with friends, relatives, professional/business associates, as well as political interests, both within a person's locality and those far away. (Wellman, 2001). Zarrella (2010 cited in Jothi, Neelamalar & Prasad, 2011) writes that the roots of online social networking can be traced to the 1980s bulletin board systems (BBS). These systems allowed the users to create personal profiles, helps to share information by sending private messages, public messages and post events at low speed connectivity. After emanation of social networking technology in the internet world, it grew higher and popular among the internet user.

Online social networking web sites have recently exploded in popularity. (Mislove, Gummadi & Drushel, nd). Shih (2009) writes that the most popular social networking sites like Face book, Hi5, Twitter, Orkut and MySpace, have hundreds of millions of active users on a daily basis. Users spend 2.6 billion minutes each day on Face book alone. Stroud (2007 cited in Jothi, Neelamalar & Prasad, 2011) argues that the ability of social networking sites to generate these huge volumes of web traffic is proof of their huge popularity.

4. Theoretical framework

The study adopts the Theory of Modernity and sociolinguistic approach as its theoretical construct.

4.1. Theory of Modernity

This is a psychological theory of development which revolves around the concept of "modern man." The major proponents of the theory include, D. Lerner and Alex Inkeles. Modern man, to the proponents of this theory is characterized internally by a certain mental flexibility in dealing with new situations and externally, by similarity to the value orientations dominant in industrial western societies. (Lerner, 1965 cited in Okeke & Idahosa, 2009). Some scholars hold the position that the spirit of modernity is a precondition for the achievement of modernization and the attendant development in any given society. Inkeles (1966 cited in Okeke & Idahosa, 2009) write that the ideal of development requires the transformation of the nature of man, the transformation being both a necessary cause of the greater growth and also a vital component of the development process.

The nine major attributes of a modern man are: readiness for new experience and openness to innovation; disposition to form and hold opinion; democratic orientation; planning habits; belief in human and personal efficacy; belief that the world is calculable; stress on personal and human dignity; faith in science and technology and belief in distributive justice (Inkeles, 1966 cited in Okeke & Idahosa, 2009).

4.2. Sociolinguistic Approach

The preoccupation with what language does in society is the basis for sociolinguistics which is concerned with the way people use language in different social contexts . *Socio-linguistics is concerned with investigating the relationships between language and society with the goal being a better understanding of the structure of language and of how language function in communication...* (Wardhaugh 2006, p. 13). Within the scope of sociolinguistics, language is seen as not simply a means of communication but also as a code which serves as a means of inclusion or exclusion. Micro-sociolinguistics specifically deals with "how social structures influences the way people talk and how language varieties and patterns of use correlate with social attributes such as class, sex, and age" (Wardhaugh 2006, p. 13) . This implies that pattern of language use can be indicators of social class, sex, age range and age grade.

Although very controversial, Basil Bernstein's theory of restricted and elaborated codes provides insight into how language use demarcates between different social classes. According to Berger (2006, p. 18) Berstein claims that "there is a difference in the way middle-and upper class people speak to their children from the way working class people speak to their children, and that these two "codes" have important effects on the way children develop and think about their possibilities". This claim ties up the concept of human potentials and development to their use of language, in which, the elaborated code with its distinct characteristics signals development and upward mobility while the restricted code and its distinct characteristics signal lack of development and low socio-economic status. In essence, the manner in which members of different social classes make use of language connects then to the particular class they belong and group solidarity and inclusion is always signaled by a the ability to use and understand the particular kind of language use tagged as appropriate in each context by members of the group. Such context and user dependent form of language use is known as Register.

The use of register is user and context specific in that its use is a covert demonstration of an individual's membership of a specific group which in turn depends on the individual's cognitive ability with which s/he interprets the specific context of the linguistic event and therefore displays such understanding by responding appropriately. "The presumption is that the same speaker has a repertoire of varieties and habitually switches to the appropriate registers as occasions and circumstances demands" (Amuseghan 1997, p. 124). Register as part of the elements of language use in society has been the concern of scholars for years. Its development as a linguistic concept is connected to the development of Systemic Functional Linguistics, a grammatical model which focuses on the different ways language function in society. Gregory (1967, p. 194) building on Halliday's work defines register as "the linguistic reflection of recurrent characteristic of the user's use of language in situation".

Most of the activities people involve in on social networks are language based. Internet Social networking is a tertiary form of communication in which participants use the written as if spoken and the written modes to re-enact real life discussions in virtual

space. Just as visible communities depend on linguistic variables in order to maintain structure, order and continuity, virtual communities organized through social networking also depend on language for the creation and sustenance of the systems involved. It is on this basis that the present study goes on to propose that discussions on social networks, even though carried on in virtual space, have the same linguistic variables typical of real life discussions. They have therefore become useful tools for generating and propagating socio-economic and political ideas which not only enhances cognitive and literacy skills but also create a sense of belonging, relevance and responsibility for individual citizen.

5. Methodology

The study relied primarily on secondary data, comprising relevant books, scholarly per reviewed journal articles and materials downloaded from the internet, especially interactions on selected social networks. Samples of interactions on some social networks (Facebook and Nairaland) were randomly selected and presented for analysis. All the discussions involved citizens/residents of third world countries especially Nigeria. A register analysis in which field of discourse, mode of discourse and tenor of discourse as it applies to each data sample was carried out. This was done with the aim of highlighting how participants demonstrate their ability to recognise these variables and to select the appropriate linguistic element as the situation around the language event demanded.

The analysis revealed how much the social networking sites, through the use of language, create an environment of interaction and inclusion which is not restricted by socio-economic variable such as education, occupation, sex, age or gender. It is assumed that when participants succeed in collaborating to the point of achieving uniformity in the use of linguistic variables, disregarding the demarcations that set them at variance in the real world and engage in discussions of similar subjects, minds also begin to work alike and this in turn sets the stage for self development for the individual as well as sustainable development at the national level.

5.1. Presentation of Data

SAMPLE A

INITIATOR:

As I have said on this page before, the administration is ready to develop Nigeria and stimulate economic production with the aim of reducing unemployment and moving the economy away from dependence on oil to more sustainable sources of income as Agriculture and its allied industries. In furtherance of this, I have just constituted an Inter Ministerial Committee on Cocoa production and processing to revive what used to be one of the main stays of the Nigerian economy. This is not going to be a bussiness as usual talk shop. The committee has six weeks to come up with creative ideas to be implemented. I am closely monitoring their activities. To revive Nigerias potentials we must revive production of those produce that sustained our forebear - Cocoa, Palm oil, Groundnut, Cotton etc. As you may also have read, the CBN has announed generous facilities for the agricultural sector and it is my intention that these funds get to those who would genuinely use them to grow the sector.

RESPONDENT 1:

Thank God. Very good moves my president. But I must proceed immediately to state that it will be good if we begin to see practical results. When Yaradua of blessed memory was in power, it was talk, talk, talk-7 POINT AGENDA that yeilded nothing while looters held sway. I was in Benin last week and I saw results after several years of leadership ineptitude. Sir, we yearn for results.

RESPONDENT 2:

that true talk OGA. But if you use the 9bil that would be used for the 50th Nigerians b/day or half of it to bring in farming materials i swear give or take 4 months we will be happy eating good food and now use the other half to fix some other things i swear we will all pray for you.

RESPONDENT 3:

the quicker the outcome of all of these the better for all of us as individuals and as a nation. We are so backward and the shame is on all of us including you Mr. President.

RESPONDENT 4:

The challenge here is that most time when money is released by government, it ends up in the hands of politicians and top civil servants. How then will you ensure that the Agricultural fund get to those who really need it...

RESPONDENT 5:

While appreciating you for making all Nigerians to be your Personal Assistance/Senior Adviser by virtue of we been able to reach out to you through Facebook, I will as well like to applaud this very step of developing the agriculture sector. The project Nigeria should involve all sector of the economy, not just on Oil and gas as it is now...

SAMPLE B

- INITIATOR:** I really dn't understand ds country anymore. Can u imagine a country like China having to deal with the issue of Farouk and Otedola? I leave you to your imaginations.
- RESPONDENT 1:** Politicians playing politics even when there is no nid 4 it.
- RESPONDENT 2:** That sucks, dis country is just turning something else
- RESPONDENT 3:** Nigeria needs prayer
- RESPONDENT 4:** uum
- RESPONDENT 5:** Comic relief ni oooooo, pls enrolled them into Nollywood... or is it NA (National Assembly) lywood
- RESPONDENT 6:** Nigeria. My Nigeria.

SAMPLE C

- INITIATOR:** What makes a Man/Woman Responsible. How would you classify a responsible person what makes a man/woman responsible this topic is as a result of cases when you see a man/woman for the first time and base on his or her appearance you tag them irresponsible/responsibleis this 100% correctcan you actually determine the responsibility of someone from thier looks. Lets have your views on this
- RESPONDENT 1:** You are what you wear. You dress to be addressed as you are.
- RESPONDENT 2:** I may tag you as irresponsible for asking this question
- RESPONDENT 3:** When you have ego, kudi, owo, People will call u a responsible person
- RESPONDENT 4:** The same way you know IF YOU YOURSELF IS EITHER RESPONSIBLE/IRRESPONSIBLE is the same way you will know another one.....
- RESPONDENT 5:** Responsibility is not a facial thing, its an act
- RESPONDENT 6:** Being a responsible fellow, has 2 do with, dressing, d way u talk, reactions, ur home as a man or woman, intergrity,d way u take up matter,infact it has 2 do wt common reasonings and both home and public behaviour.
- RESPONDENT 7:** To some people once u get married, u are responsible while to others money matters. But i will say that, the way u present urself is d way people will tag u.

SAMPLE D

- INITIATOR:** This has been worrying me and i want Nairaland peeps to help me out. Why do females get job faster than the males after NYSC
- RESPONDENT 1:** Cause dey willing to give wat u cant
- RESPONDENT 2:** They have Physicaly endowed super powers
- RESPONDENT 3:** not always true, they are just hard working, and some of them push harder than you, that's why they got and you dont for now
- RESPONDENT 4:** Yes oo. Why wont they get jobs, when they use what they have to get what they want
- RESPONDENT 5:** Cos i hardly think of hiring a man, except its the job a woman cant do, ever thought of assisting endangered species?
- RESPONDENT 6:** the reason isnt far fetched. Some randy wealthy men are ready to patronise your organization and lavish thier money to impress a female staff with an anticipation that she'll allow them a piece of the action from her honey pot. They sometimes make meaningless visit to such organizations just to catch glimpses and steal leery looks at such ladies who serves as "fem fatale" for their organizations. If the ladies venture go near such men with an ear-to-ear false grin saying "hello" hormones will start raging amd gushing to thier head.
- RESPONDENT 7:** women are better managers, administrators and marketers. If you think i lie ask why front desk/ customer services/marketing staffs are preferably ladies.

SAMPLE E

INITIATOR: I want to assure you that your feedback and comments on this page are important. I read them and they have influenced government's policy. On Monday, a Young Nigerian named Tuokpo Onuwaje who is resident in California made a comment on this page expressing disappointment that though California has the 7th largest economy in the world Nigeria does not have a consulate there yet we maintain one in Atlanta, Georgia which has a smaller economy. This youth further informed me that Nigeria had a property in California which was abandoned in the 80s. Upon receipt of this information, I instructed the Nigerian Ambassador to the U.S. to visit the property immediately and report back to me with a view to reopening our consulate in San Francisco California. I am pleased to tell Tuokpe Onuwaje and all fans of this page that the visit was concluded today. I am also looking at other request made here and will within available resources and time take action or respond to your questions. Thank you.

RESPONDENT 1: Tuokpe Onuwaje is absolutely right and am glad Mr. President for your prompt response and the Ambassador confirmation. As indicated in my previous contribution to your page on Facebook, I'm reiterating commitment and willingness of my team...

RESPONDENT 2: Say something about the Bankole issue, the typical garage boy fight by the "Honourables" and what you are doing about it. Don't tell us it is the exclusive domain of the judiciary...cos its not, dont tell us you dont want to meddle in...

RESPONDENT 3: Daddy Goodluck, thank you for doing your job accurately. It shows signs of REAL CHANGE coming into the life of our Great Nation Nigeria. Please sir, you know the problems of the nation before getting there; dont miss out anything.

RESPONDENT 4: No Wahala good...keep it up!

RESPONDENT 5: AM GLAD 2 HEAR u Mr President. Myself and other nigerians who desire 2 contribute 2 development of dis great nation have bn lft down wit joblessness. Mr. President i don't have anybody in govt 2 help me but u.

RESPONDENT 6: Your Excellency Sir, I am happy that you are one who walks the talk. Your setting upn this page lays credence to that. The California issue is great and everything else about this country but I have many issues I will like you to look but...

*5.2. Data Analysis**5.2.1. Field of Discourse*

Each of the five samples above represents different or specific fields of discourse. In each case, the subject of discussion is mapped out by the initiator who conceives the idea and chooses to share it with members of his/her virtual community. The level of coherence in the entire stretch of discussion can therefore be assessed by considering the lexical items which recur in each discussion and how these items collocate and gravitate towards the purpose of generating similar meaning. In Samples "A" and "E" for instance, the President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, President Goodluck Jonathan is the initiator. The subject in both cases is governance in general and particularly, the development of the nation's economy through the resuscitation of the agriculture sector in sample A, and the use of a participatory style of policy formulation in sample E.

In sample A, the initiator develops the subject by building a register which reflects the idea being presented. This is evident in the kind of lexical set that can be extracted from the text. Words like: develop, stimulate, production, processing, revive, economy, Nigeria, creative, implemented, potentials, cocoa, palm-oil, groundnut, cotton, facilities, funds, agriculture, industries, Nigerian, sector, administration. In order for anyone to participate meaningfully in a discussion characterized by such a lexical set, the individual must possess similar experiential and ideational orientation. The use of register in itself serves as an icon of group identity indicating that those who successfully participate in discussions so characterized belong in the same experiential world with the initiator and other members of the group. Another linguistic element through which the president presents his subject in sample A is the dynamic verb oriented predicate. As mentioned earlier, the exact subject being presented is the development of the nation's economy. In line with the notion of development which is an overt activity, a number of active verbs can be extracted from the president's posting while the use of stative verbs was totally avoided. Examples of such predicates are presented below with the active verbs highlighted.

...**develop** Nigeria
 ...**stimulate** economic production
 ...**constituted** an inter ministerial committee
 ...**come up** with creative ideas
 ...**revive** production of those produce

...**revive** Nigerias potentials
 ...**announced** generous facilities
 ... **grow** the sector

A similar pattern can be observed in sample E. The president, in that case, attempts to convince his audience that their ideas and suggestions are being considered in the formulation of government policies as evidenced by the move to establish a Nigerian Consulate in California in line with the suggestion of a young member of the virtual community. In line with this, the register pattern in his expression naturally converges to promote his intention. Consider for example lexical items such as: feedback, comments, policy, influenced, consulate, ambassador, world, economy, California, Nigeria, instructed, information, request, report, immediately.

Having considered the subjects of samples A and E, it follows that the pattern of responses should also be examined in order to be able to verify if the respondents are able to operate in the same ideational space with the president. Beginning from respondent 1 in Sample A, we see that almost all the respondents stayed in line with the president by also addressing issues of governance and development. They make use of lexical items like, leadership, Yaradua, 7-Point Agenda, looters, farming materials, politicians, civil servants, Agricultural fund, Agricultural sector, oil and gas, economy, backward and so on. Respondents in Sample E also display the same ability. Although the responses were not limited to the exact subject raised by the President, they still remained within the same field of governance and national development. Lexical items like honorable, judiciary, Bankole, joblessness, California and others were used which indicates coherence in the subject being discussed by all participants. This indicates that as the president opens up a space for discussion, he pulls in others to make contributions that are equally meaningful. This method of creating inclusion through discussions on social networking sites brings governance closer to the people creating a collaborative mindset.

Samples B, C and D can also be examined for similar patterns of the use of linguistic variables. In each of these samples, the initiator introduces a subject of discussion and respondents pick it up by choosing the lexical items that are relevant to the subject of discussion and context of situation. The subject of Nigeria politics was raised in Sample B for instance and respondents comply with the subject in spite of the fact that the initiator did not make the subject explicit. The lexical items: China, Farouk and Otedola were enough to initiate the discussion which ended with the expression "Nigeria my Nigeria" indicating understanding of the subject matter.

The subjects and patterns of discussion in Samples C and D show that participants in social network discussions display a level of language competence with which they switch to the use of formal or informal register as the context of situation demands. The field of discourse stands out clearly in each of the samples as participants make predominant use of colloquial expressions and slang words indicating their understanding of the subjects as casual and social issues. Lexical items like: peeps, super powers, randy, honey poy, leery looks and so on point to participants responses to the subject.

5.2.2. Mode of Discourse

Discussions on internet social networks are mainly in the written mode. However, Longe (1995) cites Halliday who recognises different levels of dialogue including the written as if spoken mode. Beyond the written mode therefore, interactions on social networking sites also represent the written as if spoken mode. The participants through their use of language, seem to re-enact the normal group interactions which are integral parts of everyday life in the real world. It is through such interactions that society is organised, structured and sustained. Virtual discussions are therefore capable of achieving same since they also possess characteristics of real life verbal interaction.

The use of expressions such as: talk, talk, talk (sample A), comic relief ni ooooooo, uum (sample B), Yess ooooo (sample D), I am pleased to tell you...(sample E), are mostly used in verbal interactions therefore, in this case, they are evidences of the use of the written as if spoken mode.

Tenor of Discourse.

From the analysis of register used in every text, it is possible to highlight the nature of the relationship between participants in the language event and such relationships determine what the expectations and goals of participants are. Tenor of discourse could be frozen, formal, semi-formal or informal. In order to elicit people's co-operation and commitment, which is germane to development especially in social settings such as obtains on internet social networking, participants will no doubt carefully select the tenor of discourse.

Considering the samples presented above, the tenor of discourse in most cases was highly informal except in samples A and E in which the president assumes the role of the knowledgeable who has chosen to dish out information for the purpose of enlightenment. In such cases, the tenor moves on to semi-formal as the mood system indicates.

The Mood system of a language is concerned with the "speaker and hearer (or writer and reader) of the message and the roles they adopt in relation to each other". (Berry 1975, p. 166). This implies that by considering the choices made between the indicative and imperative moods for instance, it will be possible to determine whether the speaker or writer has chosen for his/herself the role of the controller or the controlled in a situation of giving or demanding. This choice shapes the relationship between participants which in turn, creates a particular context in which meaning will be negotiated.

The Indicative mood can be realized as Indicative and Interrogative. The indicative mood represents sentence types which are either declarative or interrogative marking out the user as information giver, information seeker or information checker as the case may be. The dominant trend of sentences in the President's postings is declarative pointing to an interactive encounter in which information is given probably with the intention of winning the people's approval. He also makes extensive use of the personal pronoun "I" which presents him as one willing to take responsibility for the running of the countries affairs.

The respondents on the other hand were more informal as we see the use of imperative sentences, code-mixing and colloquial expressions. Examples of such are: The project Nigeria should involve all sector of the economy, not just on Oil and gas as it is now, How then will you ensure that the Agricultural fund get to those who really need it, Say something about the Bankole issue, that true talk OGA, Daddy Goodluck, No Wahala good...keep it up! And so on.

In samples B, C and D, the tenor is also highly informal as we see a preponderance of abbreviations, the use of slangs (honey pot, super power), code-mixing (owo, kudi, ego).

It is evident that such informal settings can serve as opportunities for bringing up important issues and promoting values of commitment, patriotism and loyalty which in turn, opens the way for development. This is even more so in a country like Nigeria in which peace is only relative and the undercurrent of tension and apprehension is palpable.

6. Conclusion

Language as used in the internet social networks provide the platform for inclusion of all classes in people regardless of their socio-economic status (age, gender, education, income) in the processes of policy formulation. It eliminates barriers which exist in the usual processes of governance, including the handicaps created by bureaucratic processes, as it is all comers affair; every citizen is able to make input without any inhibitions.

There is need for governments of the third world nations to utilize the opportunity created by the internet social networks to encourage participation of majority of their populace hitherto excluded, in the processes of governance. Following the link between citizens participation and the achievement of development which has been established by various scholars, including Ogunidiya, (2010) and Burns, Scholzman, & Verba, (2001), governments of third world nations, should encourage their institutions and agencies to realize enhanced citizen participation, which inevitably would lead to sustainable development.

7. References

1. Amuseghan, S. (1997). Fundamentalists of stylistics. Bamisaye, T. (ed.) (1997). Studies in languages and literary studies. (Pp. 124-138). Akure: Montem Paperbacks.
2. Arowolo, D. & Aluko, F. S. (2010). Women political participation in Nigeria. *European journal of social sciences* – Volume 14, Number 4 (2010). Pp 581 – 593. Retrieved on 15/05/2012 from http://www.eurojournals.com/ejss_14_4_09.pdf.
3. Atkinson, A. B. & Marlier, E. (2010). Analyzing and measuring social inclusion in a global context. New York: United Nations. Retrieved on 28/06/2012 from <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/publications/measuring-social-inclusion.pdf>
4. Burchardt, T., Le Grand, J., & Piachaud, C. (1999). Social exclusion in Britain 1991-1995. *Social policy and administration*. Vol 33, No 3, pp 227 – 244.
5. Cornwall, A. & Goetz, A. M. (2005). Democratizing democracy: feminist perspectives *Democratization*, Vol.12, No.5, pp.783–800. DOI: 10.1080=13510340500322181
6. Fatile, J. O. & Adejuwon, K. D. (2011). The implications of globalization on Nigeria's development. *Babcock University PPCSS International Journal Series*, Vol 1, No 2, pp. 165 – 177.
7. George-Genyi, M. E. (2009). Situating the African development palaver: the relevance of the political economy approach. *African journal of indigenous development*, Vol 5, Nos 1 & 2, pp. 86 – 97.
8. Havens, A. E. (nd). Methodological issues in the study of development. Retrieved on 27/06/2012 from http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PNAAA409.pdf
9. Jhinghan, M. L. (2005). *The economics of development and planning*. (38th ed.) Delhi: Vrinda Publications.
10. Jothi, P. S., Neelamalar, M. & Prasad, R. S. (2011). Analysis of social networking sites: A study on effective communication strategy in developing brand communication. *Journal of media and communication studies*, Vol. 3(7), pp. 234-242. Retrieved on 02/07/2012 from <http://www.academicjournals.org/jmcs/PDF/pdf2011/July/Jothi%20et%20al.pdf>
11. Levitas, R., Pantazis, C., Fahmy, E., Gordon, D., Lloyd, E. & Patsios, D. (2007). *The multi-dimensional analysis of social exclusion*. Bristol: Bristol Institute for Public Affairs, University of Bristol.
12. Marochi, B. (nd). *Inclusion and Representation: Claim-making in Governance Networks*. Retrieved on 26/06/2012 from <http://www.egpa2009.com/documents/psg4/Marochi.pdf>
13. Mislove, A., Gummadi, K. P., & Druschel, P. (nd) *Exploiting social networks for internet search*. Retrieved on 02/07/2012 from <http://www.mpi-sws.org/~amislove/publications/PeerSpective-HotNets.pdf>
14. Ngowi, H. P. (2009). Economic development and change in Tanzania since independence: The political leadership factor. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* Vol.3 (4), pp. 259-267. Retrieved on 27/06/2012 from <http://academicjournals.org/ajpsir/PDF/Pdf2009/May/Ngowi.pdf>
15. Okeke, V. O. S. & Idahosa, C. O. D. (2009). The sociology of national development: theories and issues, the African experience. *African journal of indigenous development*, Vol 5, Nos 1 & 2, pp 49 – 65.
16. Phillips, A. (1998). *The politics of presence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
17. Ranson, S. (nd). *The new learning for inclusion and capability: towards community governance in the education action zones*. Retrieved on 26/06/2012 from <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/19/22/1855975.pdf>
18. Shih, C. (2009). *The facebook era. Tapping online social networks to build better products, reach new audiences and selling more stuff*. Prentice Hall Publication, pp. 85-128
19. Silver, H. & Miller, H. M. (2003). Social exclusion: The European approach to social disadvantage. *Indicator*, Vol 2, No 2, pp 1 – 17. Retrieved on 27/06/2012 from http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Sociology/faculty/hsilver/documents/silver_and_miller_european_approach_to_social_disadvantage.pdf

20. Todaro, M. P. (1985). *Economic development in the Third World*. (3rd ed.). New York: Longman.
21. Todaro, M. P. & Smith, S. C. (2003). *Economic development*. (8th ed.). Boston, MA: Addison- Wesley.
22. United Nations (1995). *Report of the World Summit for Social development, Held at Copenhagen, 6 – 12 March 1995*. Retrieved on 28/06/2012 from <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/wssd/index.html>
23. Young, I. (2000) *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press