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Social Media English in Nonnative Environment: A Study of Whatsapp Discourse in Nigeria

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Abstract

Electronic discourse is known to evolve a disparate set of communication models globally. It takes various forms: email, text messages, tweeter, chat rooms, Internet relay chat, world wide web pages and websites, among others. This study particularly investigated WhatsApp messages as a sub-set of Internet discourse and adopts Internet stylistics and technological determinism theory (TDT) for its theoretical thrusts. A group chat tagged "012 UNIUYO Grammarians" was created online comprising mainly final-year university undergraduates, all of them Nigerians. There were a total of seventy-eight participants enlisted in the group chat out of which twenty-four chatters were randomly selected for the study. From this number, eighty-two chats were harvested using AntConc 3.4.4 (a corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis) and then subjected to feature analysis. The findings reveal an emerging trend in English usage in Nigeria: first, code-switching, shortened forms, abbreviations and acronyms were discovered to be prominent features in WhatsApp chats; second, there were exceptional use, and sometimes, total absence of punctuations in some of the chats; third, slang expressions, pictographs, emoticons and other semiotic devices for meaning extension featured prominently in the chats; fourth, there was predominant use of alphanumeric features, neologisms, pidginization, graphical and other kinaesthetic devices along with innovative use of stylized spellings of lexemes, syntactic structures and semantic expressions. From these findings, the researchers conclude that Internet language is so dynamic in an L2 environment that no force can limit its creative use, let alone provide a monolithic standard for a unilateral, global model.

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1.0 Introduction

Any language that cannot effectively and intelligibly meet the communication challenges of its users stands the chance and risk of going into extinction. English language, being a strong weapon for communication and social interaction, easily responds to societal communication needs. It is, therefore, as dynamic as the needs of its users. This work specifically examines the linguistic features that characterize the dynamism with which language is used in the social media, with particular reference to WhatsApp messages.

Giving a linguist's appraisal of electronic discourse, Crystal (2001) points out that we are on the brink of the biggest revolution in language ever; that online language (what he calls 'netspeak') is not a monolithic creation, but rather, a disparate set of communication methods and types such as email, chat rooms, Internet relay chat, world wide web pages, websites, among others. This source suggests that online language is best viewed as a new species of interaction, a genuine third medium (besides the written and oral forms of English), which is evolving its own systematic rules to suit new circumstances.

Davis & Brewer (1997) define electronic discourse as the writing that is very often read as if it were being spoken, that is, as if the sender were writing-talking. Therefore, Internet slang, Internet shorthand, cyber-slang, net-speak or chat-speak variously refer to a variety of slang languages used by different people on the Internet. This study is interested in investigating into the variety of social media language generally referred to as WhatsApp.

The study examines the emerging social media language that is observed in a second language (L2) environment, given the dynamics that language undergoes in a multilingual society like Nigeria. It discusses the sociolinguistic and sociocultural factors that contribute to its development and the consequence of such contributing factors. Besides, the study examines the type of English that emerges as a result of WhatsApp as a social media and how such expressions contribute to the overall communicative ability of Nigerians generally.

1.1 A Brief History of WhatsApp Messenger as a Social Media
WhatsApp messenger is a proprietary cross-platform and encrypted instant messages client for smartphones. It uses the Internet to send text messages, documents, images, video, user location and audio messages to other users using standard cellular mobile numbers. It was founded in 2009 by Brian Acton and Jan koum, both former employees of Yahoo!. As at February 2016, WhatsApp had a user base of one billion, making it the most popular messaging platform. WhatsApp Inc., which is based in Mountain View, California, United States, was acquired by Facebook Inc. on February 19, 2014, for approximately $19.3 billion.

After Koum and Acton left Yahoo! in September 2007, the duo travelled to South America as a break from work. At one point, they applied for jobs at Facebook but were rejected. For the rest of the following years, Koum relied on his $400,000 savings from Yahoo!. In January 2009, after purchasing an iPhone and realizing that the seven-month old App store was about to spawn a whole new industry of apps, he started visiting his friend, Alex Fishman, in West San Jose where the three would discuss "... having statuses next to individual names of the people", but this was not possible without an Iphone developer, so Fishman introduced Koum to Igor Solomennikou, a developer in Russia that he had found on RentAcoder.com. Koum almost immediately chose the name "WhatsApp" because it sounded like "whats up", and a week later, on his birthday, he incorporated WhatsApp Inc. in California. However, early WhatsApp kept crashing and, at a particular point, Koum felt like giving up and looking for a new job, but Acton encouraged him to wait for a few more months.

Koum later updated WhatsApp so that each time the user changed their statuses, it would identify everyone in the user's network. WhatsApp 2.0 (version) was released with a messaging component and the active users suddenly swelled to 250,000. Koum visited Acton, who was still unemployed while managing another start up and decided to join the company. In October, Acton persuaded five ex-Yahoo! friends to invest $250,000 in seed funding, and as a result, was granted co-founder status and a stake. He officially joined WhatsApp on 1st November. After months at Beta Stage, the application was eventually launched in November 2009 exclusively on the App store for the iphone. Koum then hired an old friend who lived in Los Angeles, Chris Pediffer, to make the Blackberry version, which arrived two months later.

WhatsApp was further switched from a free to paid service to avoid

growing too fast, mainly because the primary cost was sending verification texts to users. In December 2009, WhatsApp for the Iphone was updated to send photos. By early 2011, WhatsApp was in the top 20 of apps in applied U. S. App store. In April 2011, Sequoia capital was the only venture investor in WhatsApp and paid approximately $8 million, for more than 15 percent of the company above their $250,000 seed funding, after months of negotiation.

By February 2013, WhatsApp user base had swollen to about 200 million active users and its staff to 50. Sequoia invested another $50 million valuing WhatsApp at $1.5 billion. In a December 2013 blog post, WhatsApp claimed that 400 million active users used the service each month. As at April 22, 2014, WhatsApp had over 500 million monthly active users, 700 million photos and 100 million videos being shared daily. Within the same period, the messaging system was handling more than 10 billion messages each day. On August 24, 2014, Koum announced on his twitter account that WhatsApp had over 600 million active users worldwide. At that point, WhatsApp was adding about 25 million new users every month, or 833,000 active users per day. With 66 million active users representing 10% of the total worldwide users, India has the largest number of consumers. At present, there are more than one billion users of WhatsApp as a result of its accessibility and functionality.

1.2 The Research Problem

The advent of the global system of mobile communication has brought along with it endless influence on the English language and its users. It has adversely affected the ways English is written - unpredictable abbreviations, contractions, modifications, neologisms and shortenings. Observably, most WhatsApp discourses do not seem to follow the conventional English grammar rules. The implication of this is that the language of the social media has brought about a great deal of linguistic innovations, including errors, deviant and variant forms as observed in the spellings, punctuations and lexemes used by the participants. Much of the noticeable innovations affect the morphological, syntactic and semantic structures of the English language. This study is, therefore, an attempt to unravel the various forms which social media language, particularly the WhatsApp discourse, exhibits in the use of language generally, and the English language in particular, in Nigeria.

1.3 Some Vital Questions

There are some peculiar questions that this study intends to provide answers to. These include the following:

(i) Are there any traceable differences between the English language used as a social media language exemplified in WhatsApp discourse and other written English usages in Nigeria?

(ii) Why do people prefer communicating in social media language, particularly WhatsApp, to using the conventional English grammar?

(iii) What are the negative and positive effects of the social media language on the use of standard English in Nigeria?

1.4 Research Design

Data for this study were collected through randomized sampling of chats from a WhatsApp group tagged "012 Grammarians UNIUYO". The chats were gotten from final-year undergraduate students of the Department of English, the University of Uyo, Uyo, Nigeria. There was a total of seventy-eight (78) participants that were enlisted in the group chat. However, in the end, based on the sampling technique used, twenty-four (24) chatters were selected for the study out of which eighty two (82) chats were harvested using AntConc 3.4.4 (a corpus analysis toolkit for concordancing and text analysis) and then subjected to feature analysis so as to validate the findings and conclusions of the study. The results are presented in tables, graphs and charts.

1.5 Theoretical Issues

This study uses Internet linguistics, also known as Internet stylistics, as its frame work. Internet linguistics is a domain of linguistics advocated by the English linguist, David Crystal. It studies new language styles and forms that have arisen under the influence of the Internet and other new media. Since the beginning of human-computer interaction (HCI) leading to Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) and Internet-mediated communication (IMC), experts have acknowledged that linguistics has a complementary role in terms of web interface and usability. Studying the emerging language on the Internet can help improve conceptual organization, translation and web usability.

The study can be effectively handled through three main perspectives: sociolinguistics, stylistics and applied linguistics, but the study specifically adopts the Internet stylistics perspective. This perspective examines how the Internet and its related technologies have encouraged new and different forms of creativity in language. It looks at the Internet as a medium through which new language phenomena have arisen. This new mode of language is

interesting to study because it is an amalgam of both spoken and written media.

Stylistics arising from Internet usage has spread beyond the new media into other areas and platforms including, but not limited to, films, music and literary works. The infiltration of Internet stylistics is important as mass audience are exposed to the works, reinforcing certain Internet specific language styles which may not be acceptable in standard or more formal forms of language. Apart from Internet slang, inappropriate grammar and typographical mistakes are prevalent features of the writing system on the Internet and other Computer-Mediated Communication channels. As users of the Internet get accustomed to inappropriate usages, such errors gradually infiltrate into both written and spoken English. Thus, the more social media language is used in everyday life, the greater the impact it has on formal English. This is part of why this study becomes a sine-qua-non – to discover the extent to which the English language used in the social media affects formal English usage in Nigeria.

Another relevant theory to this study is "technological determinism theory" (TDT). This theory, propounded by Marshal Mcluham (1962), states that man's feeling, actions and thoughts are shaped by evolving technologies. It underscores the fact that the expressions of our world-view is basically conditioned and shaped by the knowledge of evolving, global technologies at the disposal of the language user/learner. The theory provides a general guide to discover the influence of the medium rather than total dependence on the message alone. Such technology includes online e-books, short messages service (SMS), Internet software,
Web pages, world-wide-web messages (www), twitter messages, text messages, facebook, Instagram messages, to-go messages, WhatsApp messages, among numerous others. It is within these theories that this research anchors its findings (cf Edward, 2014, p. 227).

Both linguistic stylistics and Technological Determinism Theory are significant to this study since the work examines the language of the social media. These theories explore the changes in patterns of social interaction and communicative practice on the Internet, and also expose the spread of Internet jargon and related linguistic forms in everyday English usage. As language changes, conversational discourse and stylistic diffusion overlap with the aspect of language stylistics.

1.6 Data Presentation/Analysis

Out of the eighty two (82) chats that were sampled in this study, five (5) were code-switched, forty-two (42) were made up of shortened forms, twelve (12) were abbreviated, six (6) were slang expressions, four (4) were made of acronyms and one (1) was of onomatopoeic spellings. Also, ten (10) had different graphological features, twenty-five (25) were without punctuations, eight (8) were exceptionally punctuated to create emphasis while twelve (12) contained pictographs. The data as well as the analysis are presented below.

1.6.1 Code-switching Co-occurring with Pidgin Expressions

Code-switching is a phenomenon of alternating between two or more languages during spoken conversation. It is usually used in bi-lingual situations. It is an intra-linguistic phenomenon which explains a bilingual situation in which two languages are used simultaneously or interchangeably in communication. Of interest in this study is the fact that code-switched expressions that were used by chatters co-occurred with pidgin expressions in the chats studied. The following instances were observed and drawn from the data collected.

Table 1: Chats Extracted from WhatsApp Message Platform

Waiting maryjane d write wer she no fit send till now .... She d hang my phone biko 7:55 AM
Lol@Dan. I no do bad thing help ezeulu sight d new moon o.. Y did u need my pix? 8:58 PM
ah no Ba3 biko 10:13 AM
Biko do we have test tomorrow or Thursday 10:08 PM
All dis bday pple kwanu 12:28 PM

From these chats, it is obvious that some of the chatters code-switched either from English to Pidgin or to indigenous languages, or from Nigerian mother-tongues to English and vice-versa (see Appendices I, III, IV, VI and VII, some of which are displayed in the samples above). Observably, one prominent feature of many of the chats examined is the prevalence of English-based Pidgin expressions consistently code-switched or code-

mixed with Nigerian indigenous languages. For instance, the expressions "*waiting Maryjane d write wer she no fit send …,* " "*She d hang my phone …"*, "*I do bad thing…"* and "*All dis bday pple…*" are all pidgin expressions code-mixed with English, while "biko" and "kwanu" are code-mixed expressions imported from one of the indigenous languages, the Igbo language in Nigeria. It is expected in these excerpts that the interlocutors involved in the chat understood each other moderately or explicitly before using such codes.

1.6.2 Shortened Forms/Abbreviation/Acronyms

Included within these chats are spellings which comprise shortened forms, abbreviations and acronyms. An abbreviation is the shortening of a word, while an acronym, on the other hand, is a sub-set of abbreviations and is formed from the initial components of a word. Some acronyms can be pronounced as a word; others violate normal phonetic conventions of a language and so are pronounced as a series of letters. In the chats examined, there were spellings which comprised shortened forms and acronyms. For example, in Figure 1, the abbreviations like "d", "wer", "Y" and "u" representing the English words, "the", "were", "Why" and "you" respectively are shortened spelling forms that are homophonous with the sounds represented by those expressions or letters; whereas expressions such as "*Lol@Dan*". "*Ba3*", "*pix*" and *"dis bday pple…*" indicated in Figure 1 are non-conventional, shortened spelling forms that are presumably understood by interlocutors using such abbreviations.

1.6.3 Chats without Punctuations or with Abnormal Punctuations

Grammatical punctuation rules were observably relaxed in some of the chats, while in some other instances, common punctuations such as commas and question marks were apparently omitted. Besides, there are some punctuation marks that are commonly used for emphasis or stress. For

instance, periods, ellipsis and exclamation marks were used repeatedly for emphasis as illustrated in the following examples: "*I doubt .....*" *or "Sure !!!!!!!!!*". Sometimes, question signs and exclamation marks are often used repeatedly when one is angry, doubtful about certain facts or is emotionally unstable, as in: "*You must be joking-o !!!!!!!!!!*", and "*U no be noml??*" (see Appendix II). In these instances, there are abnormalities in the punctuations of the sentences. For instance, the ellipses are normally three, possibly with a final end punctuation mark making it four; exclamation mark is usually one and question sign one, not as many as indicated in these chats.

1.6.4 Slangs/Stylized Spellings

Some spellings are made to conform to some style rather than in a realistic or literal manner. Slangs, on the other hand, are known to be language outside of conventional usage. The specialized language of an in-group is unique to a particular profession or subject. Most social media chatters have special codes used for communication. For instance, onomatopoeic, and sometimes reduplicated, spellings have become popularized on WhatsApp messages. Some well-known examples are: "*hahaha*" (indicating laughter), "*shap shap*" or "fast fast" (denoting speed or urgency), "waka waka" (sterotyping loitering), among others.

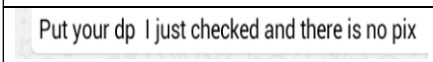
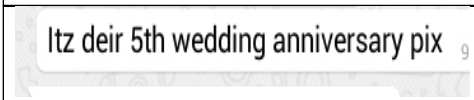
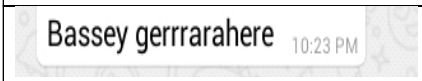
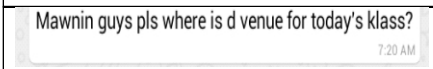
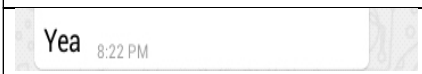
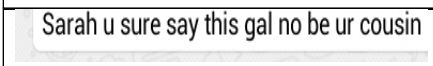
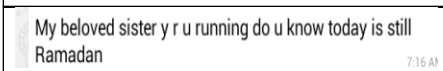
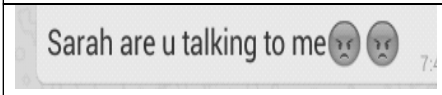
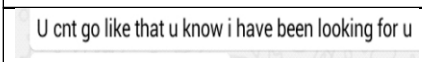
Other features observed in the WhatsApp messages examined in the data are logographs and pictographs for which an actual picture or shape represents a word or concept. Some of the feature contents and their interpretations are picked out for discussion and interpretations in Table 2.

SHORTENED FORMS	SHORTENED WORDS	INTERPRETATIONS
My beloved sister y r u running do u know today is still Ramadan 7:16 AM	y, r, u	my beloved sister why are you... (APP. I)
Apibufdae Angel Aidee 4:15 PM	Apibufadae	happy birthday (APP. II)
Hapy belated birthday @Omofon, d eminent V.P. ope its not too late. Llnp 8:27 PM	ope	hope (APP. II)
No p 10:43 PM	no p	no problem (APP. IV)
Uwc 5:41 PM	uwc	you are welcome (APP. VII)
All dis bday pple kwanu 12:28 PM	bdaypple	birthday people (APP. VII)

ABBREVIATIONS	ABBREVIATED WORDS	INTERPRETATIONS
Hapy belated birthday @Omofon, d eminent V.P. op not too late. Llnp	@, V. P, Llnp	At, Vice President, long life and prosperity. (APP. II)
Na only u gud 2 drink wine 10:34 PM	2	To (APP. IV)
Put your dp I just checked and there is no pix	Dp	Displayed picture (APP.V)
Dati did u plan on sending sth w/out me being around 10:09 PM	sth	Something (APP. VI)

ACRONYMS	WORDS	INTERPRETATIONS
U people will not Kill me 😎 ✖ 😎 lol 8:47 AM	lol	laughing out loud (APP. III)

STYLIZED SPELLINGS	STYLES	INTERPRETATIONS
I know,hunnie 2:33 PM	Hunnie	Honey (APP. II)
Mawnin guys pls where is d venue for today's klass? 7:20 AM	Mawnin	Morning (APP. II)
Its nt helping my bat3 pls 9:44 PM	Bat3	Battery (APP. III)

	Wia lafta	where (APP. IV) laughter (APP. IV)
	pix	picture (APP. IV)
	Itz	Its (APP. V)
	gerrrarahere	get out of here (APP. VI)
SLANGS	**WORDS**	**INTERPRETATIONS**
	Guys	People (APP. II)
		Yes (APP. II)
	Gal	Girl (APP. V)
CHATS WITHOUT PUNCTUATIONS		**CORRECT FORMS**
		My beloved sister, y r u running, do u know today is still Ramadan? (APP. I)
		Sarah are u talking to me? (APP. I)
		U cnt go like that, u know I have been looking for you (APP. III)

Baseey wats ur obsession 10:28 PM With marriage 10:28 PM		Basseey wats ur obsession with marriage? (APP. IV)
Dati did u plan on sending sth w/out me being around 10:09 PM		Dati did u plan on sending sth w/out me being around? (APP. VI)
Dati which kind suspense be this 10:12 PM		Dati which kind suspense be this? (APP. VI)
Ud pls stop all dis make ur relationship issues private		Ud pls stop all dis, make ur relationship issues private. (APP. VI)

Abnormal Punctuations		
YES!!! 7:48 AM Sarah!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"""""""""""""""""""""""		APP. I
Wait ist ..... Grace u still need the garri?		APP. V
Baz,na e library be ds??? 10:25 PM		APP. VI
Pictographs		**MEANING**
Hmmmm!!!! 👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁 👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁👁 waiting to see 8:35 AM	(APP. I)	The eye means that the person is waiting to use that eye in beholding something
Which one be mkpo Uran😳 7:44 AM	(APP. I)	The pictures means that the person is curious to knowing something
Sarah are u talking to me😠😠 7:48 AM	(APP. I)	The pictures means that the person is angry while asking the question
When is Udofot's test👁👁👁?	(APP. II)	The eye means that the person is waiting to see a reply to his or her question

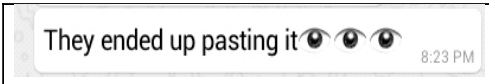
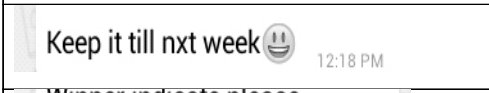
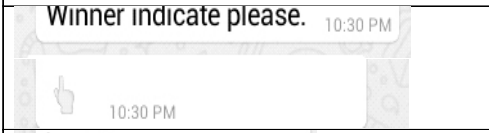
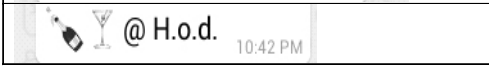
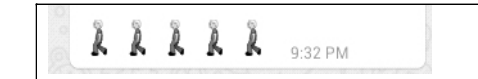
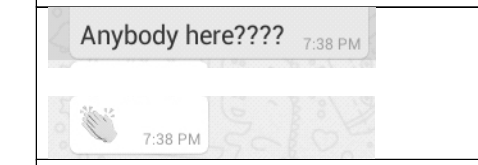
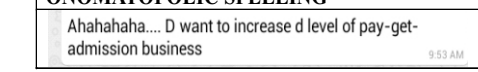
	(APP. II)	The eye means that the person has seen what was pasted
	APP. III)	The two faces represents the persons the chatter is referring to.
	APP. III	The picture depicts happiness or excitement over something
	APP. IV	The picture depicts the respond to the request
	APP. IV	The picture depicts a celebration of something
	APP. V	The picture means the person is just passing by and so not interested in the chat.
	APP. VIII	The picture means the person is calling for attention
ONOMATOPOEIC SPELLING		
	APP. II	

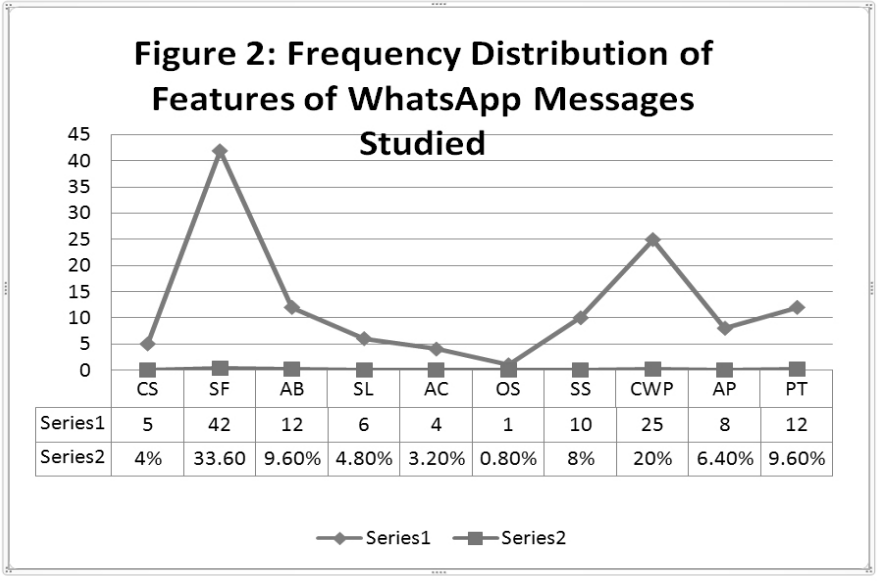
Table 3: Frequency Distribution of the Features

Feature Contents	**Frequency**	**Percentage %**
Code-switching (CS)	5	4%
Shortened Forms (SF)	42	33.6%
Abbreviations (AB)	12	9.6%
Slangs (SL)	6	4.8%
Acronyms (AC)	4	3.2%
Onomatopoeic Spelling (OS)	1	0.8
Stylized Spellings (SS)	10	8%
Chats without Punctuations (CWP)	25	20%
Abnormal Punctuations (AP)	8	6.4%
Pictographs (PT)	12	9.6%
Total	**125**	**100**

The table above shows the percentages at which each of the features were being used during the WhatsApp discourse. Thus, 4% of the total chats were code-switched, 33.6% the chats shortened forms, 9.6% contained abbreviations, 4.8% were of slangy terms, 3.2% had acronyms, 0.8% had onomatopoeic spelling, 8% contained stylized spellings, 20% of the chats lacked punctuations 6.4% of the chats were exceptionally punctuated and 9.6% of the chats had with it pictographs.

1.6.5 Line Graph Showing the Distribution of the Features

Figure 2 is a graphical display of data of different heights showing quantitatively the number of chats that indicated each of the features. The codes on the chat are derived from the ten features displayed. The height of the line graph indicates the differences in the data set between groups or classes. Hence, from the frequency distribution table, the line graph can be used to display the height in the usage of these features using the frequencies. Thus, Series 1 shows the measurement of the frequency, while Series 2 representsthe percentages of each of the features.



	CS	SF	AB	SL	AC	OS	SS	CWP	AP	PT
Series1	5	42	12	6	4	1	10	25	8	12
Series2	4%	33.60	9.60%	4.80%	3.20%	0.80%	8%	20%	6.40%	9.60%

1.8 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

There is a general perception that the type of language used in the social media is also used in spoken conversation ofmany Nigerians. Another assumption is that written language standards will further decline as a result of the influence of Internet language and subsequent generations may permanently adopt these new forms of communication.

From the findings of this study, it is obvious that most students understand that they should use a more formal tone and form with Professors than they might use with their friends. Students who chatted seemed to be quite aware of the styles that they chose during communication and they formed strong opinions about style and usage.The study revealed that 'chatspeak' is a different genre from formal academic writing. A participant or chatter admitted that “chats are different from actual writing because students do not have to worry about formal language or grammar and they can communicate quicker and more efficiently during chats”.

However, from the analysis, there is little evidence from the data to support the fact that WhatsApp chat has dramatically altered English. This decline of English standard is signalled by the number of abbreviations that are used in the chats to make communication difficult for out-group members. Basically, chatters create examples to show what the abbreviations they use mean through the use of pictographs. Also, the admonitions to use formal written language on social media will invariably fail because users have developed a number of conventions for abbreviating content to extend the length of message they can communicate quicker and efficiently. The use of the language in social networks is an instrument that benefits self expression and the

creation of original forms of disseminating subjectivity.

The use of Internet has changed the style of the formal written language by abbreviating words to a single syllable, by omitting accents, punctuations, by the fusion of words and phrases, by the use of graphic symbols instead of words to form sentences, and so on. The invention of a form of communication used among Internet surfers configures a special language.

One may say that one of the peculiarities of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is creativity in the language use. Creativity comes into play when different forms of expressing ideas and sentiments surge. Among the numerous ways of communication are the uses of emoticons or smileys to express emotions not always expressed by means of written words. Other characteristics are the common use of abbreviations during online conversations aimed at speeding up the writing of messages.

Acronyms, abbreviations and neologisms have grown up around technological mediated communication (TMC) to facilitate chatters' easy comprehension of messages chatted. Acronyms help speed up real-time, typed conservation. On mobile phones, they minimize the inconvenience of typing with tiny keys. They are now commonplace substitutes to whole sentences. Such demonstrates how social media speeds things up by lessening the need to write longer phrases and reduces space. Emoticons are used to convey what the user is feeling or to express the intended tune without actually having to write it.

People who are communicating via social networks are not necessarily

spelling things incorrectly; they are effectively speaking a new language entirely. The users are able to switch their minds and apply different sets of words to cater for their purpose and enhance communication within short intervals of time and within limited space.

CONCLUSION

Net discourse is slightlybeyond what could be described as illicit, linguistic vandalism or illiterate online expression where grammar is gone and spelling is superfluous. The language used online is that of real people of great diversity, whose output is largely unedited by proofreaders or publishers. Much of online communication is non-standard, playful, highly deviant in bending the usual rules of language, tolerant of typographical and spelling errors and full of new words. Participants use all types of shortened forms simply to combat the limiting conditions of the medium itself. The use of syntactically reduced forms such as acronyms, abbreviations and shortenings is, therefore, purely for practical reasons, that is, they reduce the time and effort necessary to communicate.

There can be no denying that social media has a significant impact on the ways that we communicate. Its ever-evolving nature leaves the human language in a continuous state of alteration, creativity and regeneration. The influence of these social media sites and platforms on our language, then, is a true phenomenon. It has managed to alter interlocutors' vocabulary as well as increase the number of communication normswhich Nigerians have every day, and the speed at which they have them.

Just as social media alters the usage of human language, so too does it introduce new usage and vocabulary. With the need for quick and succinct language and communication online, full verb phrases have become common acronyms that are now used in everyday settings and not just online. Phrases such as "laughing **out** loud" are quickly changed to "LoL" (APP. III).

With the introduction of verb-phrase acronyms in modern technology, daily communication is able to cut down on the number of words and characters used to accurately hold a conversation. This means that we are able to more efficiently communicate and with greater speed. As these conversations happen at an alarming rate, the volume with which we are sending out communication has also increased. As communication becomes quicker and makes a growing number of people more accessiblethan ever before, the responsibilities and expectations of communicating increase.

It is a matter of fact that social media is transforming the way that language is looked at and used. Its hold on language usage is evident in the amount of communication we have daily, the number of people with whom we communicate and the nature and style with which we choose to communicate. As technology and social media continue to advance, there will surely be more language altering shifts that would be expected from social media communications globally. To sum up, it can be added that no force can hinder the present social and technological progress and the Internet is a vital result of such developments and achievements.

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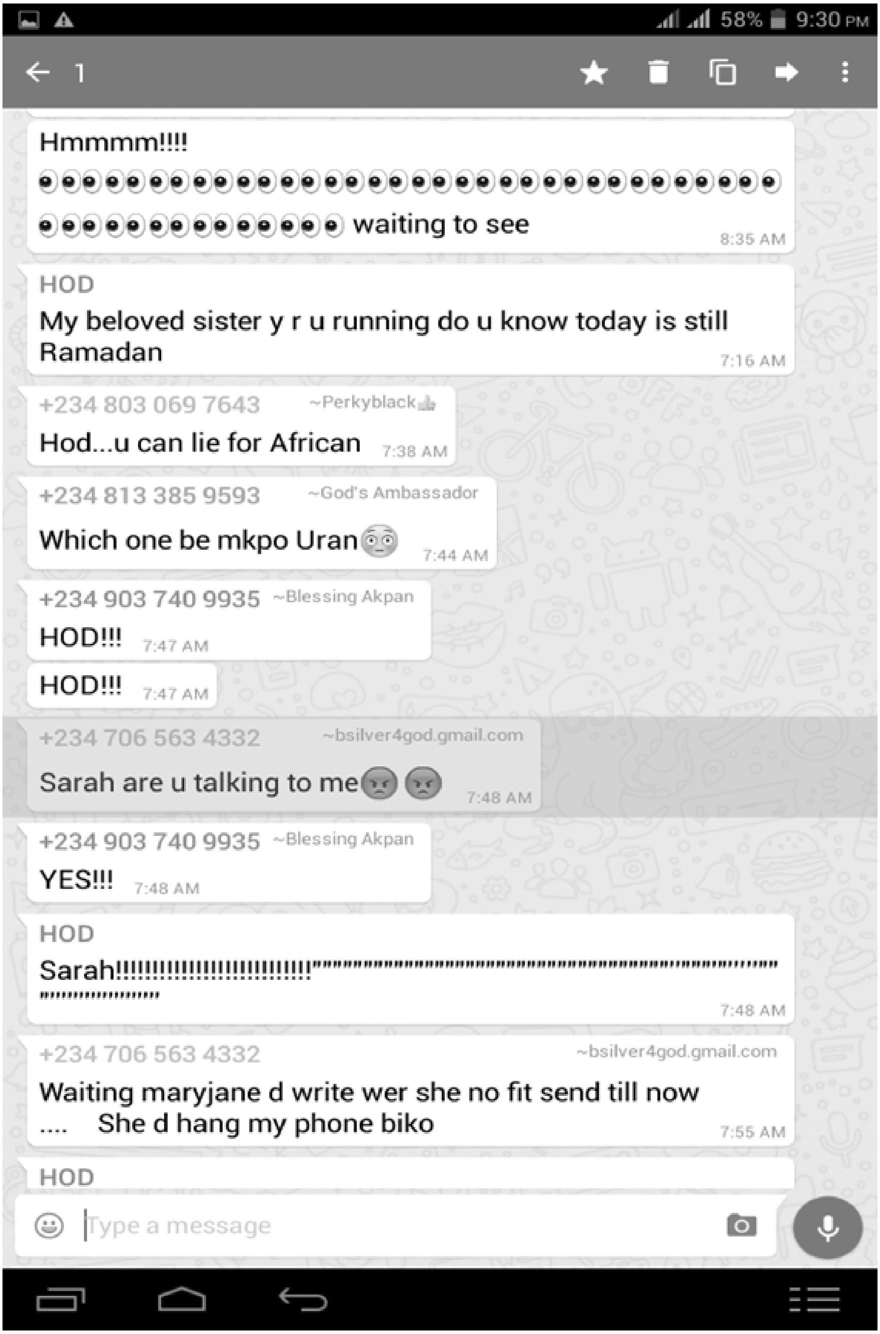
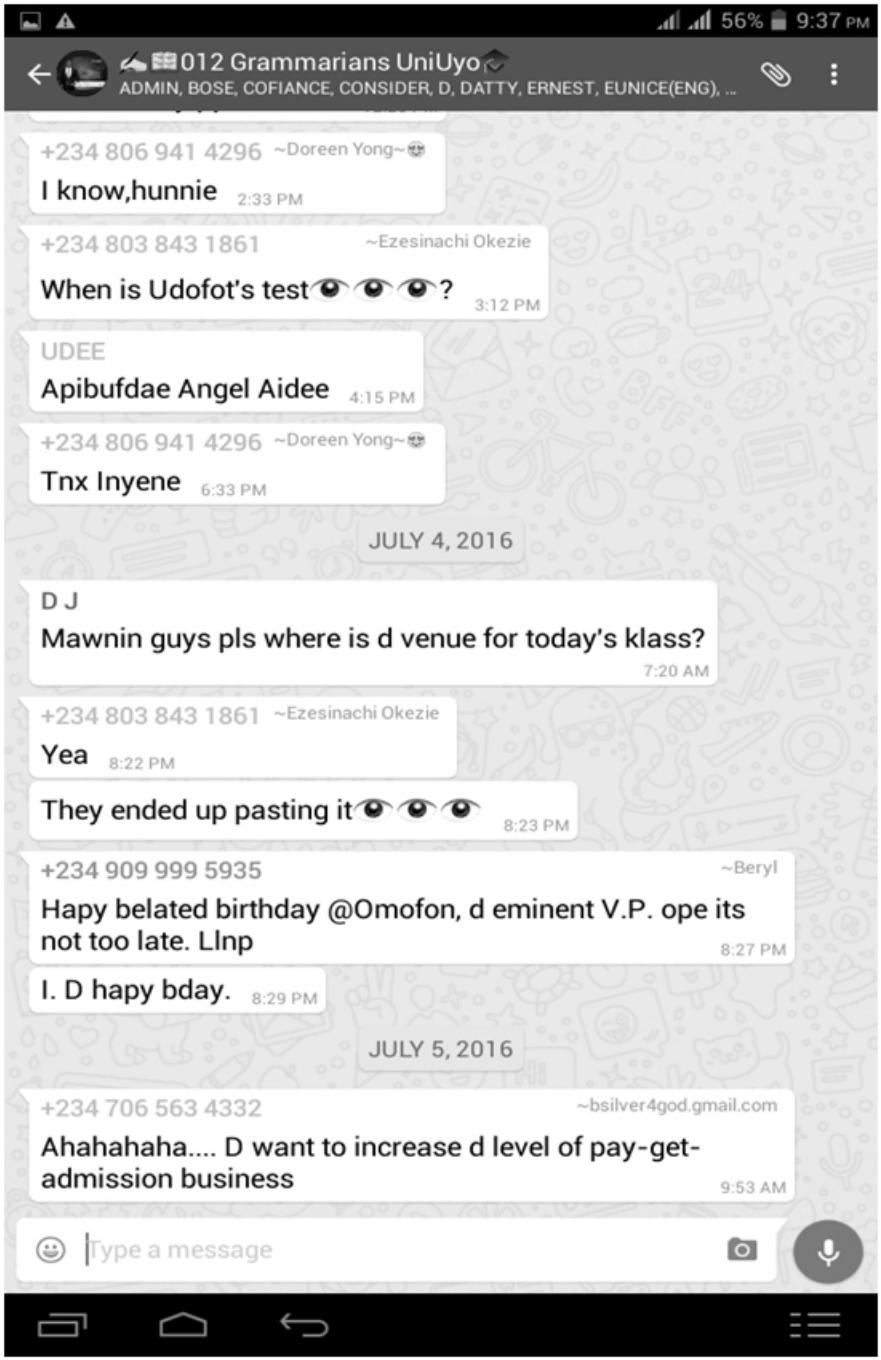
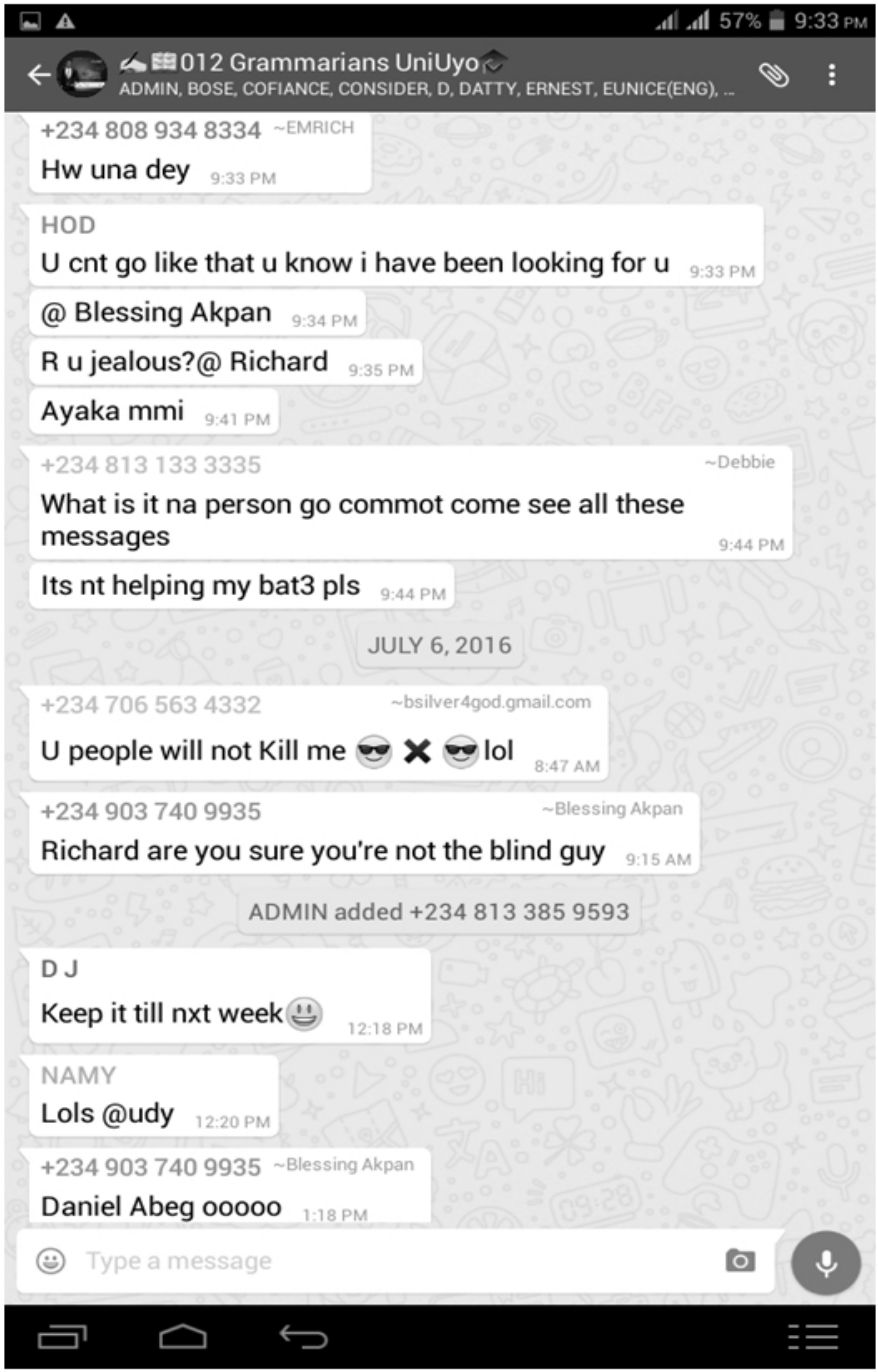
APPENDIX I


58% 9:30 PM
1
Hmmmm!!!!
waiting to see
8:35 AM
HOD
My beloved sister y r u running do u know today is still Ramadan
7:16 AM
+234 803 069 7643 ~Perkyblack
Hod...u can lie for African
7:38 AM
+234 813 385 9593 ~God's Ambassador
Which one be mkpo Uran
7:44 AM
+234 903 740 9935 ~Blessing Akpan
HOD!!!
7:47 AM
HOD!!!
7:47 AM
+234 706 563 4332 ~bsilver4god.gmail.com
Sarah are u talking to me
7:48 AM
+234 903 740 9935 ~Blessing Akpan
YES!!!
7:48 AM
HOD
Sarah!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!""
7:48 AM
+234 706 563 4332 ~bsilver4god.gmail.com
Waiting maryjane d write wer she no fit send till now .... She d hang my phone biko
7:55 AM
HOD
Type a message

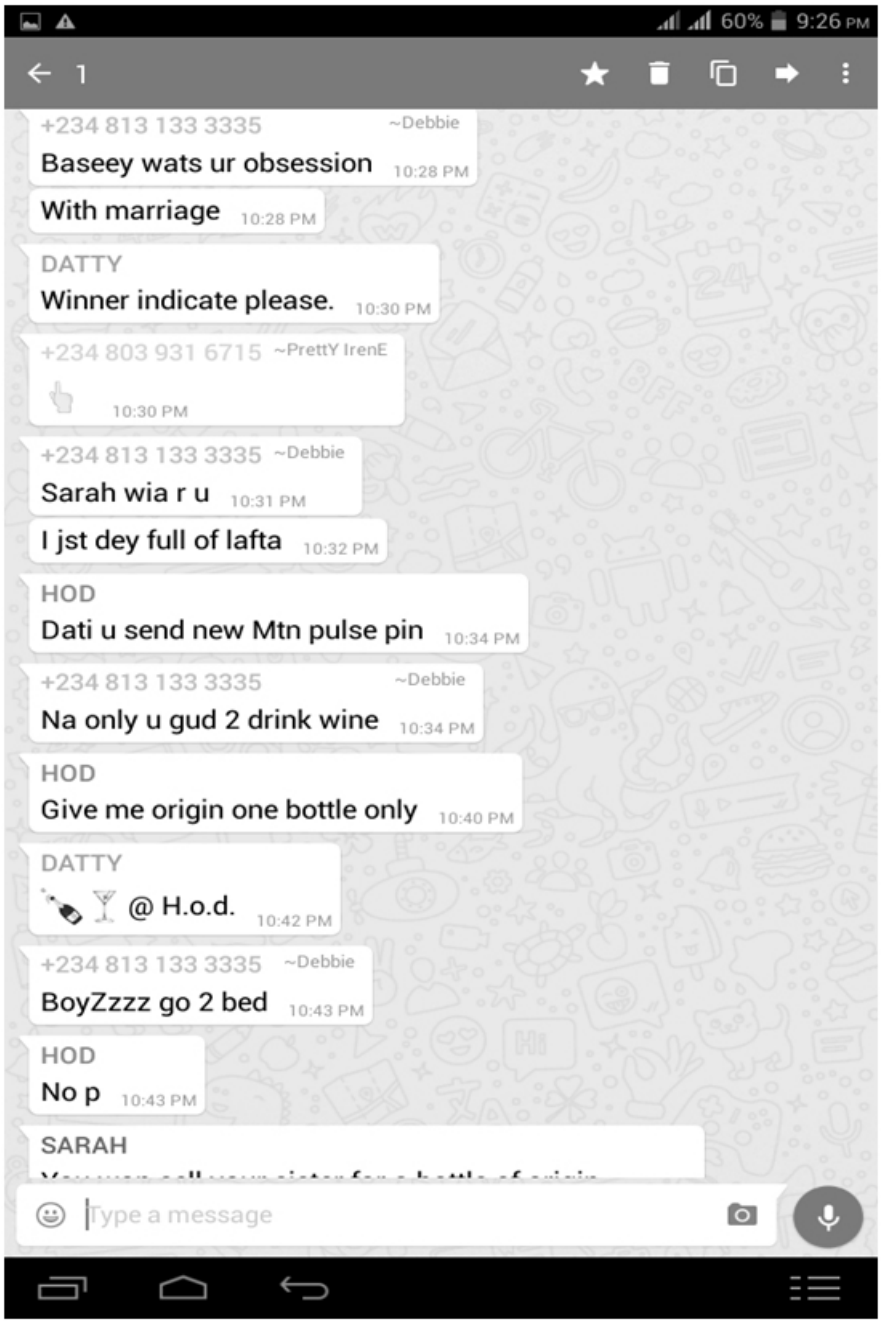
APPENDIX II


56% 9:37 PM
012 Grammarians UniUyo
ADMIN, BOSE, COFIANCE, CONSIDER, D, DATTY, ERNEST, EUNICE(ENG), ..
+234 806 941 4296 ~Doreen Yong~
I know,hunnie 2:33 PM
+234 803 843 1861 ~Ezesinachi Okezie
When is Udofot's test 👁 👁 👁 ?
3:12 PM
UDEE
Apibufdae Angel Aidee 4:15 PM
+234 806 941 4296 ~Doreen Yong~
Tnx Inyene 6:33 PM
JULY 4, 2016
D J
Mawnin guys pls where is d venue for today's klass?
7:20 AM
+234 803 843 1861 ~Ezesinachi Okezie
Yea 8:22 PM
They ended up pasting it 👁 👁 👁
8:23 PM
+234 909 999 5935 ~Beryl
Hapy belated birthday @Omofon, d eminent V.P. ope its not too late. Llnp
8:27 PM
I. D hapy bday. 8:29 PM
JULY 5, 2016
+234 706 563 4332 ~bsilver4god.gmail.com
Ahahahaha.... D want to increase d level of pay-get-admission business
9:53 AM
Type a message

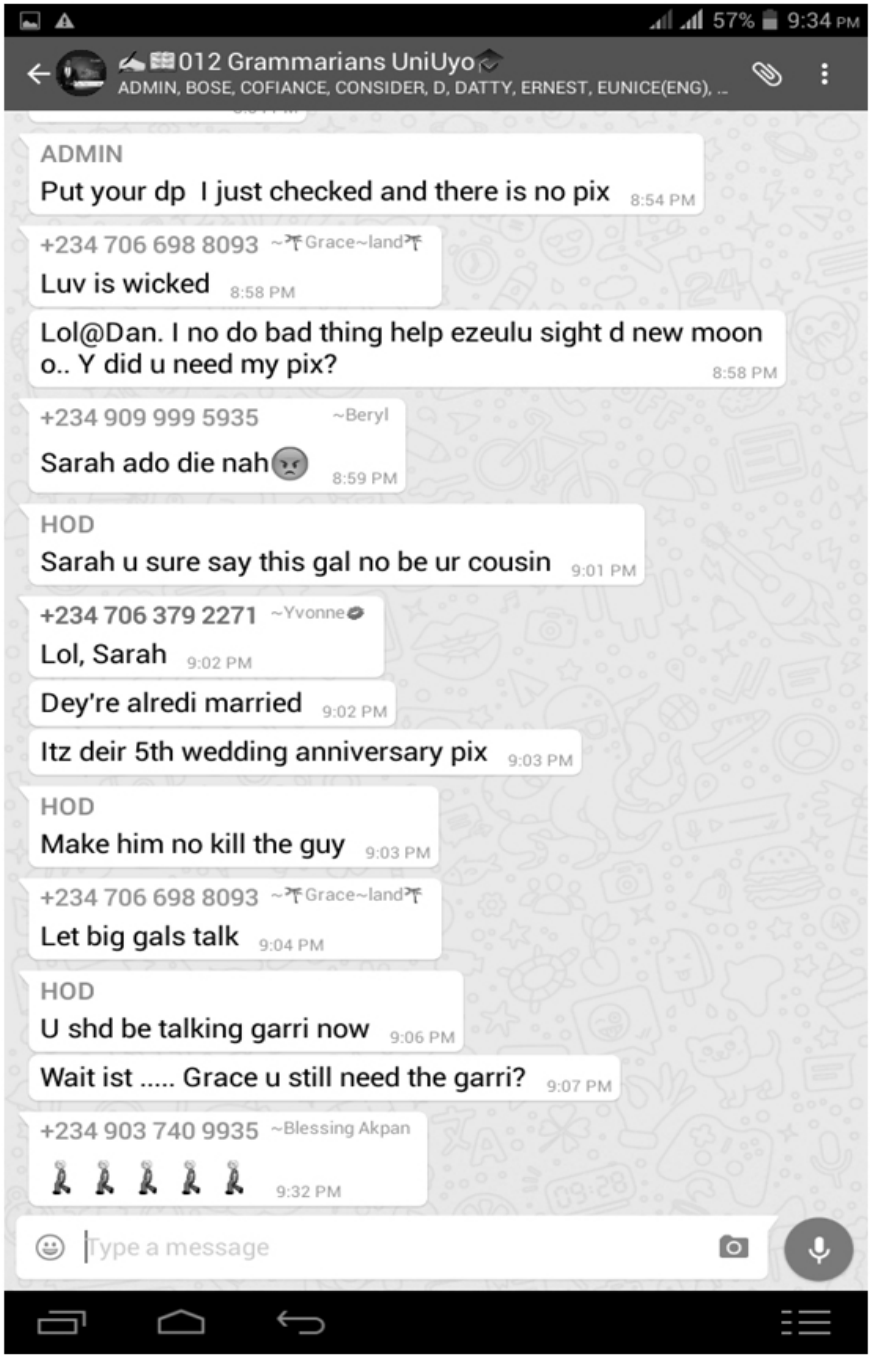
APPENDIX III



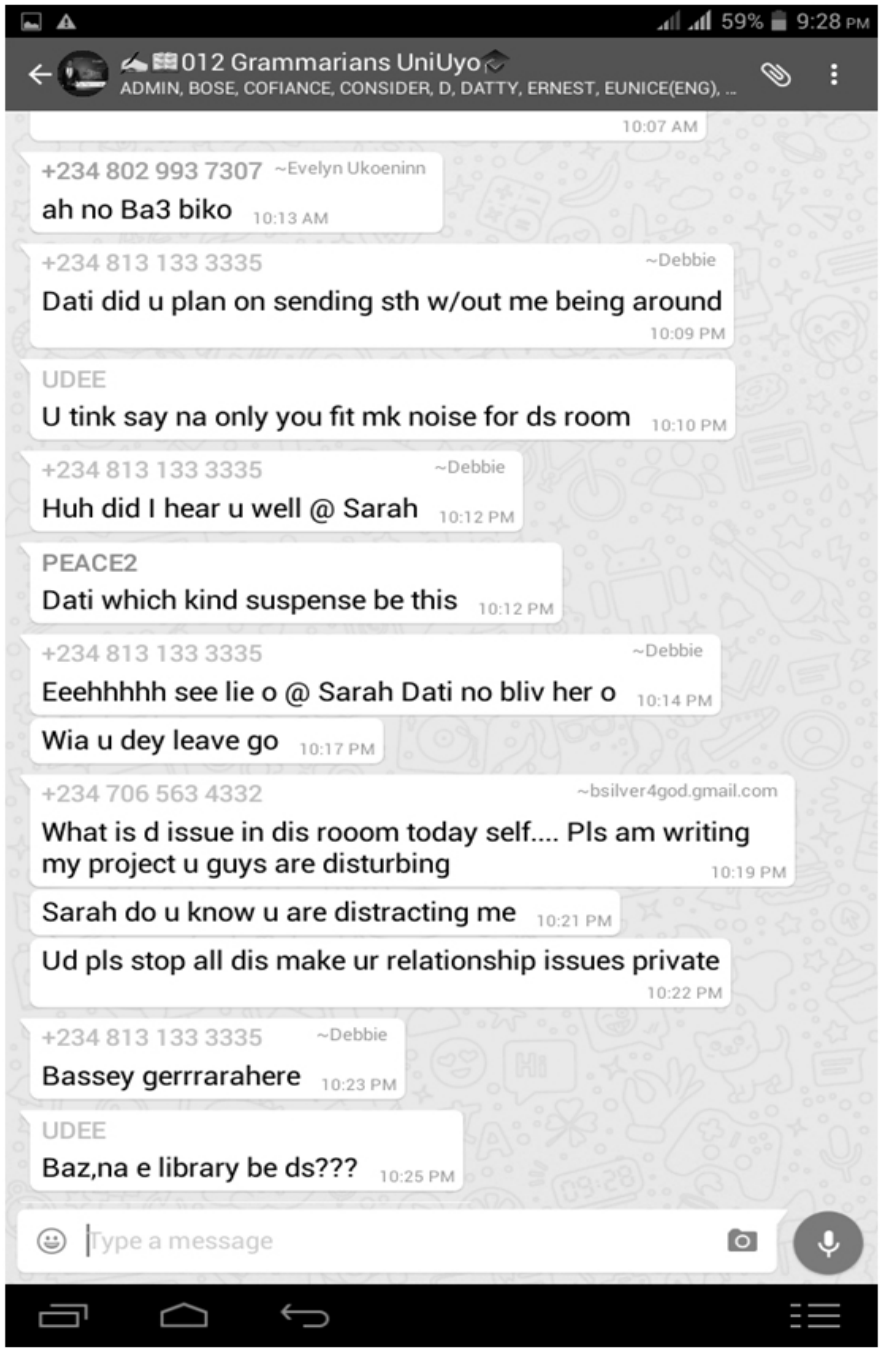
APPENDIX IV


60% 9:26 PM
1
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
Baseey wats ur obsession 10:28 PM
With marriage 10:28 PM
DATTY
Winner indicate please. 10:30 PM
+234 803 931 6715 ~PrettY IrenE
10:30 PM
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
Sarah wia r u 10:31 PM
I jst dey full of lafta 10:32 PM
HOD
Dati u send new Mtn pulse pin 10:34 PM
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
Na only u gud 2 drink wine 10:34 PM
HOD
Give me origin one bottle only 10:40 PM
DATTY
@ H.o.d. 10:42 PM
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
BoyZzzz go 2 bed 10:43 PM
HOD
No p 10:43 PM
SARAH
Type a message

APPENDIX V


57% 9:34 PM
012 Grammarians UniUyo
ADMIN, BOSE, COFIANCE, CONSIDER, D, DATTY, ERNEST, EUNICE(ENG), ..
ADMIN
Put your dp I just checked and there is no pix 8:54 PM
+234 706 698 8093 ~Grace~land
Luv is wicked 8:58 PM
Lol@Dan. I no do bad thing help ezeulu sight d new moon o.. Y did u need my pix? 8:58 PM
+234 909 999 5935 ~Beryl
Sarah ado die nah 8:59 PM
HOD
Sarah u sure say this gal no be ur cousin 9:01 PM
+234 706 379 2271 ~Yvonne
Lol, Sarah 9:02 PM
Dey're alredi married 9:02 PM
Itz deir 5th wedding anniversary pix 9:03 PM
HOD
Make him no kill the guy 9:03 PM
+234 706 698 8093 ~Grace~land
Let big gals talk 9:04 PM
HOD
U shd be talking garri now 9:06 PM
Wait ist ..... Grace u still need the garri? 9:07 PM
+234 903 740 9935 ~Blessing Akpan
9:32 PM
Type a message

APPENDIX VI


59% 9:28 PM
012 Grammarians UniUyo
ADMIN, BOSE, COFIANCE, CONSIDER, D, DATTY, ERNEST, EUNICE(ENG), ...
10:07 AM
+234 802 993 7307 ~Evelyn Ukoeninn
ah no Ba3 biko 10:13 AM
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
Dati did u plan on sending sth w/out me being around
10:09 PM
UDEE
U tink say na only you fit mk noise for ds room 10:10 PM
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
Huh did I hear u well @ Sarah 10:12 PM
PEACE2
Dati which kind suspense be this 10:12 PM
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
Eeehhhhh see lie o @ Sarah Dati no bliv her o 10:14 PM
Wia u dey leave go 10:17 PM
+234 706 563 4332 ~bsilver4god.gmail.com
What is d issue in dis rooom today self.... Pls am writing my project u guys are disturbing 10:19 PM
Sarah do u know u are distracting me 10:21 PM
Ud pls stop all dis make ur relationship issues private
10:22 PM
+234 813 133 3335 ~Debbie
Bassey gerrrarahere 10:23 PM
UDEE
Baz,na e library be ds??? 10:25 PM
Type a message

APPENDIX VII