

# Language Visibility and Audibility: Discussing the Dominant Status of Yoruba on Social Media

Bunmi Balogun<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> University of Cape Town, South Africa

Correspondence: Bunmi Balogun, University of Cape Town, South Africa.

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## Abstract

In recent times, there is evidence of the emergence of new linguistic dynamics in the social media communication engagements in the Nigerian social media culture which have consequently impacted the visibility of the Yoruba language. The use of Yoruba has become part of a lot of users' everyday social communication practices thereby promoting the language to be more visible in the arena of social media platforms. This study is interested in evaluating the nature of and the extent to which the language is used on social media, understanding its presence to the development of social media repertoire, and how it has become the dominant local medium through which many Nigerian social media users negotiate and express their identities. The motivation for this practice, and how it is employed as a discursive means of language promotion will also be investigated. The data contain Instagram comments that exhibit pure Yoruba and code mixing between Yoruba and English/Nigerian Pidgin English; and from the data, it is evident that Yoruba is gaining more popularity on social media networks amidst the dense multilingualism of Nigeria. The findings reveal that social media provide a discursive platform for the users to be able to reinforce dominant representation of the language. The paper concludes that Yoruba is emerging as a popular language of the Nigerian internet culture.

**Keywords:** language visibility, language audibility, social media, youth language practices, Yoruba language

## 1. Background of the Study

The introduction of the mobile phone and internet services in Nigeria has rapidly increased and broadened the horizons of studies on Computer Mediated Communication (CMC), and the development and widespread use of social media allow extensive examination of the relationship between language and social variables such as age, ethnicity, and gender (Anderson, 2015). There has been an ongoing discussion on language and media and this discussion continues to grow. Blyth (2008, p. 48) explains language on the internet as a "genuine new medium". Amongst other features of the internet is linguistic diversity which describes the multilingual nature of the internet today (Blommaert & Rampton, 2011). The study of multilingualism on the internet is relatively new area of research. Leppanen and Peuronen (2012) provided three reasons for this. The first reason is that in the 1990s, most websites and internet users were English speaking. Secondly, English was usually chosen as the vehicular language of internet by users who had no other shared language. Finally, in the early days, computers and the internet operated on the basis of 'American Standard Code for Information Interchange' which hindered the easy computing in other alphabets or character sets different from those of English. The internet has however, begun to experience change in linguistic diversification from the early 2000s. By now, just one third of internet users are English speaking, Chinese-speaking users made up 22.1%, while Spanish-speaking users were at 7.9% (ibid). Although Nigeria is a dense multilingual speech community of over 500 languages, and about 250 ethnic groups, of these languages, Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo are considered major languages, and each of them serves as first language to over 20 million speakers (Akanke et al., 2011). Specifically, Yoruba language serves as mother tongue to roughly 30 million people from Western Nigeria. There are about 26 dialects of the language. These dialects are distinct from one another based on the differences in the pronunciation, grammatical structure and vocabulary (Fajobi, 2012). In addition to these major languages is the Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE). The NPE is not a language of any specific group in Nigeria; rather it is a general Nigerian language. This is mainly so because of its neutrality based on its geographical, ethnicity and class spread. About 70 million people speak NPE as a second language, while three to five million people have it as their first language (Ihemere, 2006, as cited in Gbogi, 2016), and this places it as the language with the highest number of speakers in Nigeria. However,

of all the existing languages in Nigeria, English enjoys the highest pecking order. It is the official language, language of education, and language of government.

The Nigerian online community is a pulsating and vibrant speech community which fulfils important communicative role of its members whose linguistic repertoires include the Nigerian local languages, the English language and the Nigerian Pidgin English. The Nigerian youth engagements with social media and popular culture in general are essential mechanisms for creating identity, translanguaging, lexical inventions, making linguistic choices by which certain languages are made more visible and audible than others. Research has proved that media and electronic technology are strong devices by which contemporary urban culture can be passed and language maintained (see Colangelo, 2020; Crystal, 2000; Schroeder, 2016; Sefton-Green, 2006). The development and spread of the internet have altered language by activating a blow-up of new vocabularies, genres, styles, and different linguistic practices, and Nigerian youths continue to engage within the digital space to discover and participate in creative ways of representing themselves using language and other practices. These practices afford them grounds to not only exchange information, but also perform various identities which reflect who they are, how they want to be seen, and how they perceive the world. Youth affiliations and preferences as well as regular strategies they deploy to negotiate subjectivities are portrayed by connections between language and identity (Bucholtz & Hall, 2004). The relationship between language and identity on the internet has the power to affect and activate social meanings. Hinrich (2006) observes that using Jamaican Creole in online interactions not only tend to add communicative value but create a particular style, performance of 'the identity of a typical Jamaican in conversation' (p. 110).

In a dense multilingual environment as the Nigerian online community, the exploration for identity becomes the primary origin of social meaning where users structure their meaning on the premise of what they are rather than what they do. It is not a surprise that local languages are emerging in the community in spite of the powerful presence of English as the de facto language of Nigeria's online communication. Language plays an important role in identity construction. The process of belonging to a group has always been achieved to a great extent by gaining knowledge of the purposes, social distribution, and understanding of language (Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984). Identity has been described not to be based on a lasting awareness of self but on the options one makes in various situations over time (Henriquez et al., 1984). Through language, a user has the capability to consciously and unconsciously perform much more than identity by the textual choices they make; they have the permissive grounds to create and recreate who they are (Warschauer, 2002). As opposed to the earlier times when the language of the internet was strictly English (reasons explained above), there is now the development and spread of languages other than the Standard English. This is a consequence of many factors which include a demographic broadening of the cyberspace and a reflection of a wider media movement called localization (see Kachru, 1992). However, more important consideration assigned to the emergence of languages on the internet is the crucial function the languages perform in contention of meaning and identity.

## 2. Methodology

Up till now, there has never been a developed framework specifically for the analysis of online multilingualism. Researchers have cast their works within the theories of traditional sociolinguistics (e.g., Kim et al., 2014), pragmatics (e.g., Antoniou & Katsos, 2017), and discourse analysis (e.g., Blackledge, 2008); and popular analytical methods employed by these theories are conversational analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interactional analysis (Lee, 2016). This study is qualitative in nature. The researcher adopted the approach of online ethnography which required her to observe how Nigerian youths made linguistic choices of translanguaging in Yoruba with no contact with the participants. A virtual ethnography requires that the ethnographic concepts, outlooks, and methods of traditional ethnography be applied to online settings (Hart, 2017). As an online ethnographic work, the study relied on observation in order to be able to account for the participants' behaviour and culture. The study is very contextualized, thoroughly descriptive, and has interpretative framework. The researcher observed the manner in which the participants engaged in natural online activity, aiming to understand this activity soundly from their viewpoints. This provided a comprehensive description of the online activity and also provided an explanation for the importance of the activity. The data for this study are screen-based data which were the textual outputs of online users that they produced in their online engagements under the posts the researcher considered for this study. The comments were derived from a very popular youth-based Nigerian blog on Instagram; it is *Instablog9ja* with a 6.1 million followership. This page was chosen because it had large followership and its followers mostly consisted of Nigerian youths. The page therefore suits the typical idea of a culturally diverse domain on many grounds. The data obtained from the platform were public because the platform was not password protected, everyone on Instagram could view and follow it, and it had no security settings. Also, the data are not sensitive. They are everyday opinions, ideas

which have no possibilities to ruin participants should their data get revealed to new audiences. The contents of the data do not include “criminal activities such as driving offences or the use of illegal drugs; financial problems; mental health issues and feelings of suicide; extramarital sexual activity; controversial political opinions and activism” for which a researcher must seek informed consent from participants (Townsend & Wallace, 2016, p. 11). Going by this baseline for seeking informed consent for social media data, this work did not seek consent or work on the data with regard to protecting anonymity. The derived transcripts reveal the extent of the frequency of the presence of Yoruba in the comment sections. The result shows that besides Yoruba there is barely the appearance of any other Nigerian local language in the blog investigated which by extension represents the social realities of Yoruba and other Nigerian local languages on social media.

### 3. Does the Nigerian Music Factor Come to Play?

There is a symbiotic relationship between social media and music. First, most music artists are on social media platforms where they not only socialize but also use their pages to give out information about their music, and circulate them. Circulation through social media is easier and wider, giving ingress to many groups especially the youth. Second, most of the artists’ followers on social media are also their fans, and a high portion of them are youths. Hence, social media serve as a channel which helps to create a visualized community. With the understanding that the Nigerian youth who are ardent fans of the Nigerian music are those who make a high proportion of the Nigerian online community, it may not be far-fetched to argue that the linguistic choices and practices in the music arena are transferred to the internet culture. Therefore, variations in forms and uses of Yoruba on social media may be reflections of the diversity of the language used by artists, song writers, whose linguistic practices push Yoruba dominance in the linguistic space of the Nigerian entertainment subculture.


Yoruba language has always had a special place in the musical direction of Nigeria from the precolonial era to the post-independence present-day Nigeria (Adedeji, 2010). It is the indigenous language of Lagos which has always enjoyed being in powerful tactical spot; Lagos is the commercial and entertainment capital of Nigeria, and this has made it to continuously attract migrants from all over Nigeria and internationally including musicians. Different genres of Nigerian music which now have global recognition originated in Lagos, a Yoruba city in the western region of Nigeria which has been an important influence in contributing and setting the footing for the growth and increase of the spread of Nigeria’s popular music. For example, *juju*, a genre of pop music which uses Yoruba aesthetics, text, originated in Lagos in the 1920 (Waterman, 1990). This is same as with *afrobeat*, another popular genre whose origin is credited to Fela Anikulapo-Kuti, a Yoruba man. It has a fusion of English, Nigerian Pidgin English, and Yoruba, i.e., its lyrics are in English, Nigerian Pidgin English laden with Yoruba subtleties (Cester, 1998). Similarly, *fuji*, a popular genre of music is also with Yoruba origin. In spite of their origin, these styles of music are performed to and loved by audiences of heterogeneous ethnic backgrounds and linguistic leanings beyond the confines of Yorubaland where the language and other aspects of the culture are presented. Hip hop is another genre which rocks the Nigerian pop music culture. Although hip hop has its origin dated back to the African-American pop culture, it continues to grow in Nigeria to the point where it has now been renamed *afro hip hop* to express the imaginations of the Nigerian youth. This variant is characterized by a blend of English and one or more indigenous languages. Adedeji (2010) suggests that the influence of Yoruba on *juju* and the growth of Nigeria’s own hip hop have motivated artists who have different tribal affinities from Yoruba to now embrace the language in order to be accessible to the mainstream of artistic recognition. This claim may be supported with the fact that not only are Yoruba words used by artists of Yoruba descent in their music, but even popular artists of other tribal affinities have heavy presence of Yoruba in their lyrics. This defies natural linguistic expectations as it would be assumed that an artist be more inclined to their tribal extractions than other ethnicities especially in an extremely complex multilingual speech community like Nigeria where the linguistic structure is sensitive and highly political in nature (Adeoye, 2013).

The influence of Yoruba on these genres of Nigerian music is not only projected in the language, but also in the instrumentation used in their delivery. Omobiyi (1981) notes that such instruments as talking drums whose variants are *dùndún*, *gan-gan*, *bàtá*, *omele*, *àkùbà* and *shékèrè*, have ever been present and have had a long history in the Yoruba music culture. These musical items are always present in both *jùjú* and *fuji*. They are also combined with foreign modules like guitar, keyboard, microphone, and so forth. *Gbèdu* is also a kind of Yoruba drum which was present amongst the musical instruments of Fela, the one whom *afrobeat* origin is credited to. Overall, the entertainment value of Yoruba can be tied to its huge presence in the Nigerian music which has a high acceptance and appreciation in Nigeria and beyond. This is evident in the amount of its presence for instance in the airwaves, streets, and social events both locally and internationally. All the genres above constitute a very influential component in the mainstream Nigerian pop music and in the Nigerian entertainment scene at large.

The long history of the impact of Yoruba on the Nigerian pop music is also reflected in the ethnic extractions of most of the contemporary popular artists in Nigeria. This means that most of the biggest and successful Nigerian pop artists are from the Yoruba speech community. For instance, Davido, Wizkid, Tiwa Savage, Olamide, Yemi Alade, Simi, Kizz Daniel, Teni, Tems, Fireboy, Asake, etc. are Yoruba, and they have time and again reflected their ethnic affiliations in their artistry as vocabulary of Yoruba are not lacking in their songs. They weave-in their culture into their music and have been able to portray Yoruba as a representation of very positive social reputation and social standing. Code mixing Yoruba in a song is an attempt to be local, and taking on an additional voice which provides them with a different vocabulary that they use to express themselves and adding coloring to their lyrics which magnetize their fans' attention.

#### 4. Data Analysis

This study is a qualitative analysis which used Instagram comments under posts made by *Instablog9ja*, a Nigerian blog with a 6.1 million followership. The items below present selected screenshots of transcripts of Yoruba code switched/mixed comments, and they have been underlined in colors for the purposes of spotlighting them. The presence of Yoruba in the comments is in varying degrees. While some comments were made in undiluted Yoruba sentences, others have only lexical forms of Yoruba within English or Nigerian Pidgin English comments; yet some others have hybridized words which are coinages that are not from the existing words in Nigerian Pidgin English and not part of the vocabulary stock of Nigerian English or even Standard English, but they are English words and Yoruba words that were creatively and wittily blended with the phonetic and lexical structures of both languages which then were appropriated locally applicable meanings.

 **cyndy\_gram** This is not supposed to be funny but 😂😂😂😂😂😂😂


8h 195 likes Reply

View 10 replies

 **olaide** were bale lori ikan onikan 😂😂😂😂😂😂😂

8h 242 likes Reply

View 25 replies

 **king\_fraga** Werev sun lo after to fi tipa ba yan lopo tan. Baba nla werev. 😂😂😂


8h 139 likes Reply

View 5 replies

 **sogalleri** ara tu werev. 😂😂😂😂😂😂😂

8h 225 likes Reply

View 40 replies

 **wendy\_adamma** These people are heartless and don't deserve to live


8h 223 likes Reply

View 14 replies

 **tolah\_ni** This woman shouldn't have granted that interview 😂😂😂😂😂


3d 718 likes Reply

View 34 replies

 **ladyque\_1** The Internet never forgets


3d 755 likes Reply

View 10 replies

 **labisi** Elenu wiwo bii apa aja 😂😂😂😂😂


3d 214 likes Reply

View 42 replies


 **ceemptybecca** When you eat your own words!!!

3d 392 likes Reply


View 11 replies

 **dolapo\_xoo** Mioni soro 😂😂😂😂😂


3d 364 likes Reply

- 


**harbikeporsh** 🤔🤔🤔🤔 ikan o gbe'kan 🤔  
1d 324 likes Reply

— View 50 replies
- 


**symply\_tinuade** This filter don suffer for portable's hand 🤔  
1d 858 likes Reply


— View 48 replies
- 

**kiddiesroyale** Who typed this English  
1d 523 likes Reply


— View 29 replies
- 


**\_boy\_humble\_** Portable no sabi speak English. Period!!! Y'all stop expecting him to do what he can't do 🤔  
1d 461 likes Reply

— View 19 replies
- 


**tinotippsy** Portable na real idamu adugbo 🤔  
1d 428 likes Reply
- 

**lullas\_decor\_surprises** Gbogbo yin ti va werey pls what age are they celebrating  
24h 76 likes Reply


— View 3 replies
- 

**santanwess** Ori gbogboyin ati asiwaju ti daru danu  
24h 61 likes Reply
- 


**dame\_\_lilith** I weep for y'all!  
24h 46 likes Reply


— View 3 replies
- 

**02d4real** Aye yin o ni da  
24h 26 likes Reply


— View 4 replies
- 


**sterlynwrighter** Who dey check am?  
24h 33 likes Reply

— View 4 replies
- 


**keazmadie** These are the issues 🤔🤔  
24h 33 likes Reply
- 

**be in peace** . Cmon ! And she has a name by the way !  
1d 727 likes Reply


— View 14 replies
- 


**aarin** Y'all let this woman breathe, wahala yin po sha  
1d 248 likes Reply
- 


**prettybrowncy10** Problem ti won niyen  
1d 220 likes Reply

— View 4 replies
- 


**bigwiz\_obo** Na that actor know wetin he see RUN 🤔  
1d 215 likes Reply


— View 15 replies
- 

**danalbankudi** These are the issues... God epp us all 🙏  
1d 103 likes Reply
- 


**mary\_hurpsey** Omo iya meji ii rewele.  
1d 60 likes Reply
- 

**adventourswithaisha** Elated bawo? 🤔  
14h 196 likes Reply


— View 2 replies
- 

**abidemi\_ceo** E be like say u dey ment 🤔🤔🤔  
14h 162 likes Reply
- 


**eyebreakdrules** Idamu Nigeria Ti De oh !!!!!  
14h 91 likes Reply

— View 7 replies
- 


**dear\_enayi** Ajala ti de  
14h 67 likes Reply

— View 6 replies
- 

**seun\_dreams** London boy welcome  
14h 98 likes Reply


— View 2 replies
- 

**adestitoali** Kabo london boy. Pele dear  
14h 73 likes Reply




**ambyy4real** I just hope it's a joke  
2d 83 likes Reply

View 15 replies




**wendypeterschere** Not funny, I will take care of my parents, you will never understand the sacrifices until you become a parent yourself  
2d 110 likes Reply

View 3 replies




**unified\_wale** Oloun maie ka bimo ti o ni laanu wa loju oo... this is bizarre  
2d 58 likes Reply

View 5 replies




**nellynells\_\_** Dark HUMOUR 😂  
2d 48 likes Reply

View 4 replies




**callmedamy** Omo buruku 😂😂  
2d 40 likes Reply




**shy\_likita** Seun u for stick to fighting for Africa and being a good activist. This talk is not ur own  
14h 82 likes Reply

View 9 replies




**wendy\_adamma** Agbero will always agberate 😂😂 Abeggiiiii  
14h 128 likes Reply




**\_arkeelah** Naira or dollars????  
13h 313 likes Reply

View 28 replies




**adexbee** Awon motigbetoinal speakers isonu  
13h 289 likes Reply

View 24 replies




challenge together, your kids don't need a divided home it will tell on them later. I pray God strengthen u both ❤️ Let love lead ❤️❤️❤️  
1d 385 likes Reply

View 25 replies




**vivyan.gabriel** Please don't give up on her , your marriage is a beacon of international unity and true love ❤️ 🙏  
23h 43 likes Reply

View 6 replies




**sisibadan\_** My in law , please I beg you .... E fowo wonu, we the Online in-laws are saying Sorry o your wife's behalf  
1d 230 likes Reply

View 39 replies




**fingerchops** Heeeeeeys... Kí ló fà gboqbo eléyií.. Woss wobi.. Awa a o qboyinbo oooo. You want to dey whine us ni. DOKI, Oya shey normal. Wa sherey àlàyé mi. Omo e noni, oya dariji. Kora, iwọ na ma she bẹ mọ. Chop knuckle 🍌  
1d 230 likes Reply




**bashoofficial** Ori toolz ti lazdent 😂😂  
8h 105 likes Reply

View 8 replies




**kalabaripot** Oga abeg! Abeg! No spoil my market. Women are meant to enjoy, while we cook for them & make their lives less stressful.  
8h 143 likes Reply

View 12 replies



**callme\_akil** Yeyebrity 😂😂  
3d 382 likes Reply



**pholarh\_touches** That's why it's good to have work in someone's shoe before u judge or advice 😂  
3d 343 likes Reply

## 5. Discussion

Code switching and code mixing are the inevitable consequence of multilingualism. It is moving between distinct varieties. Anyone who speaks more than one language chooses between them according to circumstances. When code switching is constrained by where speakers happen to be, it can be called domain-based or situational code switching (Holmes, 2001). The decision for a speaker to learn or have more than a language and use them separately in different contexts suggests that each language has a social function which no other language could



fulfill, and that each language symbolizes that speaker. As a result of the symbolic nature of languages, choice of languages is usually used to define a situation, rather than the situation defining the choice of languages. One of the ways the Nigerian youth establish their social identities, a way of positioning themselves within the linguistic structure of the Nigerian society is belonging to socially recognized groups. The majority of members of the Nigerian online community is youth population and may have been affected by the linguistic practices and attitudes of the Nigerian pop music, and consequently have these practices and attitudes transferred on to the internet. In a complex multilingual setting like the Nigerian online community where members belong to diverse linguistic backgrounds, it is a natural expectation that speakers especially those whose addressees belong to diverse ethnic extractions stick to a unifying linguistic code that will facilitate mutual communication, understanding, and interaction, which in this case should either be English or Nigerian Pidgin English (NPE), the shared language which ensures the widest possible comprehensibility of a large spectrum of users. However, in recent times, the Yoruba language has risen and marked itself a language of preference for communication by a lot of Nigerian youths on social media. Speakers are pushing and redefining the visibility and social role of the language. This has resulted in a dynamic shift in the use of the language in the social media arena, and has altered existing linguistic patterns. Before now, making comments had adhered strictly to the norms of English and NPE. However, code mixing/switching of Yoruba has become increasingly normal by which users now get into national and globalized discourses while still being rooted in their indigenous culture and asserting the dominance of the language on social media. The social media site is very dynamic and proves to be a platform where users can create, perform, and maintain social relationships and negotiate their socio-ethnic identities. On the site, there is an offer of high multilingual domains which users' everyday lives may not afford them as they are likely to have contact with more speakers of diverse languages than they may have face-to-face interactions with. Linguistic dimensions of their engagements on social media under comment sections show how they use Yoruba to create role in online social interactions with community members. They use the language to reinforce their ethnic membership which situates them in the social media world, the trait they show in order for others to ascribe that trait to them.

Therefore, Yoruba language so far has enjoyed a high social media profile and an increasing number of language users aside its L1 speakers are coming in contact with it socially more than any other Nigerian local language. The data revealed that lexicon of Nigerian online language is increasingly being enriched with words, phrases, or expressions drawn from Yoruba. This acts as influence that gives the language its unique social roles in the Nigerian social media arena, and that leaves the comment sections with the unique flavoring and verbal aesthetics of the words, phrases, sentences, by shifting in-between English, Nigerian Pidgin English, and Yoruba. This practice impacts the social media scene in a number of ways by being a discursive mechanism by which the youths express the dominance of the language and by changing the linguistic repertoire style and appeal of the language. In moving away from the linguistic norms, users do not only use pure Yoruba in comment sections but they also innovatively deploy different mechanisms to socialize in the language on the platform. In the case of code switching and mixing, sometimes they do not abandon the elements of English or Pidgin in the process of highlighting Yoruba, rather they use hybridized forms. For example, in the transcripts, there is the use of *yeyebriety*, *ageberate*, *motigbetional*, *lazdent*. Here, *yeye* is a Yoruba word for nonsense, *agbero* is a word for bus conductor which is also used to describe thuggery, *motigbe* means "I am doomed", and *lazdent* is a blend of the Yoruba syllable *la* which means *to have* and the last syllable of English accident *dent*. For the first three examples, we have the English affixes *ity*, *ate*, *tion(al)*. *Yeyebriety* is used to describe a celebrity reported to have done something below the expectation of their fans. So literally it means "nonsense celebrity". *Ageberate* is used to describe an act of thuggery, while *motigbetional* (from English motivational) is used to diss people who are not deemed to motivate people but want to put themselves in that position. None of these words belongs to the vocabulary of English, Pidgin, or Yoruba. However, they have been created out of the attempt linked to the factor of encouraging Yoruba visibility. This and the general heavy presence of Yoruba may have contributed to changes in online language attitude, and may also have redefined established language boundaries, creating ethnic awareness, language affiliations, and emerging identities which are performed through deliberate, purposeful, and premeditated writing because when writers code mix, they do so intentionally because they have enough time to appropriately translate the words of one language to another (Anderson, 2015). The practice is socially empowering as users deploy it as a tool to present the way they want to be seen or understood as per their identities, ethnicities, interests, and employ it to create distinct social difference of Yoruba from other languages. Based on the popularity and universality of the internet technology, how much of a language appears on the internet influences its visibility and accessibility which in turn contributes to its vitality and importance.

## 6. Conclusion

Yoruba mixing in comment sections in the Nigerian online community is prevalent and diverse in its manifestations and uses. The amount of the presence of the language in comment sections differs from a single word to sentences. Nigeria is a very linguistically diverse speech community. However, Yoruba, of the Nigerian languages has the most presence on social media as evident in the transcripts presented in the data of the study. Nigerian youths on social media have continued to make social and linguistic shifts. The main function of the Yoruba switching/mixing practice is expressing the dominant status of the language which already exists in the Nigerian music sphere and making attempts to transfer and establish this dominant status to the Nigerian social media community. This they perform using the language to express values, tastes, and beliefs and seeking to create voices of their own within the complex multilingual space, thereby creating not only stylistic and cultural effects, but also social effects to negotiate identity, social visibility and accessibility over the other languages.

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