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Lexical trends in Facebook and Twitter texts of selected Nigerian Pentecostal churches: A stylistic inquiry

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Abstract: The influx of religious activities and religious discourse on the Internet has made it pertinent to examine the fundamental roles of language in the expression, presentation, understanding, and advancement of any set of religious beliefs and practices. One main aspect of online religious activities that continues to arrest the attention of scholars is the uniqueness of language used by religious practitioners. For instance, new linguistic strategies and devices have emerged as a result of bending language to suit trends on a new medium. The emergence of the Information Communication Technology (ICT) in the twenty-first century has also resulted in the manifestation of computer-mediated communication, with its attendant pervasive new forms of language and practices. Nigerian Pentecostal churches have used the Internet, especially the social media such as Facebook and Twitter, in propagating their doctrines. This study identifies emerging lexical trends in the way six Nigerian Pentecostal churches use language in extending their practices on the new media and submits that such innovations are leading up to the birth of a new cyber-variety of Nigerian English.

Keywords: style, lexical strategies, Facebook, Twitter, Nigerian pentecostalism

1 Introduction

It is worth noting that religious activities on the Internet are a continuation of offline religious practice even though they are done differently. According to Dawson and Cowan (2004), the Internet is transforming the face of religion worldwide, making it possible for religious activities to be mediated electronically, in ways that are new and innovative. With the evolution of communication

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