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JOURNAL OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE & LITERATURE

ISSN 0189-6736

OJELL VOL. 5 (1) 2020



**A Publication of
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES,
KOGI STATE UNIVERSITY ANYIGBA**

ONA

Journal of English Language and Literature

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LITERARY STUDIES, KOGI STATE UNIVERSITY, ANYIGBA

ONAJOURNAL OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE
Department of English and Literary Studies,
Kogi State University, Anyigba

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All orders and remittances should be directed to The Chairman Editorial Board,
onaJournalksu@gmail.com
Mobile: 07061627494/08034854058

Printed by
Haytee Press and Publishing Company,
No 2 Mejindadi Street, Oja-Iya area,
Off Taiwo Road, Ilorin,
Kwara State

EDITORIAL

It is with a deep sense of commitment to erudition that I present to you Volume 5 (1) of 'ONA' Journal of English Language and Literature for the year 2020. The Department of English & Literary Studies, Kogi State University, Anyigba has been and will continue to bear the cost of publishing the journal for the dissemination of the literary inquisition of not only its staff, but from scholars around the world.

My sincere appreciation goes to the members of the editorial board for their cooperation and support. I thank, most especially, Mr Oyibo Nelson Enefola for his great commitment to this project.

Lastly, we wish to welcome your scholarly articles and review papers in the forthcoming 5, (2) and other editions

If, in the course of reading, any errors are detected, it is highly regretted.
Happy Reading!

Obaje, A. Anthony Ph.D
Editor

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Language and Health Sensitization: A Mood Analysis in Selected NCDC Text Messages

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Abstract

The paper is concerned with a mood analysis of selected Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) text messages on COVID-19 health precautions. Using Halliday's (1987) mood system within Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL), fifteen out of twenty-five text messages were purposively selected and grouped into forty-two clauses to know the types of mood choice used by NCDC in sensitizing Nigerians, and the most frequently used mood in the text messages and what necessitates its predominance. The findings revealed imperative, declarative, interrogative and minor sentence as types of mood choice in the text messages. Imperative mood is the most frequently used mood which calls on all Nigerians to take action on the precautions given in the text messages at the right time. NCDC choice of imperative mood is meant to command, order, warn or drag the recipients to do its wish concerning COVID-19 health precautions. Declarative mood is used by NCDC to provide information on the novel disease; interrogative mood occurs once to give room for predominance of imperative mood, and one instance of minor sentence acts as a reminder to Nigerians to remember the rules guiding social gathering during Sallah celebration. Since NCDC feels a sense of sensitizing over its subject by its use of language; its text messages which are meant for sensitizing a purpose, make use of well selected words and phrases that is, conforming to a particular style. The analysis done in this study will enhance better understanding of sensitizing text messages from the mood choice or interpersonal metafunction perspective. It will also help in interpersonal communication in choosing appropriate language and mood choice in sensitizing the receivers based on the intended message the sender wants to disseminate.

Keywords: Mood choice; sensitizing; COVID-19; text messages; NCDC.

Introduction

People engage in communication when there is need to pass across information. The moment a user of a language has information, s/he thinks of the channel of communication to use and the target audience. Language is used as a

means of passing information between two or more people, which could be in form of written or spoken, linguistic and nonlinguistic elements in which a sender who first send the message to a receiver could again either be a receiver or vice versa (Festus M. Onipede, 2018). Human beings engage in communication when they have ideas to share to one another. When corona virus was discovered in Nigeria, Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) is Saddled with the responsibility of sensitizing Nigerians via text messages. Here, the context of the text messages is considered for interpersonal communication. Interpersonal metafunction, according to Michael Halliday (1985), involves interaction between two or more people which are realised through contextual configuration of tenor, mood and modality.

The present study delves into mood analysis of selected Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) text messages which sensitise Nigerians on COVID-19 health precautions as given by health authorities. In our view, the text messages seem to be the best means of passing across information to Nigerians. The text messages which are sent via mobile phones make use of well-selected choices. The choice of Short Messages Service (SMS) is simply selected with grammatical simplicity and lexically dense (Eggins, 2004, 197-198).

This study hopes to contribute to the recent discourse on COVID-19 by examining the selected mood in the text messages, the choice of most frequently used mood, and necessitates the dominance of the frequently used mood. Only a very few attempts seem to have been made on the concern of the present study – mood analysis of NCDC text messages, hence the need for this study.

Previous Studies

Few researches are centred on health discourse (Adejimola et al 2010; Anyanwu, 2020, and Onipede (in press). Again, Adejimola et al (2010) examine language and health communication strategies towards effective public health communication programmes in Nigeria. Their study is concerned with some population lives in the rural areas.

Anyanwu (2020) examines two speeches of President Muhammad Buhari during the corona virus pandemic to examine how he has employed language, the linguistic elements used and the stylistic and pragmatic imports. According to her, Buhari achieved the pragmatic of his speeches through lexical devices such as transitional markers, repetition, alliteration, assonance and pronoun to project the theme or subject matter of the discourse. The finding revealed that General Mohammed Buhari is combating the Covid-19 pandemic in Nigeria

In the same vein, Onipede (in press) examines the pragma-semiotic reactions of Nigerians toward COVID-19. He reveals that the posts which are classified under four semantic fields: business innovation and profit-oriented, law abiding, poverty striking and satirical posts, have various visual-pragmatic

strategies towards Corona Virus pandemic health precautions, and it is mainly meant for mockery and possibility of returning to normal life activities before COVID-19 lockdown.

From the foregoing review on COVID-19 pandemic and other discourses, none of them has investigated the mood analysis of NCDC SMS text messages on COVID-19 pandemic health instructions and tips. The questions to be addressed in this paper are to examine the types of selected moods in NCDC text messages, the most frequently used mood choice in the text messages, and what necessitates the dominance of the most frequently used mood.

Theoretical Framework

Interpersonal metafunction enables language user to participate in communicative acts with other people, to take on role and to express and understand feelings, attitude and judgement. Interpersonal metafunction is concerned with the analysis of grammar of a clause as exchange and it is realised by the system of mood and modality. The interpersonal metafunction involves at least two people (communicators). Hence, it is innately-unavoidably a two-way systematic activity (Thompson, 2014). Giving and demanding are acts of communicative exchange, which involve some form of commodity, the choice of the commodity is between exchange information, that is, takes on the form of proposition, or exchanging goods-and- services, that is, takes on the form of proposal. For illustrations, let us consider the examples below.

- i. Who brought COVID-19 to Nigeria? (information exchange-proposition).
- ii. When did Nigeria Government declare lockdown in Lagos, Ogun and FCT? (information exchange proposal).
- iii. Give me my palliative for the lockdown (Goods-and-services exchange, proposal).
- iv. John, take your part and give me mine, please (Goods-and-services exchange, proposal).

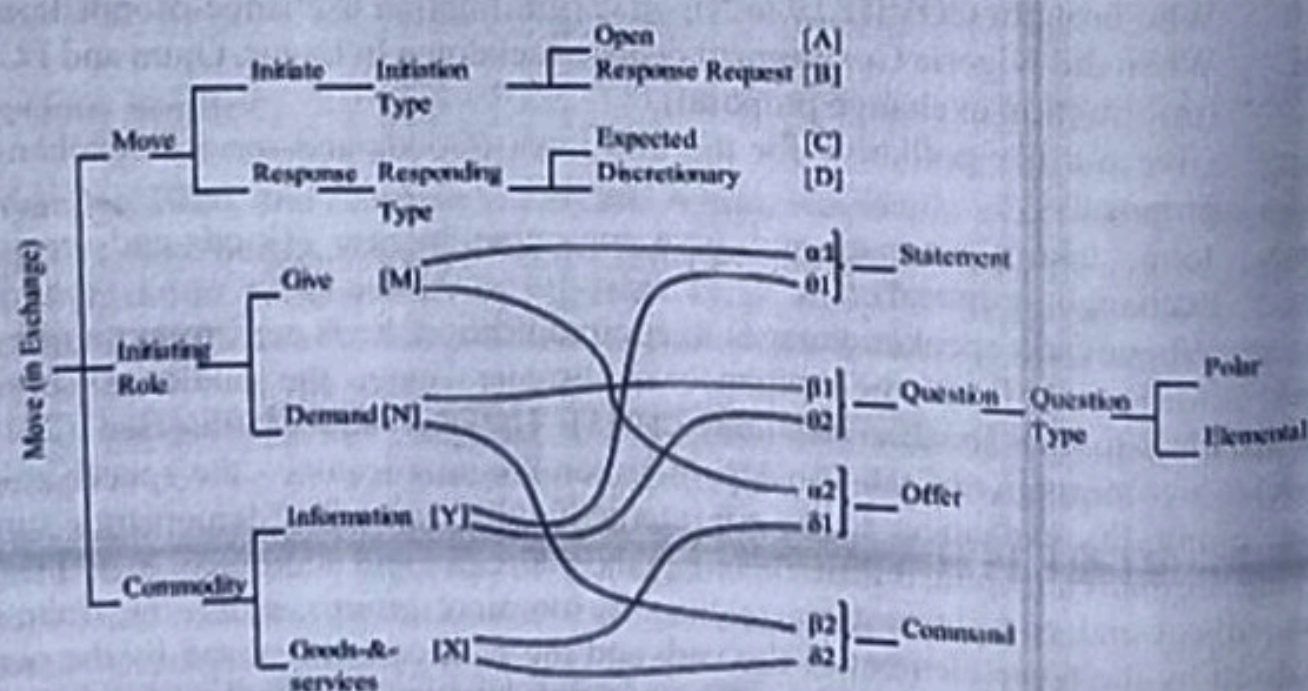
Whenever a speaker engages in communication, he is performing a role to seek information from the audience or listener, here, the audience supply information to the speaker (Halliday, 1995). Halliday and Matthiessen (2014) provide two domains of relationships between communicators - the speech roles and commodity exchange. These are interactive processes that demonstrate turn-taking and normative responsibilities between the addresser and addressee. In addition, the subject and complement are realised by nominal groups, while the finite is realised by the tense element of the verb and the predicate is realised by the non-tense element of the verbal group. A user of any language can make use of mood system which involves series of choices available. Halliday (1994) identifies two major moods - indicative and imperative. Indicative mood is divided into two - declarative and interrogative. For every speech role, a speaker expression of

probability, attitude, possibilities, propositions and familiarities are expressed through the mood system.

Moreover, Osisanwo (2003, 68) identifies jussive options to express command, e. g. get out! And non-jussive, the opposite of jussive (Let her go out!). He further subdivides non-jussive into volitive and optative. Optative and volitive are used to express a wish or permission. E. g. let him get out of the room (volitive) and non-jussive volitive clause has unseen performer power in utterances.

Under the semantic system of speech, three arms of the exchange are move, initiating and commodity. The move considers the addressee as initiating a communicative enquiry that requires feedback from the addressee. The initiating role is meant for the addressee to either giving or demanding. The commodity is being connected by the initiating role of addresser for exchange of information or goods-and-services.

According to Halliday (1987, 112), as cited in Onipede (2016), a clause realises three layers of meaning that are "present in every social context, they are lexicogrammar system of transitivity, mood, and theme are at work in the conversion of semantic metafunctions into structural patterns." Mood distinguishes between declarative, interrogative and imperative sentences. A clause is analysed into mood and residue; subject and finite (mood element). The residue is the rest of the functions in the clause (predication, complements and adjuncts) (Bloor & Bloor, 2004, 46). The mood system is summarised in figure 1 below.



For the purpose of this study, we shall adopt Halliday & Matthiessen's (2014) semantic system of mood resources because of its simplicity, clarity and comprehension.

The semantic system of mood resources (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014, 136)

Methodology

The data for this study were taken from the text messages NCDC sent to the researchers' and other colleagues' mobile phones. The data were drawn from NCDC text messages between the months of March and August 2nd, 2020. The population of the data is restricted to 15 out of 25 text messages. Other 10 text messages are discarded because they have similar features with the ones we retained for our analysis. The text messages are broken down to clauses for mood analysis. Each text message is grouped into texts1 to 15, and each text is further subdivided to 42 clauses. In our analysis, we retain S, F, P, C and A which stand for subject, finite, predicator, complement and adjunct respectively. 'K' and 'Ø' stand for clause and null finite respectively. We therefore adopt descriptive and interpretative technique. The frequency of the mood is presented on table 2 to show their occurrence in terms of percentage.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Text 1

K1

There	Is	no remedy	For covid-19
S	F	C	A

Mood

Residue

K2

The best ways to protect yourself	Are	to wear a mask
S	F	A
Residue		

MOOD

K3

Practice	physical distancing	wash	your hands	Often
F1	C	F2	C	A
Residue				

Mood

Text 2

K1

Remember	the number	of covid-19 cases	reported	by NCDC
F1	C1	A1	P	A2

Residue

are	human beings	Like you
F2	C2	A2

Residue

Don't (neg. polarity)	(neg. wait to be	a victim	before action	taking
F	P	C	A	

Mood

Residue

Text 3

A face mask	can	spread	Disease	if not handled Properly
S	F	P	C	A

Mood

Residue

Take	Responsibility
F	C

Residue

Wash	your hands	Before	and after wearing
F	C	A1	A2

Residue

do not (neg. polarity)	share	And	Always	wash	before reusing
F1	P		A1	F2	A

Residue

Text 4

K1

covid-19 Is real so Are Risking their to protect the rest of us
many of our workers

S F1 C1 F2 P C2 P C3

Mood Residue

K2

Take Responsibility

F C

Residue

Text5

K1

Did you know that the of in depends on
seriousness covid-19 patients many factors

F1 S P C A1 A2 F2 A3

Mood Residue

K2

Some who test may remain But Can still spread
positive the disease

S C1 F1 P F2 A F3 C2

Mood Residue

Text6

K1

as you go about work or Wear a face mask
business

A F C

Residue

K2		with soap and water	
Wash	your hands		
F	C	A	
Residue			

Text7

K1		States		to control
The NCDC	is	supporting		covid-19
S	F	P	C	A
Mood		Residue		

K2		Nigerians		so that	we can
Please	follow rules	put in place	to protect		stop the disease together
F1	F2	C1	F3	A1	P3
					C2
					A2
					C
Residue					

Text8

K1		claiming to		covid19
Please	don't	Consume	any mixtures	be vaccine
F1	F2	P1	C1	P2
				C3
Residue				

K2		no approved		for covid19
There	Is	no	approved	for covid19
		drugs or vaccine		
S	F	C		A
Mood		Residue		

K3		Cause		Harm
These substances	Can	Cause		Harm
S	F	P		C
Mood		Residue		

Text9

K1

Prevent	corona virus	by changing all surfaces frequently
F	C	A
Residue		

K2

high-contact surfaces	Include	door handles	stair rail and tables
S	F	C2	C2
Mood.		Residue	

Text10

K1

wearing a mask	Cannot	Prevent	covid-19
S	F (neg. polarity)	P	C
Mood		Residue	

K2

in addition to face mask	was	hand	frequent	stay	2 metre	away from other	and disinfect	commonly touched surfaces
A1	F1	C1	A2	F2	C2	A3	F3	C3
Mood								Residue

Text11

K1

Ø	Happy Sallah
	C

Minor clause 1

K2

Observe	Eid prayer	in small group
F	C	C
Residue		

K3	Maintain	physical distancing	and	people over 50 yrs	Should	worship	at home
F1	C1			C2	F2	P	A
Residue				Mood			Residue

Text12

K1	wearing a mask	helps	protect	Us	from the droplet	that	carry	the covid-19 virus
S	F1	P	C1	A	C2	F2	C3	
Mood.	Residue							

K2	Take	responsibility	for health	your	And	for your loved ones
F	C		A1			A2
Residue						

Text 13

K1	New restrictions	Ø		in force in FCT, Lagos and Abuja
S				A
Mood				
Residue				
K2	You	Must	Stay	at home
S	F		P	A
Mood Residue				

for more and information	exemptions	Visit	covid19. ncdc. gov. ng
A		F	C

text14 Residue

those & with chronic health conditions	are at more risk	of complications	or death	from covid19
S	F	A2	A3	A4

Good Residue

Please take Care and protect your loved ones
F1 F2 C P C

Residue

do not(neg.polarity) travel out of your state at this time
F P A1 A2

Residue

Please follow Rules put in by health authorities
F1 F2 C P A

Residue

So we Can Quickly reduce the spread of Corona virus
S F A P C

Mood Residue

Table2: Summary of Mood Analysis in the Data

S/N	Mood Class	Frequency Distribution	Percentage Distribution
1	Imperative	26	61.9%
2	Declarative	14	33.3%
3	Interrogative	1	2.4%
4	minor sentence	1	2.4%
	Total	42	100%

Discussion

The table above shows that there is a predominance of imperative mood in our data while the imperative sentence occurs 26 times (61.9%), declarative occurs 14 times (33.3%), interrogative mood occurs 01 time (2.4%), and minor sentence occurs 01 time (2.4%). The dominance of imperative mood followed by the declarative is motivated by the circumstances surrounding the text messages and its genre. Imperative mood is predominantly used by NCDC in sensitising Nigerians mainly for meaning making process. NCDC makes use of imperative mood to instruct, command and order Nigerians to follow the rules put in place by health authorities. NCDC intention is to guide and monitor the recipients of the text messages to comply with necessary precautions that could further spread COVID-19 pandemic.

The use of imperative mood is very significant in the text messages. The highest frequency of imperatives suggests that the text messages do more than asking or giving information, rather they also request and command the recipients. The imperative mood is used to sensitise the target audience/recipient so as to follow COVID-19 pandemic health precautions. For examples in almost all our data, we have the use of 'practice... (T1, K3), 'don't wait... (T2, K2), 'take responsibility (T2, K3; T3, K2; T4, K2; T6, K1; T12, K2; T13, K4), 'wash your hands (T3, K3; T6, K2), 'do not... (T3, K4), '...wear a face mask (T6, K1), 'stay at least... (T6, K3), 'follow rule... (T7, K2), '...don't consume... (T8, K1), 'prevent Corona virus... (T9, K1), '... wash hands... (T10, K2), 'stay 2 metres... (T10, K3), 'observe Eid... (T11, K2), '...wear a mask' (T11 K3), 'maintain physical distancing...' (T11, K4), 'stay at home' (T13, K2), '... visit covid-19...' (T13, K3), 'take care and protect...' (T14, K2), 'do not travel...' (T15, K1), and 'follow rule...' (T15, K2).

The use of declarative mood is meant to inform and make an idea about COVID-19 pandemic health precautions known to the public. The declarative mood declares the mystery behind corona virus and the need for the recipients (Nigerians) of the text messages to take precautionary measures. The hidden ideas of the product/service are the messages NCDC declares as health precautions that the recipients need to behold. For examples, NCDC declares in the following texts: 'there is no verified remedy for COVID-19' (T1, K1), 'The best ways to protect yourself are to wear a face mask' (T1, K2), 'a face mask can spread disease if not handled properly' (T3, K1), 'remember the number of COVID-19 cases reported

by NCDC are human beings like you' (T2, K1). For more examples of declarative mood, (see T4, K1; T10, K3 & 4; T12, K1; T14, K1). The use of declarative mood by NCDC shows that it is saddled with the responsibility of providing information about the novel disease via text messages. Once the messages get to the recipients, it is their responsibility to take action by following the laid down rules and regulations.

Interrogative mood ('did you know that the seriousness of covid-19 patients depends on many factors?') occurs once in the text messages, which gives room for the predominance of imperative mood. It shows that the text messages do not give room for question from the recipients but command them to take action by following the specified rules.

The use of minor sentence depicts that NCDC wishes to remind Nigerian to remember the rules restricting social gathering which it thinks people may violate during Sallah celebration. We have instance of minor sentence thus: 'Happy Sallah' (T11, K1).

Furthermore, subject and finite are the two components of mood system. The residue contains functional elements such as predictors, complements and adjuncts. The elements of the residue dominate the imperative. The dominance of imperative mood reveals that NCDC is calling on Nigerians to take action (the predicator), what to do (the complement) and when to do/ where to do so (adjunct). Also, the dominance of imperative structures is NCDC intention to order, command, warn or drag the audience to do its wish concerning the given COVID-19 health precautions. The declarative mood is used by NCDC to support its imperative mood choice. It is obvious that before NCDC order people to take action, it would have first of all declared the precautionary measures through declarative mood. Hence, the reduction in declarative mood is a deliberate attempt to appeal and encourage Nigerians.

Conclusion

This paper has examined the mood system of NCDC text messages. The text messages are meant to sensitise Nigerians to follow COVID-19 pandemic health precautions. The findings revealed imperative, declarative, interrogative and short sentence as types of mood choice in the text messages. Imperative mood is the most frequently used mood which calls on all Nigerians to take action on the precautions given in the text messages at the right time. NCDC choice of imperative mood is meant to command, order, warn or drag the recipients to do its wish concerning COVID-19 health precautions. Declarative mood is used by NCDC to provide information on the novel disease; interrogative mood occurs once to give room for predominance of imperative mood, and one instance of minor sentence acts as a reminder to Nigerians to remember the rules guiding social gathering during Sallah celebration. The analysis done in this study will enhance better understanding of sensitising text messages from the mood choice or interpersonal

metafunction perspective. It will also help in interpersonal communication in choosing appropriate language and mood choice in sensitising the receivers based on the intended message the sender wants to disseminate.

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