

## HASHTAG ACTIVISM AND STANCE-TAKING IN NIGERIAN TWITTER DISCOURSE: A PRAGMATIC ANALYSIS OF #BBNAIJA (SEASON 10)

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### Abstract

Twitter hashtags have developed into vital sociolinguistic instruments that structure publics, coordinate attention, and enact stance in real time. This paper examines hashtag activism and stance-taking during the Nigerian Twitter discourse surrounding #BBNaija (Season 10), and contextualizes the phenomenon within the convergence of pragmatics, sociolinguistics, and digital media studies. Informed by Du Bois' (2007) *stance triangle*, which frames stance as the simultaneous acts of assessment, positioning, and alignment, the study explores how followers of *Big Brother Naija* adopt hashtags to negotiate cultural values, gender norms, civic responsibilities, and ethical concerns. A mixed-methods, pragmatics-oriented approach combines computational mapping of hashtagged interactions with qualitative coding of stance moves, thereby balancing macro-level digital trends with micro-level interactional analysis. The paper demonstrates that what may appear to be ephemeral pop-cultural commentary—such as evaluations of contestants' authenticity, morality, or behavior—are in fact patterned performances of stance, which ultimately construct identities, alliances, and normative frameworks. Drawing on Honeycutt and Herring's (2009) description of Twitter's interactive affordances, as well as Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) model of identity as emergent and relational, the study argues that recurring practices of stance-taking on "Hashtag Twitter" go beyond entertainment, scaffolding publics around issues of gender justice, fairness, human rights, and civic participation. The paper concludes that Twitter hashtags—particularly in cases such as #BBNaija—function as pragmatic stance-taking tools that not only structure online discourse but also shape cultural identities, moral evaluations, and civic engagement in Nigerian digital spaces.

**Keywords:** Hashtag Activism; Stance-taking; Pragmatics; Nigerian Twitter; #BBNaija

### Introduction

Hashtags on Twitter have matured from simple metadata to an important sociolinguistic device for organizing publics, coordinating attention, and performing stance in real time. Indeed, as Honeycutt and Herring (2009:8) observe in their early empirical description of the dialogic functionality of Twitter, that the @ convention made Twitter more interactive, such as by increasing the range of content that is conveyed in tweets. Within this increasingly conversational environment, stance is not merely opinion but a relational act. Du Bois (2007:143) defines stance-taking as "the process whereby a stance-taker orients to an object of stance and characterizes it as having some specific quality or value." Du Bois further points out that a stance move can only be understood by referring to the appropriate prior stance (150), since evaluation and alignment always occur within dialogic sequencings. In this way, stance constructs or builds identity through time: stance is subjective and intersubjective simultaneously because social identities can be formed by taking the habitual stance, and choices made in regards to position-taking may become long-term: stance moves can become fixed into a more permanent form of identity (Bucholtz, 2007:379). Similarly, Bucholtz and Hall (2005:591) notes that "identity is emergent and interactional" and are often shaped in the moment through interaction, and made visible through indexical work of stance, alignment, and position. These sets the scene for an interpretation of hashtag activism as a pragmatic domain where users consider topical issues, position themselves, and associate or dissociate themselves with imagined audiences- often within a single tweet that combines both content and tag.

Nigeria's Twitter space provides a productive background in which to consider the relationship between hashtag activism and stance-taking because media content in this part of the world often blends entertainment, politics, and civic debate. Fans and spectators who form around reality-TV shows like *Big Brother Naija* (#BBNaija) are more like publics, with a time constraint. They engage in a constant process of taking and renegotiating stances on contestants' gendered behaviour, morality, and national identity. Studies on movement hashtags have demonstrated the ways in which topical publics are made legible through repetitive frames, metrics, and alliances (Freelon, McIlwain, & Clark, 2016:52-54, 62-66), but the same processes are occurring within entertainment-driven spaces where affect, judgment, and agreement are constantly being negotiated. Here, the Du Bois model of stance-taking can be directly applied: Twitter users express a stance toward an object (a housemate, a show twist), position themselves in relation to circulating cultural values (e.g., respectability, authenticity, hustle) and align or disalign with co-fans through tags such as #TeamIsimi or #TeamAvatar; an ecosystem of micro-actions that, in Du Bois (2007:141-145) terms, involves "evaluation, positioning and alignment."

According to Honeycutt and Herring (2009: 8) “the interactive nature of twitter enables individuals to do more than just post brief updates but to also respond to one another and continue discussions.” This position is useful in understanding how BBNaija audiences find it very easy to switch between commenting on the show, voting, and giving moral judgement in their threaded discussions. Bucholtz (2007: 379) holds that such minute acts of taking a position cannot be considered as not important. As time goes on, the consistent patterns of expression of opinions and positions accumulate into identifiable identities and fan communities. Bucholtz and Hall (2005: 586) also demonstrate that such identities do not exist in isolation but are formed in conjunction, in the stream of live performances, in the circulation of trending hashtags.

It is against this backdrop that this study establishes two intersecting fields of research: pragmatics (place of stance-taking) and social media studies (place of hashtag activism) and applies them to a specific case “Hashtag Activism and Stance-taking in Nigerian Twitter Discourse: A Pragmatic Analysis of #BBNAIJA.” Despite #BBNaija regularly dominating the national media agenda and triggering large-scale engagement by users, there seem to be a lack of practical understanding of how users use hashtags to evaluate, locate, and position interlocutors and align publics in a way that transcends entertainment, informing attitudes about gender, class, and civic belonging. Du Bois (2007) provides an analytic lens to make sense of these positioning within single tweets—where a stance-taker orients to an object of stance, and where any partial configuration of the stance triangle is analytically useful. Honeycutt and Herring (2009) provides an illustration of Twitter having interactive affordances. The study undertakes that a single hashtag can do so much work conversationally. Studies on movement communication reminds us that even in what might seem like pop publics, consequential narratives and coalitions are frequently incubated; as Freelon, McIlwain, and Clark demonstrate across multiple event periods, publics are gathered and re-gathered around frames, actors, and media routings (2016). The topicality of the exploration is straightforward, given how the study traces, in a pragmatic manner, how Nigerian users use #BBNaija to enact stance - (a) to shape in-platform engagement, and (b) to influence surrounding social discourses.

There are three considerations that led to this study. First, methodologically, #BBNaija provides a large-scale, dense corpus of contemporaneous, culturally rich stance moves—that is, it provides an ideal corpus to test and extend pragmatic theories. Along with Du Bois (2007) who insists on the unified stance act that ties evaluation, positioning, and alignment. Second, the case allows for the connection of interactional sociolinguistics (Bucholtz, 2005; Bucholtz and Hall, 2007) can be linked to platform studies and analytics in the sphere of public communications (Freelon, McIlwain, and Clark, 2016:52-55), establishing that identities and publics interactively co-produce each other using hashtags. Third, substantively, the Nigerian Twitter represents a lively space where entertainment discussions tend to overflow into the civic discussion. The result is a socio-politically apt and timely investigation into how popular culture hashtags create dispositions, naturalize certain judgments, and scaffold collective action repertoires, even when the apparent target relates not to a protest march but to a reality TV show. In as much as the study focuses on the entertainment-politics interplay, it uses #BBNaija as a lens to understanding hashtag activism more generally. In the movement context, Freelon, McIlwain, and Clark (2016) demonstrate that the semantics of iconic tags are contested in interaction, that focus is concentrated on episodic peaks, and that coalition with journalists, celebrities, and issue entrepreneurs alter reach. The micro-pragmatic scenario further allows us to operationalize the monitoring of how evaluation is packaged within tags, positioning indexes moral footing, as well as alignment displaying affiliative or counter-affiliative tagging practices. Combining these scales produces the following guiding questions of the study: how do Nigerian Twitter users use #BBNaija to perform stance that organises publics and how do such stance performances circulate as activist, counter-activist, or civic talk beyond the show? The result is a richer picture of the way hashtagged stance is performing consequential work within an African digital context one that grants weight to the small details of practical activity as well as the meso-level processes of the formation of the public.

### Research Methodology

The research takes a mixed-method pragmatics-focused approach that combines computationally mapped, hashtagged Twitters posts with finely-grained qualitative position. A mixed design is justified because the phenomenon is simultaneously large-scale and micro-interactional: hashtags organise publics at scale, yet stance is performed turn-by-turn in single tweets and threads. Quantitative layers (volumes, networks, co-hashtag patterns) offer the ecological backdrop upon which pragmatic acts are carried out, whereas qualitative layers (manual coding of stance moves) demonstrate how users actually carry out evaluation, position, and alignment acts in context. This design is consequently explanatory sequential: some meaningful slices of data (peaks, clusters, threads) are first located with the aid of computational mapping. Purposive samples of these slices are then subjected to in-depth pragmatic analysis in a second stage. The unit of analysis is the tweet as generated in context (standalone, reply, quote, or retweet with comment) with local thread context provided where possible.

The analytic spine is Du Bois's (2007) stance model, operationalised via the stance triangle: (i) evaluation of an object, (ii) positioning of the stance-taker, and (iii) alignment or disalignment with other subjects. The theory holds that stance is never a discrete articulation, but rather, a complex performative undertaking that involves assessment, positioning and alignment. Du Bois (2007) defines stance as "a public act by a social actor, achieved dialogically through overt communicative means, of simultaneously evaluating objects, positioning subjects (usually themselves), and aligning with other subjects, with respect to any salient dimension of the sociocultural field". This model is rendered graphically by the stance triangle, in which the vertices denote the stance subject (speaker), the stance object, and a secondary stance subject (listener or other). The sides depict the three interacting acts of: judging the object, locating oneself, and assimilating or dissociating with others. The theory emphasises that stance manifests in interaction, whereby "dialogicality becomes evident to the extent that a stance-taker's words derive from, and further engage with, the words of those who have spoken prior" (Du Bois, 2007: 140).

Du Bois's triangular position has gained positive reception in the academic literature as a paradigm in sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and other fields of study. It has received considerable referencing, and more than 1,300 references have been identified in scholarly databases, demonstrating its contribution to the development of the research on stance-taking. Jaffe (2009:7) points out that the stance triangle identified by Du Bois illustrates the social and intersubjective nature of stance and as such is useful in examining how speakers negotiate identities and relationships during conversation. Nevertheless, there are also criticisms that mention it may be restricted in non-verbal situations, but generally, the reception confirms its strength in the study of empirical discourse.

Nonetheless, in this study, hashtags themselves are treated as pragmatic resources that can compress evaluation (e.g., "#JusticeForX"), signal positioning (e.g., #TeamKola vs. #TeamEfe), and invite or refuse alignment (e.g., partisan tags, antagonistic counter-tags). The framework guides both codebook construction and interpretation: each tweet is examined for explicit lexical evaluations, positioning, and alignment. Alignment is imagined in a relation-like manner (to co-fans, competitors, media or show producers) and this enables results to relate micro-acts to the shaping of publics around #BBNaija.

### Operationalizing the Stance Triangle in Selected #BBNaija Twitter Discourse

Extracts of Selected Tweet:

1. @SirUTI: "In a game like #BBNaija just like the real world, whom you choose to associate yourself with can greatly affect your chances of winning and how you are perceived during and after the show... Being authentic and organic will ALWAYS be empowering for your PERSONA."
2. @BokorMamaga: "Hmmm, I hate these tags regardless of who's been labelled as such... Be kind to your fellow women, you can banter words but some words should be off limits."
3. @Vawulence\_007: "Another Season were people will hate on Light skinned girls... Another Season were people think fighting, being wicked and useless is CONTENT."
4. @omalichanwa1234: "We are watching the effects of misogyny and patriarchy unravel in real time! Cant believe i now have to work harder to ensure my daughters never fall victim!!!!"
5. @CityBoyABJ: "Agender for the week 1. IMISI must trend all week... hashtag for this week IMISI TILL THE LAST DAY #ImisitillTheLastDay #ImisiAyanwale"
6. @ShozyLozy: "If a girl plays her game without wanting to do physical touch... she'll be labelled proud... BUT If a girl decides to still kiss... she'd be slut shamed... So when does it end?"
7. @imisioluwa668: "Pity where? No pity for here... This is 10/10 season, if you cant take the heat.. leave the kitchen! Imistars are here to be entertained... Aura for aura..."
8. @ngula\_kangwa: "She literally has the mentality of most bb fans... who keep agendering on Dede's name... yet the guys who are doing the most are treated like saints... this show is very male centered."
9. @BigRebs: "Until the average Nigerian learns to genuinely tolerate & respect people they believe are "beneath" them, the trenches community will keep growing stronger & will keep rooting for their own to win. Vote IMISI."
10. @cookiesin\_cream: "Same words were used on Imisi, Isabella and they cheered. Now you remember the housemates are humans with emotions? Now you remember empathy? Shame on y'all."
11. @ComradeAtt: "My own is, NO VICTIM MENTALITY or BULLYING Agenda will fly this season!!! No razz agenda will fly this season! They are all Adults!! Let them fight if they wanna fight!"
12. @CeciliaWarero: "Imagine if there was hot oil or hot water resulting in serious burns! @Ebuka @BBNaija this is shameful, unprofessional, obvious bias and justification of violence based on 'likeness' of HMs"
13. @ComradeAtt: "Everybody will play everybody... Nobody would shine alone... Nobody is a VICTIM in that house... Love these housemates... What a season."

14. @themonalisanets: “@BBNaija this show is encouraging abuse and bad behaviour towards women... the way biggie was addressing Imisi was intimidating... Are there human rights laws in Nigeria why are they letting something like this to slide.”
15. @ComradeAtt: There are a lot of cry cry babies this season... The show is not a family reunion! Nobody owes you anything! People must NOT Hug you!... IT’s A GAME.”
16. @onlylilibee: “The way boys are just being evicted is shocking ooo. Why are people not voting for the guys... Are we going to be watching girls, only BBN show. Abeg oooo. I dont want boring something! What is life without a Man in there!”
17. @CityBoyABJ: “Maybe imisi decided her strategy was to act funny... how is that an issue? But yet we have also seen she is very intelligent... How is that is issue with rivals plz leave her alone and instead vote for her.”
18. @BarbaraOgbodo: “Expecting graces for your faves whilst slutshaming and name-calling others is hypocritical. Enjoy the show & support your faves... The fan wars and abuses are unnecessary.”
19. @kosi\_annie: “Both men and women came into that house saying they’re in a relationship but... the males... have kissed,hugged, cuddled... while the girls have been standing on business. Guess who bbn fans have been dragging more tho?”
20. @beautybaby2700: “Firstly nobody should safe guard any housemates... Secondly hate the game not the player. Thirdly free your chest from hate to enjoy the show with no serious resentment for one stranger because of a game show.”

The dataset of tweets presented here shows how participatory discourse turns this popular culture phenomenon into a site of contesting cultural values, gender norms and notions of civic belonging. The hashtags are not only a content aggregation tool but also a sociolinguistic platform where participants are able to continuously perform stances via interactional exchanges which reflects and simultaneously produces societal attitudes. Approaching these practises through Du Bois’s (2007) stance triangle framework, the tweets reveal how evaluation practises, positioning operations, and alignment tactics are at play in computer-mediated communication that make up contemporary publics. The repeated use of the hashtag #BBNaija acts as a searchable channel. Zappavigna (2011:788) argues that “being searchable creates a new form of sociality”, demonstrating how tagging brings together distributed posts into a spatially ambiently cohesive space. Bruns and Burgess (2011:1) observed that “Twitter hashtags enable the formation of ad hoc publics, oriented around particular themes and topics.” This explains the focus of jokes, moralising claims, calls to vote, and human-rights complaints in a single, visible stream in #BBNAIJA hashtags. This is significant from a stance-theoretical perspective because stance-taking is a public, relational move (Du Bois 2007:172).

#### Mapping Tweets to Du Bois’s Stance Triangle

Tweet (abridged)	Subject (Stance Taker)	Object (Stance Target)	Other (Audience/ Alignable)	Evaluation	Positioning	Alignment
@ComradeAtt“NO VICTIM MENTALITY... They are all Adults!!”	The speaker (@ComradeAtt)	Housemates (as “adults”)	Other fans/readers	Rejects victim/bullying narrative (negative evaluation)	Positions self as rational, housemates as equal adults	Invites fans to align with fairness, not victimhood
@CeciliaWarero: “Imagine if there was hot oil... shameful, unprofessional, obvious bias...”	The speaker (@CeciliaWarero)	Show organizers (@Ebuka, @BBNaija)	Fans and broader Twitter public	Condemns bias and risk of violence (negative evaluation)	Positions self as justice-seeking, show as unprofessional	Calls others to align against violence/bias
@ComradeAtt: “Everybody will play everybody... Nobody is a VICTIM...”	The speaker	Housemates/game structure	Other fans	Praises competitive equality (positive evaluation)	Positions housemates as active players, not victims	Aligns fans to accept competitive framing
@themonalisanets: “This show is encouraging abuse... intimidating Imisi... human rights laws...”	The speaker	Show (@BBNaija) and Biggie	Nigerian civic/public sphere	Evaluates show as abusive and unjust	Positions self as rights advocate	Aligns public to consider women’s rights
@ComradeAtt: “Cry cry babies... Nobody owes you	The speaker	Housemates expecting sympathy	Fans	Evaluates complaints as	Positions self as	Aligns others to adopt



anything! IT's A GAME"				weakness (negative)	realist/game-aware	competitive stance
@onlylilibee: "The way boys are evicted is shocking... What is life without a Man in there!"	The speaker	Eviction outcomes	Fans/viewers	Evaluates imbalance as negative (loss of men = boring)	Positions self as valuing male presence	Aligns others to share gendered concern
@CityBoyABJ: "Imisi is intelligent... leave her alone and vote for her"	The speaker	Housemate Imisi	Fans	Evaluates Imisi positively (funny + smart)	Positions self as defender of Imisi	Aligns others to support/vote
@BarbaraOgbodo: "Expecting graces for your faves while slut-shaming others is hypocritical..."	The speaker	Fan communities	Other fans	Evaluates hypocrisy negatively	Positions self as fair-minded viewer	Aligns others to reduce toxicity
@kosi_annie: "Males kiss/cuddle while girls stand on business... guess who fans drag more?"	The speaker	Fans' double standards	Public audience	Evaluates double standard as unfair	Positions women as wrongly targeted	Aligns others to recognize gender bias
@beautybaby2700: "Nobody should safeguard... hate the game not the player..."	The speaker	Housemates/fans who resent	Public fans	Evaluates resentment as unnecessary (negative)	Positions self as rational/game-aware	Aligns others to enjoy fairly, free of hate

The tweets are representative of the rich discourse in which fans negotiate existing social norms through stances. For example, @ComradeAtt's posts reinforce civic belonging by rejecting a "victim mentality" and encouraging competitive equality among housemates, thus positioning the show as a game in which "Nobody owes you anything!" This position treats housemates as equal adults, paints the speaker as someone who stands on the side of fair play, and will be sympathetic to viewers who view the show as little more than entertainment and not a moral battleground. In contrast, @themonalisanets put gender issues at the forefront of her criticism:

this show is encouraging abuse and bad behaviour towards women... the way biggie was addressing Imisi was intimidating... Are there human rights laws in Nigeria why are they letting something like this to slide.

The stance here is a criticism of perceived biases in the way violence and abuse towards women is dealt with, such as the rationalisation of violence based on 'likeness' or the encouragement of abuse and bad behaviour against women.

Furthermore, some of the tweets critique Big Brother's moderation as inadequate, place female housemates as victims of structural discrimination and invite identification with audiences interested in human rights. Other tweets, like @kosi\_annie's observations about the double standard in fan reactions to relationships -- in which males get less scrutiny than females -- show the ways in which cultural values are negotiated intersubjectively. Likewise, @BarbaraOgbodo and @beautybaby2700 combine gender critiques (e.g., against "slutshaming") with civic exhortations to "hate the game, not the player," thus strengthening identities based on an awareness of hypocrisy and lessened resentment. Collectively, these interactions reveal how #BBNaija is a dialogic space for stance-taking on issues of gender equity and belonging to the community, and how users are building relational identities through normative shared assessments in the space.

Zappavigna (2012:51) notes that "hashtags help to align attention to a topic" which allows stances on gender and belonging to be clustered. This process propagates individual views into a public discourse, for instance the discontent about the gender ratio presented by @onlylilibee, which leads to reactions and solidarities. Scott (2015:9) elaborates that hashtags "serve a stylistic purpose enabling users to sustain an interpersonal, informal style in a mediated...public discourse context" which is demonstrated in the way that users like @CityBoyABJ use them to defend housemate strategies interpersonally. By embedding metadata, hashtags facilitate intersubjective identity-forming as publics come together based around or challenge values like anti-bullying. Given this, hashtags in sociolinguistics transcend mere categorization; they are relational tools through which social identities are dialogically shaped, as can be observed in the performative actions that these tweets reflect. On the Nigerian Twitter, and more specifically with respect to #BBNaija, entertainment is intertwined with political and civic discourses, where fans negotiate positions with respect to contestants, and cultural values as a

whole, and this negotiation builds identities through repeated stance-taking in threaded interactions. Tweets like @CeciliaWarero's condemnation of "obvious bias and justification of violence" are at once a critique of the programme as well as a persuasive intervention in the broader political conversation about human rights, inserting members of the audience into the argument. As Chombow observes (2020: 959) "gender stereotyping takes place in Twitter conversations among viewers of the reality TV show, so that they negotiate cultural norms." This default position of defensiveness, epitomised by @kosi\_annie's double-standard call out, is thus a productive position that further solidifies fan identities as either fans for or against a work. Androutsopoulos (2006: 421) suggests that "sociolinguistics can contribute by showing how language use and linguistic variation generate interpersonal relationships and social identities on the Internet—a position that can be applied here, as interactions around civic belonging engender community bonds." In @themonalisanets's mention of "human rights laws in Nigeria" there is a political undercurrent, which links users to civic conversation. In the process, identities are reinforced through dialogic reproduction, making entertainment a site of cultural struggle.

This analysis draws on pragmatics, sociolinguistics, computer-mediated communication and social media studies. Pragmatically, tweets like @BarbaraOgbodo's anti-hypocrisy stance are exemplary of evaluative acts that are actively gender-bending. At the sociolinguistic level, lexical variation - as expressed by @beautybaby2700's call to "free your chest from hate" - is implicated in the construction of identities that are inextricably linked to class belonging. In computerised mediations, Androutsopoulos (2006:420) argues that "Computer Mediated-communication offers a new empirical arena for many research traditions of sociolinguistics", which is validated here by highlighting how #BBNaija threads go beyond being only fun to shape collective dispositions. Social media studies also emphasise how hashtags enable "ambient affiliation" (Zappavigna 2018:12), where users form around shared gender bias, such as with @onlylilibee's criticism of the imbalance of evictions. In this intersection, there are class connotations, as some of the tweets imply elitist favouritist treatment as "likeness" bias. These discourses eventually filter into cultural attitudes and prove that hashtags can move beyond their flippancy.

Du Bois's (2007) stance-triangle frames stance-taking as a dialogical process involving the appraisal of objects, the role of subjects and the orientation to others and reflects the discursive nature of stance-taking as an intersubjective process. In the tweets of @ComradeAtt, we find a mode of evaluation in the non-victim construction of housemates which places the self in an egalitarian position in the context of the Big Brother Nigeria (BBNaija) show. DuBois termed stance as "a dialogically performed public act by a social actor" (DuBois 2007:163), and as "the simultaneous appraising of objects, the positioning of subjects (self and others), and the orientation to other subjects" (Du Bois 2007:167). Positioning is "responsibility for stance and for evoking sociocultural value" (Du Bois 2007:143) as exemplified in @CeciliaWarero's self-positioning against bias. Alignment is "the process of calibrating the relationship between two stances, and by implication between two stance-takers" (Du Bois 2007:144), as can be seen in the case of joint gender criticism.

## Conclusion

The study of hashtag activism and stance-taking in Nigerian Twitter discourse on the example of the hashtag #BBNaija (Season 10) reveals how digital publics in Africa bargain culture values, gender norms, civic belonging, and moral responsibility into the porous yet consequential space of social media. Using the approach of Du Bois (2007) stance triangle to this corpus, the paper confirms that evaluative judgments, positional acts, and alignment strategies as encoded in hashtags serve not only as entertainment commentary but also as dialogical actions that structure emergent identities and publics. What might seem at first like transient pop-cultural talk, e.g. the issue of the truthfulness, decency or ethical behaviour of housemates, is actually a demonstration of how identity and ideology are constructed concurrently in the situation via patterned performance of stance. As Honeycutt and Herring (2009) and Bucholtz and Hall (2005) remind us, these performances are cumulative: over time, the repeated positions take the form of identifiable identities, alliances, and normative frames that can be discerned throughout civic discourses beyond the show. Therefore, the hashtags of the BBNaija are not insignificant content aggregators but sociolinguistic platforms that organise the masses around gender justice, fairness, human rights, and civic belonging and hence, demonstrate how African digital cultures blend entertainment and civic praxis. The theoretical consequences include a confirmation of the existence of pragmatics as a way of making sense of the micro-interactional dynamics of hashtag activism, as well as an empirical prediction of Nigerian Twitter as a critical location where popular culture and political consciousness come together. Finally, the paper highlights that as a pragmatic resource, hashtags have a consequential relational work that reproduces and recreates social realities that support the idea that in the dialogical interaction of evaluation, positioning, and alignment, entertainment discourse is a crucible of cultural negotiation and civic imagination.

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