Effective Language Use in Interdisciplinary Collaboration for Employee Performance and Academic Integrity in the University

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Abstract
The 21st century University is faced with multifarious challenges that require strategic, pragmatic and multidimensional measures for lasting solutions. This study proposes effective language use and interdisciplinary collaboration as viable measures for attaining employee performance and academic integrity in the university. The study argues that effective use of language is needed for the attainment of interdisciplinary collaboration, academic integrity, and employee performance, given that effective language use and interdisciplinary collaboration are needed to find lasting multidimensional solutions to the challenges of the university. Qualitative method and content analysis are employed. Observation, introspection and extant literatures are relied on for both primary and secondary data. The analysis shows that effective language use and interdisciplinary collaboration pave way for the attainment of employee performance and academic integrity in the university and proffer multiple solutions to the problems confronting both the university and the society. Therefore, universities are charged to willingly develop and sustain interdisciplinary collaboration and effective language use culture in its curriculum and bylaws.

Keywords: Effective, Language use, Interdisciplinary collaboration, Employee's performance, Academic integrity

Introduction
In the contemporary era, the university system is continuously faced with multifarious challenges. Academic integrity no longer obtains, as it used to and supposed to be. Employee performance remains a mirage. As Evans (2015) declares, 'we urgently need education that confronts the challenges of our time' (p. 71). For this study, the needed education, which can confront the challenges, is interdisciplinary and collaborative education that is rooted in and allows for academic integrity. Such education also addresses issues of university employee performance. Also, Ụbahakwe (1979) observes that 'a Nigerian problem would require, in language studies, a Nigerian solution' (p. xiii). This implies, among others, that a university problem requires a university solution. Thus, universities have to consistently find lasting solutions to the contemporary challenges of the university system, as no other system else would do that well. Among others, meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration and academic integrity are needed in finding lasting solutions to the challenges.

Against the foregoing backdrop, this study proposes that rather than compounding, not attending to, or aggravating the multifarious challenges, sustainable interdisciplinary collaboration and academic integrity systems should be built in the university system using effective language. The central position of the paper is that once language is used effectively to put up, build, pursue, attain and sustain interdisciplinary collaboration system, deserving academic integrity and employee performance would be attained in the university system in Nigeria and across the world. There are studies that lend credence to the position of this work on the role of language in addressing 21st century university challenges. They include Anyanwu (2023), Nkereuwem and Robert (2023), Osuagwu and Chimakonam (2018), Ogbulogo (2017) and Emeka-Nwobia (2015), among others. These mentioned studies prove language to be a viable means of solving different problems in society. Similarly, Beyerlein et al. (2003) are of the view that global, economic and business problems can be solved more effectively when skills, values

and processes for effective collaboration are put up or in place and sustained. It should be noted that the global problems they point at include those in educational, political, social and other spheres.

University Challenges and the Remedies Imperative
The changes in different spheres of life in the 21st century continue to affect the university along with the education it offers. The factors identified to be affecting university education include the trends of globalisation and new media, curricular and pedagogical issues, English language superimposition and its attendant imperialism, increase in student population, the commercialisation of academics, and issues of more or exclusively theoretical education with little or no practical knowledge, among others (Anyanwu, 2023; Mbah, 2023; Robert, 2017a; Altbach et al., 2009; Becher & Trowler, 2001). There is also the serious problem of quality assurance (Drach & Slobodianiuk, 2020; Schleicher, 2018; Hrynevych, 2014). Besides, there are the hard challenges of migrating from analogue to digital (technology-based) education in contemporary time (Nwode, 2022; Schleicher, 2018; Robert, 2017a&b).

Crimes and all kinds of unethical and immoral practices have become synonymous with the university system, as commonly evident in Nigerian universities. Administrators, teaching and non-teaching staff, students and all other participants in the university education system are all guilty of one ill act or the other. The ill acts include endemic corruption, embezzlement, mismanagement, poor funding of academic programmes and projects, outrageous school fees, incessant strike, lack of competent personnel, examination malpractice, certificate forgery, sexual harassment, cultism, and acrimonies, character assassination and pull-down syndrome among staff, to mention but a few. Robert and Besong (2023) lend credence to the foregoing thus: "the endemic issues of low standard of education present complex ethical issues compounded by the unwillingness to address them" (p. 532).

Being a complex system of learning in a microcosmic community of the macrocosmic world, the university system has its peculiar culture. After all, culture as, Hofstede (2007) puts it, is 'the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes one group or category of people from another' (p. 33). Thus, the university is a system having a culture that is characterised by both cultural particulars and universals. Every cultural group finds solutions to its problems or challenges of existence by making attempts to meet the challenges (Emenanjo, 2000). It is by doing so that it sustains itself and all its existential embodiments. Culture gives meanings to social, political, economic, aesthetic and religious norms and models of organisations, groups and nations (Emenanjo, 2000). Irono's (2005) description of culture as 'a system of knowledge by which people design their own actions and interpret the behaviours of others' (p. 30) reflects the fact that the university is a learned structured system having its own culture, meaning it has its own government.

Widodo (2019) affirms the place of culture in addressing the challenges inherent to the university and other schools, among which are lack of academic integrity and poor employee performance. Widodo (2019) agrees that culture can also serve the purposes of (re)developing school curriculum and containing challenges such as corrupt practices, violation of ethics, and lack of integrity, excellence and collaboration. Therefore, the need for the university, as an autonomous system, to deploy cultural and other mechanisms to tackle its challenges cannot be over-emphasised. That is why this paper advocates interdisciplinary collaboration among intellectuals, learners and other actors in the university world regardless of their professional differences. Collaboration entails sharing resources, information, risks, responsibilities, etc. for even progress, unity of purpose, finding better remedies to problems and so on. It is said that two good heads are better than one. So, this study observes that interdisciplinary collaboration is a dire necessity in the university because it drives employee performance and academic integrity in the university. It posits that to get maximal interdisciplinary collaboration, which drives or guarantees the ideal or deserving employee performance and academic integrity in the university, language ought to be used effectively for efficient regular communication in the system.

Collaboration, as Msanjila and Afsarmanesh (2008) notes, requires the participating individuals to engage mutually with trust and focus the engagement on achieving common goals. Interdisciplinary collaboration in the university world involves building as well as having a sustained practice of collaboration among actors in the system, from the highest to the lowest and vice versa. It means

sensitising and socialising all and sundry within the university on the dire need for collaborative living, interaction, teaching and learning, research and development, etc. The idea is that exposing learners to the project of developing collaboration implies teaching them the nitty-gritty of collaboration, its essence, prospects and challenges amidst ways of tackling the contemporary challenges of the university and the larger world through meaningful collaboration for multiple remedies.

Given that 'the greatest challenge of the modern world is at the instance of language' (Ogbulogo, 2017, p. 4), interdisciplinary collaboration, employee performance and academic integrity can be attained through effective use of language. Be it so, language is the greatest technique for confronting the challenges of the modern world, wherein the university exists and operates. This assertion is affirmed by Osuagwu and Chimakonam (2018), who argue that language-based techniques are effective means of addressing various issues in society, including philosophical problems. Development, ethical, social, educational, leadership and otherwise issues confronting Africa remain importunate because indigenous systems and solutions are neglected and left unharnessed (Anyanwu, 2023; Nkereuwem & Robert, 2023; Robert, 2020; Besong, 2017; Ogbulogo, 2017). Nkereuwem and Robert (2023) show that oral literature and indigenous languages are viable means of pursuing and realising change in society. As such, it is possible to use language effectively to change the university system from what it is currently to becoming significantly collaborative internally and externally in disciplines and interpersonal relations and communication.

The University, Academic Integrity and Interdisciplinary Collaboration
The university, as the apex tertiary institution, ought to be characterised by academic integrity and values. These include virtues, morality, legal and conventionalised principles and sanctions, commitment to truth, rationality, diversity and cohesion, attentiveness, adaptability, responsible sharing of knowledge, well articulated arguments or debates on varied subjects, freedom of expression, and active participation (Leavis, 1943). Academic integrity is described by Drach and Slobodianiuk (2020) as a situation in which there is a zero tolerance for violation of integrity and ethics in the school system. They affirm that integrity is an element of quality assurance in tertiary education as well as education in other tiers or levels (Drach & Slobodianiuk, 2020). For them, trust, mobility, motivation, compatibility and attractiveness arekey conditions for quality higher education (Drach & Slobodianiuk, 2020).

According to Drach and Slobodianiuk (2020), explanatory educational activities should be used to replace the practice of punishing for violation of academic integrity. Academic integrity, for this paper, refers to being responsible, respectful, virtuous, fair and honest in one's actions, decisions and deeds regarding academic and other endeavours, as a teacher, a student and any other professional in the university circle. Wherever integrity is an aspect of culture, people uphold it and do whatever would sustain the virtue of integrity along with other virtues. That is what it is in the context of the university system vis-à-vis university education. It is needed in the university system to ensure and attain quality, excellence, decorum, and law and order. It encourages academic honesty and thereby gets rid of academic dishonesty, indecorum, corrupt practices, moral laxity, insubordination, disloyalty, vices, knowledge theft or plagiarism, primordial sentiments, and structural imbalance, to mention but a few.

Macfarlane (2005) is of the view that to avoid academic disengagement among intellectuals (teachers) and learners, universities should develop the culture of collaboration, which would allow for meaningful education. The implication of lack collaboration in the university is echoed by McNay (2005), who considers the lack of collaboration as a division that paves way for failure among the academics. For Evans (2004), the situation amounts to killing critical thinking. When thinking is killed, universities are bound to die. Interdisciplinary collaboration in the university is a dire necessity, because the world has become irreversibly interconnected (Friedman, 2010). It should be noted that finding lasting solutions to world's complexities requires collectiveness and collaboration. For Dean (2010), 'Our world needs more, not less collaboration; more synergy and less polarity' (p. 1). Their points confirm that all disciplines, units and participants in the university system across the globe need to collaborate meaningfully. With meaningful collaboration, we can collectively get rid of polarisation and otherness to a large extent, if not completely. Polarisation accounts for some of these endemic issues confronting the university in the contemporary time.

Prospects of Interdisciplinary Collaboration

Effective collaboration synthesises differences among participants in ways that deliver a competitive advantage to the organisation (Weiss & Hughes, 2005). Weiss and Hughes (2005) consider interdisciplinary collaboration among organisations, individuals and nations alike to be beneficial, as they note that collaboration fosters efficiency through harmonised expertise, perspectives, and backgrounds. They agree that collaboration allows organisations, as in universities, to leverage employees' talents, to co-ordinate knowledge, and respond more quickly to global issues while at the same time taking advantage of available opportunities (Weiss & Hughes, 2005). Jones and George (1998) argue that organisational capabilities, which accrue in the course of internal collaboration, augment the value and competitive advantage of several other organisations involved in the engagement.

Evans (2015) agrees that there is need to build internal and external collaborations among tertiary institutions, because that is a viable way of attaining sustainable education in this era that is characterised by multiple challenges. To Evans (2015), interdisciplinary and pragmatic measures and systems of teaching and learning are needed for the attainment of sustainable tertiary education. According to Evans (2015), faculty and departmental collaboration and commitment should be developed by faculty and departmental groups in order to succeed in building sustainable education through trans-disciplinary sustainability praxis. To realise this envisaged goal, institutional priorities, structures, and processes have to be redesigned and repositioned (Evans, 2015).Praxis is said to be sustainability and a unity of theory, practice, and reflection (Evans, 2012). Many scholars have affirmed transdisciplinarity (i.e. interdisciplinary collaboration) to be a viable strategic mechanism to be applied to education and social reform (e.g. Dolling & Hark, 2000; Meyer, 2007).

Transdisciplinarity, according to Piaget (1970), is a principle for unity of knowledge across different fields, with the intent of harmonising ethics, morality, creativity and cultures across and among nations and groups, such as universities. Crow (2010) has expressed the urgent need for academic leaders to commit their institutions to conscious collectivism in order to attain evolutionary transformation in both the education sector and the society at large. Kelly (2009) is of the view that sustainability requires creative, ethical and moral imagination of situations and critical matters of society and thereby experiment with practical ideas. Such critical matters are those obtained in the education sector. As Kelly (2009) agrees, developing and sustaining interdisciplinary collaboration would help in solving serious problems and 'build a world where everyone can do the same' (p. 45).

Furthermore, collaboration has changed leadership and relationship patterns from the traditional rigid pattern to a flexible seamless one. Thechanged pattern has a lot of offers in stock. These include ethical professionalism, decorum, discipline, capabilities, skills (including digital skills), experiences, knowledge, competencies, innovations, critical literacy of different kinds, creative, and productive and efficacious leadership styles, among others (Nwode & Danjuma, 2023; Peter et al., 2023; Dean, 2010; Gratton & Erickson, 2007; Nohria et al., 2003; Cloke & Goldsmith, 2002; Goleman et al., 2002). The risk of not involving in collaborative leadership is echoed by Ibarra and Hunter (2007), who point out that leaders who do not develop their collaborative skills through networks face the danger of derailing and are bond to face difficulty in tackling complex issues that require collaborative experience, skills, techniques, approaches, etc.

Constraints to Interdisciplinary Collaboration

The situations at stake are decried by Mulkey (2012), who states that 'at a time when we should be tailoring our college curriculums to prepare graduates for dynamic action, our colleges and universities are bureaucratically moribund, self-interested, and inwardly focused' (p. 43). These decried situations constitute some serious constraints to interdisciplinary collaboration in the university system. Constraints to collaboration in the university are identified to include issues of administrative and ethical or disciplinary structures (Crow, 2011; Hyun, 2011), increase in specialisation within disciplines (Nicolescu, 2002), the absence of formal recognition in the promotion and tenure process of building inter collaboration, lack of incentives for achieved as well as strived for collaborative projects (Evans, 2015), and the negative intellectual tradition of externalising the world (Bacon et al., 2011).

Also, interdisciplinary collaboration in the university is constrained by high competition for academic positions, career risks on the part of some academia, misconduct, poor educational budgets, lack of co-operation, charlatan attitude, and corrupt practices (Robert & Besong, 2023; Besong, 2017; Hyun, 2011; Everett, 2008). Orr (2002) and Everett (2008) identify hidden curriculum to be one serious constraint to internal and external collaborations. Loose, incompetent and ineffective leadership is another constraint to the collaboration (Robert, 2020; Evans, 2011; Mudroch, 1992). Horton (1990) observes that it is enslaving to keep any persons confined to particular areas of speciality; stressing that doing so amounts to depriving them of what they can do outside their areas of specialty. Etim-Robert (2016) notes that not redesigning jobs to be for male and female genders means denying them of the tasks they can take up, merely because of gender profiling. That is why jobs such as mechanic, building, carpentering/furniture, commercial driving, manufacturing, etc. were (and are still being) considered the exclusive preserved of men, while cooking, plaiting, etc. are considered those for women alone (Etim-Robert, 2016).

As Crow (2010) notes, 'institutional differentiation, as opposed to standardisation, is capable of increasing the relevance of institutions and programmes to diverse constituents and making the higher education system as a whole more robust' (pp. 36-7). Conversely, Crow (2010) notes, 'the lack of innovation in our colleges and universities results in an insufficient differentiation between distinct categories of institutions as well as a stultifying homogeneity among institutions of the same type' (p. 36). Also, Crow (2010) regrets that 'public universities and their self-imposed paralysis' consistently make it almost impossible for scholars and researchers to find lasting solutions to the issues at stake, since they 'cannot be efficient when following a path that has not already been marked' (p. 26). According to Mulkey (2012), not tackling these issues is a pointer to unresolved crisis. The failure to face the hard situations spells grave consequences. Bearing the implications in mind, Mulkey (2012) observes that many tertiary institutions will fold later on as a result of their unwillingness or inability to tackle the problems facing them.

Scholars agree that since the contemporary society is faced with multiple issues, techniques for tackling them should also be interdisciplinary and multifaceted (Nkereuwem & Robert, 2023; Robert & Peter, 2021; Osuagwu & Chimakonam, 2018; Asouzu, 2017; Evans, 2012; Kahn, 2010; Everett, 2008; McLaren, 2007). Hyun (2011) implicitly accepts that developing and sustaining collaboration among institutions would help address the complexities of higher education, review, reposition, and diversify its curriculum and root it in multiple values and fields. To Hyun (2011) and Evans (2015), intellectuals are to blame for the complexities, which arise basically from their politicising, contextualising knowledge to West and serving powerful nations rather than being honest in order to attain academic excellence through harmony and collaboration.

Analysis

Here, relying on systematic review and content analysis, data analysis is done descriptively. Effective language use undoubtedly has a significant impact on employee performance, because the employees are motivated and satisfied (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). The central argument here is that effective or good language use motivates employees and rouses employee performance, while ineffective or bad language use results in job dissatisfaction and low performance. Wherever managers and/or employers of organisations devalue or abuse employees verbally, employee performance cannot obtain significantly. When language is misused or used ineffectively in the workplace for abuses and other vices, employees feel hurt and unsatisfied and lack the motivation to be committed, diligent and productive.

Profanity is a common trend among contemporary users of language (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). Profanity entails much more than blasphemy against God to fellow humans. Religiously, psychologically, socially and otherwise, profanity, vulgarity or obscenity is offensive, and a show of indecorum. That a person works under you as junior colleague or an employee does not mean you should neglect or trample upon his or her personal dignity. Unfortunately, bosses (employers inclusive) of many workplaces seldom understand this reality. Such bosses and employers are not conscious of this reality either (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023).

Many workplace bosses are (very) rude, arrogant, pompous and inimical to employees. Employees working with such bosses certainly feel dissatisfied, uneasy and lack motivation (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). Linguistically speaking, motivation requires verbal and gestural impressions from one person to another. Thus, seeing the employee as a less human person or a slave, such workplace bosses resort to using profane, vulgar and dehumanising words on their employees. Employees, who find themselves in such hostile work environment characterised by verbal abuse, usually lack the supposed job motivation (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023).The attendant feelings adversely affect their performance consciously or unconsciously. Different motivation systems could be used, including material offers and various learning, experiential and socio-economic opportunities (Wambe, 2021).

It should be noted that if employees get verbal abuse along with all the motivation systems, material offers and various opportunities, most of them are bound to be dissatisfied with both the job and the accompanying motivation offers. This is simply because the psychology of these given employees is tampered with (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). The troubles and demoralising thoughts about the verbal abuse would undoubtedly outweigh the attraction to or interest in the offers. The situation could be likened to that of offering a dog meat, bone and/or delicious food with one hand and flogging it or holding a cane in the other hand to flog it. Certainly, in that situation, the dog would run away. If it realises or sees cane while coming for the food, it would not come forward for the food. That is because that dog realises that the food is only a substance for attraction or enticement. But as it considers its safety, it rather withdraws. That is also the case with employees who suffer verbal abuse amidst certain comfortable motivators. With the persistency of the problem, amidst whatever motivators and benefits put in place, such employees would rather opt out of the job, so they could have peace.

Where fear of being jobless or other factors hamper the employees' decision of opting out, their performances usually decrease. They would certainly not work with all their strength. There is bound to be some reservation by such employees. For example, an employee, who is given a good position in an organisation along with several motivators, but suffers verbal abuse and/or lack of verbal appreciation of his/her unceasing efforts and contributions to the organisation, is bound to feel dissatisfied with both the job and the position as well as the motivators (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). The number one consequence is poor or low performance. The next likely action is quitting the job, or exhibiting any other unfavourable act. The abuse, troubles or lack of verbal appreciation tampers with the person's emotion, happiness, pleasure and real (internal or self) comfort and value. Most persons cannot afford to ruin or sacrifice all these for such a dissatisfying job that lacks real motivation.

Meanwhile, without those motivators but verbal appreciation and the absence of verbal abuse and profanity, most employees could work patiently, happily and diligently under any tasking conditions. That is because they get motivated. Take for instance, where an employer owes his/her employees salary for a month or more and resorts to effective use of language to persuade, explain and plead with them for patience, the employees would really bear with him/her and be patient for even many months. But in a case where the employer uses rash or coercive words with his/her employees, trouble would ensue, as the employees would feel hurt the more by the words and threatened by the rising job insecurity.

To that end, they would rather decide to quit the job (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). Such an employer or a management is bound to face some inconveniences and troubles from the resignation of the abused employees, who opt out of the job(s). The inconveniences and troubles are the manifestations of ineffective use of language by the given employer or management. On the other hand, the persuasive and humane employer, who keeps their owed employees with the use of language-based strategies, demonstrates effective use of language. Essentially, words matter. The kind of language one uses in communicating with/to others also matters (Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). Ineffective language use is demonstrated by anyone who uses hurtful, degrading, dehumanising, unpleasant and worthless words. When this occurs in the workplace, workers get demoralised, unmotivated and unproductive.

Tickle (2011) reports that Jeff Bowers at the University of Bristol reveals from his experiment that the use of bad language can alter individuals' behaviour. Leaning on that, this study argues that bad language changes employees' behaviour or attitude towards work, for which low performance is recorded in an organisation. And, the low performance gives birth to poor service delivery, unmet

organisational goals and low productivity. Clearly, the words one says to others do not only affect them (the speakers) in several regards, but the audience too (Tickle, 2011; Nwode & Anyadiegwu, 2023). Thus, affected by bad words from workplace bosses, lack of job motivation arises with job dissatisfaction that consequently causes employee underperformance. Therefore, to attain meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration, employee performance and academic integrity in the university, effective language use is an imperative requisition.

Conclusion

It is evident from the above discussion that effective language use determines the extent to which interdisciplinary collaboration, employee performance and academic integrity obtain in the university. Also, despite not being deployed by the university as supposed, interdisciplinary collaboration is affirmed in the literature to offer huge prospects, including finding multiple solutions to societal and university problems. As such, it has to be imbibed by the university in order to harness its prospects for betterment in academics, research and its other engagements, sustainable, collaborative and quality education, high employee performance, and significant uncompromised academic integrity. Emphasis on and (re)training on effective language use and interdisciplinary collaboration should be an operational organisational culture in the university. What is needed mostly is the willingness to develop and sustain interdisciplinary collaboration and effective language use for multiple solutions to issues confronting both the university and the wider society.

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