Infodemic and Misinformation in the Era of Coronavirus: An Analysis of Selected Rhetoric from Africa

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Abstract : The Covid-19 pandemic has seen several rumors and conspiracy theories overtake the truth in many online platforms across several African countries. Just as the coronavirus has travelled widely, misinformation has equally spread. Thus, it is important to launch investigations into these conspiracy theories in order to detect them early and as a result, implore health practitioners and agencies to be more proactive in repelling misinformation while at the same time provide the general populace with purely undiluted information regarding the virus. Through social media posts on platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and WhatsApp, as well as online platforms such as Google, this study intends to draw as many instances as possible of infodemic and misinformation by reviewing and analyzing these texts and the resulting implication if the misinformation continues to gain popularity. The study discovers the use of conspiracy theories, rumors, hyperbolism, and unverified claims as elements of infodemic used during the coronavirus pandemic. Importantly, the findings of the study will assist the public to be cautious and vigilant against false information that are being peddled as original.
Keywords : infodemic, miscommunication, accuracy, social media, rumors, conspiracy
Conference Title : ICLGL 2021 : International Conference on Language and General Linguistics
Conference Location : Los Angeles, United States
Conference Dates : October 28-29, 2021