

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE FORMS AND
COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS OF SLANG AMONG
SOME SELECTED YOUTHS IN THE FEDERAL
COLLEGE OF HORTICULTURE DADIN- KOWA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF
ENGLISH AND LITERARY STUDIES, FACULTY OF ARTS AND
ISLAMIC STUDIES, BAYERO UNIVERSITY, KANO IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE
DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS ENGLISH (LANGUAGE)**

DECEMBER, 2015

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this work is the product of my own research efforts, undertaken under the supervision of Professor Mustapha Ahmad Isa, has not been presented elsewhere for the award of degree or certificate. All sources have been duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this research work by Nasiru Musa SPS/11/MEN/00015 was carried out under my supervision.

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APPROVAL PAGE

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my father, late Alhaji Musa Liman and my mother, Halimatu Hayatu for their parental care and struggle in guiding me to the right path.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

What an academic journey! I would like to first express my gratitude to the Almighty Allah who has guided and given me the wisdom, good health and determination in my life. On this journey, however, many people made contributions in one way or another which enabled me to produce this dissertation.

In the first place, I wish to thank my mentor and indeed my supervisor Professor Mustapha Ahmad Isa who in spite of his ever tight schedule, always finds time to go through the drafts of this thesis promptly and thoroughly. Sir, thank you for the discussions we had, the sincere criticisms, the valuable

inputs you made to several versions of my chapters, your prompt responses to my questions, all of which contributed to, what I believe, a better final product. I would also express my appreciation to the Head of English and Literary Studies Department who also doubles as my internal examiner Prof. Sadiya Sani Daura. Ma, the constructive criticism and words of encouragement you gave me have immensely contributed towards producing this work. The research also would not have been complete without the contribution gotten from the academic staff of the department. They include: Prof. Aliyu A. Kamal, Prof. Mustapha Mohammed, Prof. Bashir Sambo, Prof. Ibrahim Bello Kano, Prof. Saidu Ahmed Babura, Dr. Amina Adamu and Dr. Rabi Ibrahim Abdulsalam. Dr. Aminu Mohammad Dukku of Sociology Department would not also be forgotten. He has been a pillar to me since when I was an undergraduate student. I thank you all.

My sincere gratitude to my course mates (Sulaiman Moh'd Isah, Kabiru Mohammed, Shuaibu Adamu, Adamu Babura, Auwal Mohammad Gwaram, Sulaiman Dahiru, Mal Tijjani Damaturu) for supporting me with a platform to present some of my research. Thank you for the good friends we have become, but most of all for the professional way in which you supported me and the sound advice you gave me to improve the thesis. Under your guidance and support I have grown as a researcher and I thank you for that.

A word of thank to the management of Federal College of Horticulture Dadin-kowa, who granted me permission to conduct my research in the college. Special word of thanks to the Head of Departments of Preliminary and General Studies Mal. Usman Alkali and General Horticulture Mal. Salisu Haruna Gombe.

To my colleagues at work, thank you for your interest in my study and the words of encouragement. Thank you also for the discussions we had and your valuable suggestions.

A special word of thank to my family and friends for their support. To my friends – I will not attempt to mention any names. Thank you for being there when I needed a cheerful chat. To my brothers SLT.H Musa and Dr Umar Gurama, thank you for showing interest in my study and for being there for me always. You lifted my spirit many times and encouraged me to carry on.

My wife, Jamila, and my son, Abdul Rahman had made a lot of sacrifices during my study. You were the ones who supported me when I was feeling down. You provided me with the necessary balance that I needed so much during my study. I thank you. To my mother and late father, who supported me, love me, and prayed for me, thank you so much for being there always. Words will not do justice to explain what you mean to me. You made huge sacrifices to assist me when called upon, and for that I am grateful. Most importantly, to my Heavenly late father who carried me all the way and never let go of my hand. Thank you all. I pray Almighty Allah to reward you abundantly.

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ABSTRACT

Slang seems to be one of the prominent language varieties whose existence is no longer contested. It is a variety originally designated to be the speech of people involved in criminality, bandit and other questionable characters, hence it suffers social stigma among linguists and lexicographers as they often associate its usage with overtly impertinent behaviour. However, in spite of this social stigma, slang continues to spread amongst people with different professions. Some see it as a linguistic tool that brings breathing life to language development. In view of this, the present study attempts to identify the use of slang especially among the youth with the objectives of exploring the communicative functions of slang, identify factors that influence the creation and use of slang lexical terms, finding out particular contexts wherein slang is used and identify the impression of youths regarding the use of slang. To achieve this, the researcher uses 86 subjects (educated and uneducated). Questionnaires were administered to sixty six participants, while interview was conducted for the remaining twenty subjects who do not have western education. The study considers slang as a register according to use, hence, Halliday's theory of classifying registers according to the dimensions of Field, Tenor and Mode is adopted as a theoretical framework for the study. The findings of the research reveal that the use of slang is basically determined by the situations and the subject matter being discussed (field) and the relationship between the speakers (tenor). Creativity and secrecy have been identified as major functions of slang among the youth. The study discovers that the use of creativity to form slang terms does not only occur in English but also in indigenous languages. And it arises productively through the processes already established in the language such as: coinage (neologism), borrowing, blending, clipping, acronym and metaphorical extensions. The work however, disagrees with the notion that slang is a means of opposing established authority. Respondents indicate that they do not see the use of slang as a process to rebel against the use of standard language but a platform to showcase their talent. It is also revealed that, gender and type of occupation are key to the creation of slang lexical expressions. Despite being stigmatised by linguists, the findings discover that youths are enthusiast and satisfied with the use of slang.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background

Language as a medium for human communication can be seen as a system of symbols, grammar, structure and meaning. The structure of words and the expressions in a language typically reveal recurring patterns of organisation. Such patterns give speakers the resources to establish new forms based on the structures within the language. Francis (1983:15) asserts that “no language spoken by more than a very small number of people is homogeneous’. Thus, Emerson (1976) considers language as a building of which every human being brought a stone. This explains that languages have considerable internal variations which give speakers many possibilities to create new variety of expressions. Labov (1969: 13) argues that “every speaker will show some variations in phonological and lexical rules according to the immediate context in which he is speaking”. Accordingly, speakers adapt their language “to fit the needs of the occasion”. Hudson (1980:3-5) contends that understanding our humanity entails knowing the language that makes us human. Thus, language and society are intertwined in such a way that is impossible to understand one without the other. As any human society is composed of different social groups, languages cannot be static, that is, language may vary accordingly. Within a society or culture, people who associate with one another as a result of having some common characteristic or interest such as occupation, education and belief may also develop a language variety as their own way of communication.

Therefore, within any recognizable speech community, variations are normally found on all levels of linguistics structure such as phonological, grammatical and lexical. Some of the variations are correlated with the social and cultural context. Wardhaugh (1986:10) observes that varieties that speakers use reflect matters like regional, social or ethnic origin and possibly even gender. This is further asserted by Ussel and Prideaux (1989) who attribute factors contributing to variations in language use to social context, age of participants, degree of formality, relative intimacy of the

participants, subject matter being discussed, relative differences in perceived power and authority of participants and a host others. Similarly, Preisler (1983:03) states that:

A speaker's choice of speech forms... is determined in a predictable but often complex way, by the structure and properties of the social situation as defined by an interplay of demographic variables such as region, social class, ethnic membership, age, sex and occupation with variables directly related to the speech event such as setting, medium, relative status of the participants, degree of formality and topic.

A speaker can therefore, use speech forms in accordance with the social situation which interplays between demographic variables such as gender, status of the participants, their relationship and the topic under discussion. Hence, Verderber (2005:4) observes that the essential elements in communication are participants, messages, meaning, symbols, encoding and decoding; all of which will come to play for communication to be effectively realized.

The languages of the world are constantly changing in the area of grammar, phonology, syntax and vocabulary. As an area of vocabulary which reflects a person's age (Holmes, 2008), slang seems to be one of the prominent language varieties whose existence is no longer contested. It is a widespread phenomenon in any language and the functions of it seem to be dependent on social context and also deeply rooted in every human being's need for belonging to a group. Slang intrudes into the vocabulary of many people with different socio-economic and educational statuses. It is an important variety of the English language in particular and all other languages in general though, originally designated to be "the speech of people involved in the criminal underworld, hooligans, bandits", etc. but now being used as an alternate vocabulary, encoding communal values (Nguemo 2010:21). Indeed, as Eble (1996) argues, "most slang words arise productively; that is, in conformity with patterns already established in the language". It exploits existing forms and their current meanings in various

ways, drawing on, and often mixing resources from the sound system, the word building processes, paradigms and the speaker's knowledge of the culture.

However, slang seems to have suffered social stigma among linguists and lexicographers as it has frequently been associated with overtly impertinent behaviour. Many still condemn the use of slang, believing that it undermines the standard language and reflects poorly upon its users. Parshall (1994) notes that Ambrose Bierce in his dictionary called slang "the grunt of the human dog". Even the Oxford English Dictionary (1989) edition defines it with disdain. It says slang is "the special vocabulary used by any set of persons of a low or disreputable character; language of a low and vulgar type". It has also sometimes been regarded as subversive, even though, in reality, it may, often, simply encode a shared experience and normally functions as an alternative vocabulary replacing standard terms with more forceful or interesting versions, just for the fun of it. De Klerk (1995:265) argues:

Slang has until recently been neglected by linguists and romanticised by its supporters as creative and vivid, unrestricted by the chains of a standard, or viciously criticised and condemned by prescriptivists as dangerously vulgar, non-standard speech. Yet it is a valid part of the linguistics competence of the individuals using it and as such deserves attention by linguists.

Moreover, Crystal (1995) hints that many groups use slang largely because they lack political power. According to him it is simply a safe and effective way that people rebel against the establishment. This is perhaps why most English and other language teachers wince at the idea of including slang in Language teaching, believing that it is a corrupt version of standard language. However, some are of the view of seeing and considering slang as a variety in language that has come to stay. For instance, Eric Partridge cited in Crystal (1995) states that despite being informal, slang serves a number of purposes as it displays identity of its users. Some also consider that slang is a real authentic material, pragmatic and living breathing part of the English language. It can be a motivational tool that provides colour, humour and intimacy in language use.

Slang can be said to be used in almost all socio economic backgrounds. It is used in all circles of speech community which according to (Hudson 1991) is a group of people connected to each other by the variety of language they speak which demarcates them linguistically from the larger society surrounding them. Slang can therefore, be realised by a specific group of people whose members are connected with some particular link, such as territory, (city), age (teenagers), subculture (students), and mainly occur in the spoken form of language. Of all the speech community, young people are more notorious for using slang in their speech as identified by Dazzell(2005:32):

Youth is the most powerful stimulus for the creation and
distribution of slang...when we are young, we are subject to
the generational imperative to invent a slang vocabulary that
we perceive as our own rejecting the slang of our older brothers
and sisters in favour of a new lexicon.

The period of adolescence, especially teenage years, is connected with close relationship with peers of different backgrounds and gradual separation from the parents' influence. Chambers (2009:182-4) highlights that the passage from childhood to adulthood is often, almost typically, accompanied by extremism. On the surface, rebellion against old norms takes an obvious outer signs, such as vividly coloured hair, piercing and torn clothes. Linguistically, the rebellion is marked through the use of distinctive slang vocabulary as a medium of communication.

Slang can thus, be seen as one of the idiosyncratic aspects of youths which allows them to shape and reshape language to suit their individual needs and status. This ability involves a shared knowledge of the linguistic code as well as of the socio-cultural rules, norms and values which guide the conduct and interpretation of slang expressions among them. Stenstrom (2002:65) lists some features that help in identifying youth slang. He points out that youth slang is characterised with vague words where existing words/expressions with new/extended meanings and new words/expressions are used. Dirty words (taboo/offensive words that are used in place of more accepted synonyms in the standard language, like *piss cold*), clippings, acronyms/abbreviations, derivations from popular culture and

borrowings from other languages are also among other features of youth slang. It is against this background that this work was set out to examine the use of slang among youth by essentially focusing on the functions it serves in their communication.

1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Slang as a variety of language is looked down by linguists and lexicographers as they have frequently associated it with overtly impertinent behavior. It has even been considered as “the grunt of the human dog” and a safe and effective way that people rebel against the establishment. However, despite the stigma, slang continues intruding into the speeches of many people especially youths and the reason for its functional use has been debated. Hence, this work was set to explore its forms and the communicative functions it serves among the youths.

1.2 AIM AND OBJECTIVES

This work aims at investigating a sociolinguistic description of the slang used by youths in the Federal College of Horticulture Dadin- kowa, Gombe State, Nigeria when using English or other languages.

To achieve this general aim, the study has the following objectives:

1. To explore forms and functions of youths slang in the area under study.
2. To identify factors that influences the use and creation of slang lexical items.
3. To find out if there were particular contexts wherein the youths under study use slang.
4. To find out the impression of youths regarding the use of slang.

1.3 SCOPE AND DELIMITATION

The research was essentially carried out on a specific area (Federal College of Horticulture Dadin-Kowa). The subjects were randomly selected from different backgrounds within the study area; and focus was basically on the forms and communicative functions of slang among the youths who use standard or adulterated English. So, the study was delimited to only youths who were either students or members of staff of the college who also fell between the ages of 18 to 24. The study also did not cover the negative implications of using slang or the variations of slang usage across genders.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Slang seems to have suffered social stigma among linguist and lexicographers as it has frequently been associated with overtly impertinent behaviour. However, there have been few studies of slang in most ESL environments especially Africa. Almost, all the studies followed a trend similar to the British counterparts, like studies of students' slang in academic environments. Gorke P. (1989) for instance, examines a collection of slang terms used by students of Obafemi Awolowo University Ile- Ife. He identifies personal disposition, level of social sophistication, course of study and reading habits among other predominant themes in the students slang expressions. Similarly, Martha N. (2010) writes an article on the prevalence of slang use among students of SBRS/ABU Funtua, Nigeria. She found out

variables such as age, gender, social background were among motivations for slang use among students. Both have ignored the inclusion of uneducated youth who perhaps because of their low or none educational background create and use slang. The communicative functions that slang expressions serve among its users also seems to have not been taken care of. Hence, this research work hoped to contribute immensely to the field of language study as it portrayed how youths from different socio economic backgrounds shape and reshape language(s) to create slang terms that can suit their individual needs and statuses. The work would also be significant as it identified various functions of slang expressions not only in English but other indigenous languages in Nigeria; considering that slang words now penetrate into public speeches, scientific language, media and other fields of human communication. Moreover, the findings of the research work will hopefully provoke the curiosity of researchers who consider slang as irrelevant of academic investigation as there are few studies on the subject especially in ESL countries in Africa.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Slang being informal and non- standard (Crystal, 1995, Stenstrom, 2002) form of communication, seems to have been existing in most cultures and classes of society as well as in all languages.. This work therefore, attempted to answer the questions below regarding the forms and functions of slang in particular and its usage in general among youth:

1. What functions does slang serve in youth communication?
2. What are the factors that influence the use, creation/choice of slang items?
3. In what situations do the youths use slang?
4. What are the impressions of the youth regarding the use of slang?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.0. INTRODUCTION

An attempt is here made to examine views of some scholars as well as other relevant works related to the topic being studied. The chapter therefore, begins with the definition of terms relevant to the study. It further provides general discussions of slang and later outlines the theoretical frame work for the research and discussed the sociolinguistic theories relevant to the study.

2.1 ENGLISH IN NIGERIA

The emergence of English language in Nigeria could be traced to the time when Christian missionaries arrived into the country and were later joined by the British colonialists. In 1842, the first school was established by the Christians missionaries where teaching of English was handled by the Europeans and other American liberated slaves. By the end of nineteenth century and the early twentieth century the southern and northern parts of the country were amalgamated by the British colonialists who eventually gave impetus to the spread of English language throughout the two protectorates.

When the country became a sovereign state, English received a new status as second and official language. As a multi- ethnic nation that has over four hundred different tribes (census 2006) with distinguishing features, speakers of these languages however, prefer to speak their indigenous languages at home and in a gathering of close relatives; but for the purpose of business, official engagements as well as other social gatherings, English language is used especially when people of different background are involved.

More so, some educated parents prefer their children to speak English instead of their indigenous languages and it has even become a common sight today in some part of Nigeria to hear a bus conductor and other school dropouts using English even in an adulterated form.

This therefore highlights that although English came to Nigeria as a foreign language, it slowly but steadily spread its roots all over the country in both standard and adulterated forms (Slang).

For the purpose of clarity, this current study particularly focused on slang of youths who are speakers of the indigenous languages in their areas and sometimes using English as second language (L2) or additional language (AL). These include youths who have encountered English both informally (through informal contexts) as well as formally (in schools).

2.2. THE ORIGIN OF SLANG

Slang is not an entirely a new phenomena. It was indeed considered as the main reason for the development of prescriptive language in an attempt to slow down the rate of change in both spoken and written languages (Thorny 1990). Latin and French were the only two languages that maintained the use of prescriptive language in the 14th century. It was not until the early 15th century that scholars began pushing for a Standard English language.

Ayto and Simpson (1992: iii) argue that the term slang dates back to the mid- eighteen century where it was used to refer to the restricted or special vocabulary of criminals or the low classes of society. It was therefore, associated with a kind of street language. During the 19th century, the meaning of slang broadened and was applied more generally to include any language of a highly colloquial type and it was seen as speech below the standard language and “consisting of either new words or current words employed in some new special sense” (Ayto and Simpson 1992: iii). This definition of slang in the 19th century holds for the 20th century, where slang is seen as language below the standard of language and not appropriate in a formal register or in written contexts.

Allen (2001: 266) views that slang is an urban phenomenon which originated in the socially diverse urban subcultures. Most of the slang words came from these subgroups in society and diffused through word- of- mouth to other groups and even sometimes infiltrate the standard language. This process would usually result in slang words changing their meanings and add new meanings to the existing

words. Hence, that ends in subculture based slang expressions which eventually could be taken up in the society as part of the general culture and slang (Allen: 268-269).

Also, during 1700`s, the cultural differences in America had begun to influence the English-speaking population, and slang started to expand. Asher (1994) points out that it was not until the 19th century that slang became a part of life of the modern cities, as well as part of modern societies in general. A well documented period that marked a change in behaviour of western societal values and codes was the era between the 1940`s and 1950`s when young people started displaying even greater differences in their manner of dress, hair style and speech than previous generation. This further developed into what became known in Britain as the “teenage revolution or movement”. This situation gradually spread across American and other part of the world and it was characterized on the importance of acknowledging and identifying youths as individuals with right to determine their own rules of language usages that should be free from any interference. The youth of that time according to Hudson (1983) had become of sub-culture in the society.

2.3. THE SLANG

No living language is simply one set of words which can be used the same way in all situations. This implies that there are many ways to say the same thing in different ways, depending on where you are, who you are talking to, and how you feel. One of the main factors which determine which words and structures are appropriate is the degree of formality of the situation in which one uses the language.

Slang as a subject of a language used by particular groups, offers its speakers avenues to create and used words differently. Slang consists of a lexicon of its own by creating new words or using old or existing words with new or distinctive meanings. Hence most of the words and expressions will not be found mostly in the dictionary, and can be distortions of existing words or entirely invented terms. It is used by all kinds of groups who share situations or interests. Thus, it “acts as a class divider” (Adams 2005) that set them apart or makes it difficult for ordinary people to understand them.

However, slang is academically taught and studied as a part of speech to be used sparingly, and as only appropriate away from classroom or professional settings. Speculating on why slang has not been subjected to serious scholarly analysis, Grossman (1997) argues that “the neglect of slang as a topic for research may be the result of such factors as the belief that slang use changes rapidly or that slang is not standard language”. Also, Bethany and Lighter (1978:47) are quick to stress the reasons why slang is considered as inferior form of speech in most setting:

It is markedly lower in prestige than Standard English.

It tends to appear first in the language of groups with low status, who may have little power or responsibility.

It is often taboo and unlikely to be used by people of high

Status and it tends to displace the conventional terms...

But Adams (2005:23) defends the usage of slang by saying “slang is a type of linguistic jaywalking: you can stand at the crosswalk and wait for the light to change, but that would be boring, as well as slow, so we’d rather not”

However, a perusal of the literature shows that slang has now been a subject considered worthy of attention among some scholars. Linguists have recently started showing considerable interest in it because of the prominence it has among youth. Though usually problematic to define, the literature available offers different perspectives on what constitutes slang. The word evokes mixed reactions among public and scholars. What is slang for one person is not slang for another. Even dictionaries on slang seem to differ on which words must be regarded as slang. Dumas and Lighter (1978:5) argue convincingly that the term “slang” has rarely been defined in a way that is useful to linguists. Everyone has its own opinion of what constitutes slang, but no clear linguistic effort or model has come forth in producing criteria for which words should be regarded as slang and which are not. Eble (1996:289) highlights the circumstances surrounding the definition of slang. She observes that one cannot set a clear linguistics distinction among terms such as jargon and colloquialisms. Hence, Dumas and Lighter (1978: ii) conclude that “while we all share an assumption that there is a lexical category of slang, we

differ widely in our assumptions about what items belong in that category. However, there are reactions ranging from describing slang as simply “bad” English to slang as a creative language that demands attention and explanation.

An eminent authority in the field of slang Eric Partridge (1935) who spent most of time in studying and collecting slang expressions and later authored a dictionary of slang and unconventional English claims that the term “slang” might not be beyond definition, but it is “incapable of precise definition” He thus, relates his definition to the Webster’s Third (new) International Dictionary (1985:342) which describes it as:

...a non standard vocabulary composed of word and senses characterized primarily by connotations of extreme informality. Composed typically of coinages or arbitrarily changed words, clipped or shortened forms, extravagant, forced figures of speech, or verbal novelties, experiencing quick popularity and relatively rapid decline into disuse.

The definition gives the notion of informality as a feature of slang. This is to say that slang is not used in informal speech or writing. Partridge (1935:74) in listing functions of slang claims that, it is intentionally used to decrease the formality of spoken as well as written discourse. This however, contradicts how some youths in this study who claimed that using slang was not a deliberate attempt to rebel against the rules of a standard language or decrease the formality of languages.

However, an early definition can be found in the encyclopaedia Britannica (1926). And it is defined as:

... in what is now usual sense, a general name for the class of words, more or less artificial or affected in origin or use, which are not recognized as belonging to the standard vocabulary of the language into which they have been introduced, but have an extensive currency in some section of society either as a means of concealing secrets or as intentionally undignified substitutes for those modes of expression that are employed by persons who values themselves on propriety of speech (1926:207)

This definition has major four points. It firstly says slang is in the “words” or the “vocabulary” which can be described as belonging to the lexicon of a language. It further states that slang “words” do not belong to the variety of a standard language as it associates often with poor grammar and questionable diction. It also expresses that a speaker who uses slang does so intentionally. More over, the quotes refer the use of slang to some section or society which means it is specifically used by a group of people established themselves as a sub-culture in the larger society.

With reference to the oxford English dictionary (OED1989 vol. xv: 651), the lexicographers Ayoto and Simpson, state that, slang includes the vocabulary of “the underworld (street gangs, drug trafficking) as well as the specific vocabulary of “a particular profession and colloquial language below the level of standard educated speech”, consisting of new words or of current words employed in some new special sense”. Allen (1990:819), in concise encyclopaedia of pragmatics, points to the uncertain existence of slang, describing it as “vocabulary in limbo... awaiting acceptance or rejection by standard usage. Thus, Anderson and Trudgil (1990) posit that slang mostly consists of words and expressions which are extremely informal and often fashionable but rather temporary. They further emphasize very strongly that slang is sociological rather than a purely linguistic phenomenon used to mark social differences and reinforces relationship within a group and keep outsiders outside. Yule (2006:211) observes that what is slang to a generation may not be slang to the next generation, since language is constantly changing, and words and expressions can move from one form of it to another. However, Dumas and Lighter (1978: 14-15) outline four criteria for deciding whether a linguistic item constitutes slang. Their view is that a linguistic item will constitute slang if it fits two of the four criteria below:

- a. The presence of the expression will markedly lower the dignity of the formal discourse (whether in speech or in writing), meaning that as a receiver you will not expect to find such an expression in a formal discourse. For example expressions such as “getting around”, “screwing around”, “picking around” are opposed to the more formal expression “sleeping around”.

- b. The use of the expression is based on the sender special familiarity with the group of people. “Special familiarity” refers to “in” terms which are opposed to the more conventionally accepted terms.
- c. The expression is seen as a taboo term in ordinary discourse among persons of higher social statuses or responsibility.
- d. The expression is used in place of the conventional synonym in order to: protect the sender from the discomfort conventional terms or to protect the sender from the discomfort of further elaboration. Lexical items and expressions borrowed from other languages fit into this category.

A pilot study earlier conducted by the researcher, revealed that most of the slang expressions meet three of the above criteria (especially criteria (b), (c) and (d), though criterion (b) might be problematic as it is difficult to determine groups’ actual special familiarity with the usage of certain terms. However, expressions like: “dabus”, “snake”, “morning show” all suggest that the sender is familiar with the in group terms of the target audience. Moreover, lexical items such as: “fucking around”, “akwati”, “bros”, and “camera” are taboo terms or used by the sender to avoid the explicit details contained in the more conventional terms.

The foregoing discussions suggest that Dumas and Lighter (1978) are inclined to defining slang terms of how they deviate from societal norms and attitudes. But Ellis (2002:6) sees slang as “a variety of language used in certain contexts by means of which people express their sense of belonging to a particular group within the community which is not specific to any geographic location”. For Spolsky (1998:35) slang is a kind of jargon marked by its rejection of formal rules, its comparative freshness and its common euphemism, and its marked use to claim solidarity. Galperin (1971:96) states that slang seems to mean everything that is below the standard usage of present day English. While Eble (1996) sees it as an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large. It

can therefore, be said that both Ellis and Eble focus on the social functions of slang, though the latter underscores one important issue about slang terms, their short-live terms. Today's slang is tomorrow's history. Slang words change meaning all the time and acquire different meanings with for different groups (Mlangeni, 2003). Slang words can, however, occasionally enter into standard usage, but the majority of the slang words has a short life span and is rapidly replaced by new ones. However, Martiello (2005) describes slang term by distinguishing the general from specific. While the general slang term are used by the speakers to deliberately break with the standard usage, and therefore are not group restricted, specific slang terms are used by people of common age and experience such as youth, they are therefore in-group makers. The creation of these terms usually arises productively as asserted by Eble (1996). Speakers often draw on the resources of the language, phonological, morphological and culture, to express new meanings.

From the definitions above it is apparent that slang is viewed from different fields of study: for some, slang is mainly a sociological construct, while others see slang as a purely linguistic notion. Both these notions of slang can be accommodated in sociolinguistics, which is the study of language relation to society. This study has however adopted slang as a sociolinguistic phenomenon which entails the study of a distinctive vocabulary that indicates social identity.

Opinions differ as to whether cant, jargon, swearing and argot should really be considered slang. Eble (1990), for instance, excludes both cant, (although it has contributed a great many times to slang) and jargon, which is characterized as a specific professional language with its own terminology. Anderson & Trudgill exclude all three as cant and jargon are sometimes connected with taboos of some kind and they contend that slang is often used as a substitute for swearing or a substitute for other words that are taboo, a phenomenon referred to as *euphemisms* (1990: 82). Instead of saying "I have to piss" which is not very polite there is a vast number of slang words that can be used instead, such as, *drain the spuds*, *answer nature's call* or *lose my weigh*. In contrast, chambers concise 20th century dictionary defines slang as "the jargon of any class, profession or set (1989), and in the oxford English dictionary of

(1989) we find that slang refers both to “the cant or jargon of a certain class or period” and to abuse and “impertinence”. Adams (2009) believes that it is wrong to use argot as synonyms to slang. He observes that “argot’s primary purpose is to deceive, to defraud and to conceal...”. However, Eble (1996) views that slang share some characteristics with each of these and the characteristics can overlap. This shows that cant, argot and jargon can be sources of slang as asserted by Partridge (1988). To sum it up, jargon, argot and cant can be said to be related to slang for its unique vocabulary and the distance from standard language, but the individual intended function separates them.

When all the definitions given above are compared with one another, the complexity surrounding the definition of slang is perceptible. However, what is generally agreed upon among linguists and lexicographers alike is that, slang is a short-lived, group related and ever-changing colloquial language. It is characterised with creativity, innovation often playful and metaphorical.

The negative attitudes attached to slang as a stigmatised and deviant language variety has not stopped scholars from conducting research on it. As stated earlier, a perusal of literatures highlight that linguists are gradually showing keen interest in the subject. Studies by Thorne (2004, 2005) are examples of efforts to sustain a scholarly examination of slang. He examines students’ slang terms in the United Kingdom and shows that some semantic clusters correlate with student’s preoccupations. Students create slang expressions to reflect and describe their academic life and other variety of issues which includes: course names, behaviour of students and lectures, absenteeism, course names, grades, nick names, and food items etc. His findings therefore, confirm that slang terms among students are a reflection of “actual students’ behaviour” Alimi and Arua (2008). Thorne (2008) further reports that the expressions employed by students are characterized with the presence of features identified by Halliday (1978) of re lexicalisation, over lexicalisation and figures of speech though not part of Halliday’s features.

2.4 DISTINCTION BETWEEN SLANG AND OTHER LANGUAGE VARIETIES

Bailey (1985:2) contends that “slang is best described as register or a variety according to use”. For him, slang is in fact a language variety, a way of communication that uses words or phrases that may replace those used in formal or standard language but have strong emotional impact. Like slang, a register is a subset of language used for a particular purpose or in a particular setting. But, Halliday and Hassan (1976:57) show register as “the linguistics features which are typically associated with a configuration of situational features- with particular values of the field, mode and tenor...” unlike slang, whose setting is totally informal, the setting of register may be either formal or informal depending on the situation. In their part, Dumas and Lighter (1978: 12) emphasize the importance of speaker intentions in identifying a word or expression as slang. To them the use of slang is in defiance of the existing language order and is used to consciously break the existing social and linguistic rules in order to establish a certain relationship with the receiver.

Moreover, some linguists make a distinction between slang and colloquialisms. On his part, Zuckermann (2003:21) sees slang as an informal lexical items used by a specific social group like teenagers, soldiers, prisoners, thieves. For Zuckermann, slang is not the same as colloquial speech, which according to him is informal, relaxed speech used on certain occasion by any speaker. Eble (1996:20) states that slang is often used in colloquial speech but not all colloquial expressions are slang.

2.5 SLANG AND SOCIAL VARIABLES

Understanding the relationship between language and society is the major focus of sociolinguistics. It tends to highlight among other things the correlation between language variation and other social variables such as age, gender, and socio-economic class. Milroy and Milroy (1997:50) suggest that “in order to demonstrate co-variation between linguistic and social categories, it is desirable to identify speaker’s age, gender, and social group”.

2.5.1 SLANG AND AGE

Many scholars argue that there are patterns of speech appropriate for young people. These patterns however, are likely to decrease or disappear as they grow older (Holmes1992:183; Hudson 1996:15). Researchers like Bailey (1985), Bembe (2006), De Klerk (1991), Eckert (1997), Thorne (1998) assert that adolescent tend to speak more slang than adult. Ekert (1997:163) observes that adolescent is a period when advancement in language use is marked. During this time, people become more creative and active. Bailey (1985:5) supports the view by saying that slang “is used more by younger people and merely used by adult”. Sternsorn (2002:74) identifies teenagers who are between the ages of 17-19 as those who relatively use more slang than the other categories. This is followed by those who are between 14- 16 years. However, there seems to be a gradual decrease in the use of slang among those of 20 years old onward. A similar result was also found by De Klerk (1995) who investigated the problem of English slang among 160 English speaking white adolescents, focusing on the independent variables of age and gender. The study revealed that teenagers between the ages of 15-17 demonstrated an increased knowledge and a more positive attitude toward slang. This he attributed to the attempts by the teenagers to separate themselves from the larger community through various means, one of which is linguistics. This can be summed up with the words of Eskert (2000:8) who states that linguistic style is an important part of age appropriate behaviour and further notes that adolescence has been considered as a turning point in the speaker’s sociolinguistic competence.

2.5.2. SLANG AND GENDER

Scholars such as Coates (1987) and Fasold (1990) argue that the men and women differ in their speech forms though the differences are not usual and quite noticed. In his study on the relationship of language and gender Coates (1987:12) posits that two main approaches to gender differences in language reflect the views of women as different from men or as oppressed and marginalized. The first approach is the one that emphasizes the notion that, men and women belong to separate sub-cultures. Their linguistics barriers are interpreted as reflecting these sub-cultures. The second is the view that considers women as an oppressed group and interprets linguistic differences among men and women

as a reflection of men's dominance and women's subordination. Fasold (1990:12) supports Coates's view and states that taboos have a powerful influence on the growth of separate gender vocabularies in general. This shows that there are some certain words women should not use. Instead, they may tend to coin a new word or paraphrase. According to Fasold (ibid) a woman might use a different form when talking to another woman compared with when talking to a man.

In relation to the study on slang and gender, various researchers have argued that slang is mostly used by male than female. As De Klerk (1995:267) highlights "linguistics taboos exist in most cultures, and such words are avoided and considered inappropriate". He goes on to argue that women, considered as aspiring to prestigious "ladylike" behaviour, have long been taken as upholding such taboos, and avoiding non-standard or dirty words in particular. For De Klerk, higher levels of slang usage by male are attributed to the fact that use of slang often implies a high level of confidence, which typically, is a male attribute. This can be seen in many societies where boys receive special and rather extensive training which prepares their transition to manhood and make them strong, courageous and brave (De Klerk 1997:145). This process however, extends into linguistics domains as well. According to De klerk, many slang words including the taboo and derogatory are mostly used by male than female. This could be linked to the perception held by many that male are seen as powerful and strong to express themselves. The view is further asserted by Grossman and Tucker (1987:102) who see the use of slang has traditionally been a male dominated domain as indicated in the "220 expressions for a promiscuous woman compared to merely 22 expressions to describe male counterpart". The situation according to Chapman (1997:103) has however changed a decade later, as he found an increasing use of vulgar and taboo slang amongst women which he attributed in part of the feminist movement for gender equity policy and showing that women are as powerful as males and that they have the same liberty of speech. But both sexes still believe that slang is more appropriate for males than females despite the claim by Groosman and Tucker (1997:108) that the gap between males and females in slang use is still closing and that it is more legitimate for females to use slang frequently in their everyday language.

Flexner's (1975:xiii) preface in the *Dictionary of American Slang* supports the assertion that men are likely to use more slang than women. He claims:

In my work on this dictionary, I was constantly aware that most American slang is created and used by males. Many types of slang words, including the taboo and strongly derogatory ones that refer sex, women, work, money, politics, transportation, sports and the like are primarily used by male... Women have very little of their own slang. The new words applied to women's clothing, kitchen utensils, and gadgets usually created by men.

2.5.3. SLANG AND SOCIAL GROUP

Slang is a tool through which members of a particular social group identify and interact among themselves. Goodfellow (2006) posits that students and other social groups are characterized by the use of specific slang expressions. Mesthrie and Tabouret (2001) however, argue that the speakers' use of language is a series of acts of identity in which speakers seek to align themselves with, or distance themselves from certain social groups. Thus, linguistic choices are seen as a channel through which individuals identify themselves and identify others. Eble (1996:11) describes slang as "an ever changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in society at large". De Klerk (1995:267) also observes that slang reinforces group membership and acts as a marker of social and linguistic identity.

2.6. LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS OF SLANG

Morphological and grammatical properties of slang: Morphology is said to be a process of word formation. It explains the processes involved in the creation of lexical items in a language. Slang as a vocabulary construct, operates mainly on the lexical level, specifically on the level of lexical morphology and lexical semantics (as opposed to phonology and syntax). Yule (1996) classifies

processes involved in word formation which includes: derivation, conversion, compounding, coinage, borrowing, clipping, acronym, blending. In her part, Eble (1996) explains that slang vocabulary as well as general vocabulary arises productively due to word processes which includes compounding, affixation, functional shift, shortening and blending. She further stresses that “slang explains existing word and their current meaning in various ways, drawing on and often mixing resources from the sound system, the word building processes, paradigms, and the speaker’s knowledge of the culture. New slang expressions are formed by means of these above mentioned derivational processes. On the level of semantics, slang words tend to change or extend meanings and are used as figurative language, such as metaphors Munro (1989: 5).

Slang lexical items have particular characteristics. However, these characteristics are not exclusive to slang. The features include, among others, the following:

- a. Existing standard language words are used with new meanings, *dog* (“*ugly lady*”), *camera* (“*a lady who wears a transparent clothes*”)
- b. The creation or coining of new words (neologisms) that have not been received into the standard language e.g. *maxsing* (“*too economical*”)
- c. The use of figurative language, such as metaphors and metonyms, e.g. *box* (“*a fat woman*”), *cancer stick* (“*cigarettes*”),
- d. The use of abbreviations and acronyms (not recognised in standard dictionaries), e.g. *the big A* referring to AIDS.
- e. The shortening of standard words, referred to as clipping
- f. The blending of two words e.g. *difxams* (from *difficult* and *exams*)
- g. Borrowings from foreign languages e.g. “*Jabbama*” a Fulfulde word meaning “welcome” (*a Peugeot 406 car*)
- h. Derivations from popular culture (such as television, radio, advertisements, movies, music etc) *Anaconda* (Toyota camry 2008 model)

- i. Taboo words, e.g. *fuck-up*. Carstens (2003:362); Galperin (1971:97-98); Coetzee (2005: 252-255.)

A pilot study undertaken for this work revealed that most of the lexical items of slang by the group under study have some of the characteristics identified above. Example:

1. Compounding: noun + noun – couch potato = “lazy person”
-verb + noun-breakneck= dangerous situation
Adjective + noun: big mouth = a talkative person
2. Affixation: hardy – depressive experience
Dogky – stupid
Megas – busy
Meganotes – huge amount of money
3. Function shifts
-shifts from noun to verb:
Potato = “lie around doing nothing
Crash = to sleep
-shift from adverb to verb:
Later: = to end a relationship
4. Acronyms:
My – money,
B. G = Background, S. C – Sim card
24 – Twenty hours
5. Clipping =
Uni= university moms = mother
Sitch = situation bros = brother
Beb = baby girl

2.7 FUNCTIONS OF SLANG

In the modern world today, slang has become so much a defining trait of so many groups that it is impossible to ignore the impact it has on human communication. Though, slang expressions are considered to be a lower class way of speech, but it is used in all socio-economic background and all different regions. The expressions which may take the forms as metaphors, simile, euphemism and other figures of speech, are inevitable becoming associated with the inner cities, rural areas, and especially with minorities. Hence, every social group uses some type of slang and by association, thus words and grammar become property of that group, something defines them in a certain way. However, not all the slang remain characteristics to the group it began in; some type of slangs expand across generation and become accepted standard language because social conditions have either made them fashionable or people have become used to hearing and using them. Sociolinguists have also believe that until 1970s women used less slang than men because slang was supposed to be a semi restricted vocabulary of male subculture, which is today losing its exclusiveness and isolation (Allen 1998: 882).

Slang as a way in which languages are changed and renewed, has become a common sight today, as people working down the street using it in their common casual conversation. Thus, slang is believed to fulfill various functions for its users. Crystal (1995) cites examples from Eric Partridge's "slang, today and yesterday" to illustrate many uses of slang. Partridge according to the historical dictionary of American slang, which is perhaps the century's best-known collector of unconventional English" points out that people use slang for fun, humour, playfulness, to be creative, to shock others, to reduce the excessive seriousness of a convention; to be secretive; for group identity and solidarity. These functions of slang are further supported by Bailey (1985) who observes that slang may be used for humorous effect; to regulate social interaction where by a group uses particular words for a particular purpose such as in greeting and farewells. In the same vein, Mesthrie (1995) believes that slang reinforces group membership and acts as a marker of social and linguistic identity. Partridge (1935) develops 15 reasons for using slang among people. But he particularly identifies two reasons (13 and 14) as the most significant. The reasons are as follows:

1. In sheer high spirit, by the young in heart and the ones who are young in age; or just to be doing it for the fun of it
2. As an exercise either in wit and ingenuity or in humour
3. To be different, to sound novel
4. To be charming
5. To be unmistakable arresting, even startling
6. To escape from clichés, or to be brief and concise
7. To enrich the language
8. To lend an air of solidity, correctness; to the abstract: of earthiness to the idealistic; and appositeness to the remote
9. To soften the tragedy, to lighten or to prettify the predictability or death, or to mask the ugliness or the pity of profound turpitude and to enable the speaker or his audience to endure
10. To speak or write down to an inferior or to amuse a superior public; or merely to be on an informal level with either ones audience or ones subject matter
11. For ease of social intercourse
12. To induce either friendliness or intimacy of a deep or durable kind
13. **To show that one belongs to certain school, trade, or profession, artistic or intellectual set, or social class; in brief, to be in the swim or to establish contact**
14. **To show or prove that someone is not in the swim**
15. To be secret ; not be understood by those around

Eble (1996) reiterates some of the reasons outlined by Partridge and adds to these by referring to the function of slang as a means of opposing established authority.

Slang can therefore, be said to have served several purposes. In many cases, as outlined earlier, it makes conversation more informal and enables users (youth especially) to more closely connect with others in the group. It has more colourful and descriptive terminology- far more than formal language. It engages minds through humour, sarcasm and cynicisms. Hence, the concise new Partridge

Dictionary of slang and unconventional English states “we have considered for inclusion all unconventional English that has been used with the purpose or effect of either lowering the formality of communication and reducing solemnity and/or identifying status or group and putting oneself in tune with one’s company” (Delzeil & Victor 2005:45).

2.8 SLANG AS A REGISTER ACCORDING TO USE

The use of language largely depends on the relations of the speaker, addressee, audience and particularly the relations of power or solidarity among them. Every speaker tends to show some variation in phonological and syntactic rules according to the immediate context in which he is speaking. (Labov1996:120). Thus, speakers adapt their language to fit the needs of the occasion. Bailey (1973:46) points out that slang is best described as a register or a variety according to use. This view has however been supported by Halliday (1964:87) who says “the convention of a certain kind of language is appropriate to a certain use. He further classifies registers according to the dimensions of field, mode and tenor of discourse.

2.8.1 FIELD OF DISCOURSE

Field discusses the subject matter and the particular purposes that the use of language is serving within the context of that activity (Halliday 1978). This shows that meaning of a certain word can be inferred when the content and the social setting are put together. Doughty et al (1972:33) observe that:

Field refers to the institutional setting
in which a piece of language occurs, and
embraces not only the subject matter but
the whole activity of the language or participant
in a setting.

Researchers on slang often argue that it is used in an informal settings (Eble 1996); (Anderson and Trudgill 1990). The topics participants engage in are also determined by the contexts they find themselves in. A pilot study conducted by the researcher through personal observations and group discussions which involved some twenty five youths testified that, context mattered much in employing slang expressions. They youth adopted various slang expressions on topics related to love, fashion, friendship, education etc depending on the environment in which they get themselves.

Field of discourse is also related to the ideational function of language (Gregory and Carroll 1978). In the case of slang, the ideational function is to transmit information from speaker to hearer, including the interlocutor's life experiences. This however, will be determined by what the speakers are doing at the time as well as the topic they are engaged in.

2.8.2 MODE OF DISCOURSE

This refers to whether the lexicon used in communication is written or spoken. Halliday (1978) cites Pearce (1972} who sees:

...the channel of communication adopted not only

the choice between spoken and written medium, but much more detailed choices .(we might add: and other choices related to the role of language in the situations).

Slang nowadays is used in writing especially in modern internet blogs, facebook and Twitter. However, the participants as well as the topic during a particular time will determine the mode of discourse of the slang users. Thus, circumstances will dictate to the users which medium they could employ.

2.8.3 TENOR OF DISCOURSE

This refers to the relationship between the text producer and text receiver. Use of slang implies a relaxed and informal relationship between producer and receiver. The relationship is established through societal factors such as social status, age and background of the participants. The relationship that exists among the participants takes into account whether the parties are friends, parent- child, teacher - pupil.

Thomas et al (2004: 57) argue that "...speakers take into account whom they are talking to and alter their speech accordingly". Therefore, the manner in which speakers address one another will depend on their statuses and the context wherein they interact. An interview carried out by the researcher during the pilot study showed that two friends confirmed addressing their Biology teacher in a more formal way within the classroom setting when analyzing one of the scientific concepts. However, they testified that, they were likely to also address him in a relaxed and less formal variety when meeting him at a social gathering such as a party.

2.9. DEFINITION AND EXPLANATIONS OF "YOUTH" AND "YOUTH CULTURE"

There are various definitions provided by scholars of the term “youth”. Roach (2004:17) for instance, sees “the youth as a phase in the life course between childhood and adulthood and “young people” as that group of individual going through that phase. The term is sometimes inaccurately used to describe similarities in behaviour style of some adolescent and young adult. In its part, a World Bank internet website (www.web.worldbank.org) cuts the age of youth from eighteen to twenty- four. However Marshall (1994:24) defines the term youth from sociological perspective. He says the term involves ... “an ascribed status, or socially constructed label, rather than simply the biological condition of being young”. Marshall sees the term as used in three different ways: firstly, it is generally used to cover sets of phases in the life circle of an individual, from an early infancy to young adult hood; secondly in adolescent with emphasis on teenagers and their transition to adult hood: and thirdly to a set of supposed emotional and social problems associated with growing up in urban industrial society. But according to Davis (1971:3) youth culture refers to the existence of a collective age bound of thought being practiced fundamentally separable and distinct from the culture of the larger society in which youth find themselves.

On their part, Amit and Willff (1995:224) describe youth culture as not “... necessary a sub-culture but a distinct culture, particularly that of a youth as different from that of adult”. Youth culture therefore is an identity marker placing the youngster within the particular and specific age group, sharing the values, norms and standard of that culture. Hence, the term can be viewed as shared experience and communality among them (youths), not as member of counter culture, but members of their own meaningful society. Thus, adolescence can be seen as not only the transitional period between childhood and adulthood, but also the essential period for the development of social and linguistics behaviour of a person. Some of the innovations in youths talk (slang inclusive) have gained currency into the mainstream language because youth language has the potential to influence the way some languages develop. (Stenstrom 2002: x).

2.10 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework of this study was derived from the Halliday's theory. He classifies registers according to the dimensions of **FIELD, TENOR, AND MODE**. The choice of the theory owes to the fact that slang users take into account the context, subject matter and the relationship among them when using slang expressions.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0. INTRODUCTION

The chapter discusses the procedure used for conducting the research. The nature of the study area and the subjects were explained. It also highlighted the data collection procedure adopted for the study.

The discussions were given as follows:

1. Area of study
2. Population
3. The subjects
4. Sampling procedure
5. Research design
6. Instrumentation
7. Validity and reliability of the instrument
8. Method of data analysis

3.1 AREA OF STUDY

The study area of this research was Federal College of Horticulture Dadin- Kowa. The school is located in Gombe state, North Eastern Nigeria. It offers different programmes ranging from pre-diploma, diploma and higher national diplomas courses. The college is considered as a cosmopolitan environment as students from different socio- economic background are found. Beside, the college contains youths from various ethnic/ social backgrounds who work as either laborer, security personal, or drivers. The use of slang here has been prevalent especially among students who mostly are in the college's farm for practical, hence the choice of the place as the researcher's area of study.

3.2 POPULATION

The subjects for the study were educated and uneducated youths who fall between the age of 18 and 24. And their population was one hundred and ten (110).

3.3 THE SUBJECTS

The study was based on exploring the forms and communicative functions of slang among youths in the Federal College of Horticulture Dadin Kowa Gombe state. The subjects therefore, comprised both male and female youth between the ages of 18 and 24 who hail from different socio- ethnic and cultural background such as Hausas, Fulanis, Tangale, Bolewa, Kanuri and others. The subjects also comprised sixty six youths who have attended formal schools and twenty who did not have formal education. Thus, sixty six of the respondents were educated while twenty were not educated. The basic assumption was that youths are identified as the group that uses slang and the slang expressions are sometimes derived not only from English lexicon but indigenous languages.

3.4 SAMPLING

Due to time and other factors militating against the conduct of research, the researcher observed that it might be practically impossible to collect data from the entire population of the study area. Hence, he employed stratified sampling method through the use of Kreichie and Morgan (1971) model. According to the model, when a researcher has a population size of one hundred and ten, the appropriate sample size that represents the population shall be eighty six (86). Thus, eighty six was considered as the sample size for the research work.

3.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

The study is basically a survey research that entails investigation. Questionnaire and structured interview were used on the selected subjects. The two methodologies were important in an attempt to arrive at a better comprehension of the slang used by the group under investigation. The data collected served to investigate forms and the reasons for speaking slang as well as the functions it serves in their communication.

3.6 THE RESEARCH TOOLS

The research tools used for this work were questionnaire and interview. The aim of using the written questionnaire was to gather data on the demographics of the respondents; their frequency of and reasons for using slang; the context wherein they use slang; as well as samples of the lexical items and phrases they use. The data collected facilitated in the compilation and discussion of the lexicon they use. Sixty six questionnaires were administered. The researcher was assisted by a volunteering youths in the process of distribution and collection of the completed questionnaires.

As earlier stated, that the researcher drew his subjects from youths who have either attended schools or not; but considering the fact that questionnaire could only be effectively used with educated subjects, the researcher used interview for his uneducated subjects. More so, the interview was to facilitate in verifying and comparing some of the responses provided in the questionnaire. Twenty interviewees participated in the process. The two instruments were therefore used to inquire the following from the respondents:

SECTION A: PERSONAL DETAILS

The section aims to provide the demographics of the respondents such as their age, gender, tribe, occupation and level of education. This information was to assist in compiling the socio linguistic profile of the respondents.

SECTION B: THE USE OF SLANG

The section was designed to make the researcher obtain data for the study from the respondents. The details of the questions are as follows:

1. How did you learn slang?

This question focused on the extent to which the participants learnt slang from different categories of people. The question was paramount for explaining those who influence the respondents on learning slang. It is assumed that understanding the category of people that influences the learning of slang would assist to find out and analyze the functions of slang usage

2. How often do you speak slang?

The question sought to understand the frequency of using slang amongst the subjects

3. Where, when and with whom do you speak slang?

The assumption here was that slang is a language variety used in a contextualised situation. The respondents were therefore, given various possibilities of domains wherein they might use slang and requested to identify the frequency of using slang in each of the given option.

4. Why do you use slang?

The motive for the question was to digest and identify various communicative functions slang serves for the group under investigation. The respondents were thus allowed to specify reasons they consider slang renders in their communications. They were given the room to list as many as possible.

5. How do you consider the use of slang?

6. Can you encourage someone to use slang?

7. Do you regard speaking slang as a protest against the use of standard language?

Essentially, these questions were designed to demand information regarding the respondents' impressions on slang usage. The responses were thought to have assisted the researcher to identify the position of slang among the youth.

SECTION C: SLANG EXPRESSIONS

Under this section, respondents were requested to write down as many as possible slang words and expressions they use, their attached meanings, the context of use and the reasons for its usage. The words asked could even originate from other native languages other than English. The aim was to study the lexical items and identify factors that influence the creation and use of the words given and also analyse the reason behind using them.

3.7 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF THE INSTRUMENT

Before administering questionnaires and conducting the interview, items were validated by the supervisor for the basis of relevance and clarity. Modifications were made based on the comments by the supervisor.

3.8 METHOD OF DATA ANALYSIS

The researcher believed that slang is a register according to use. Hence, he based his data analysis on Halliday's model of register which classifies the use of lexical terms according to field, mode and tenor. Therefore, circumstances that led to the use of slang as well as impression on the use of slang by the subjects in the study area were analysed according to the above mentioned model.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the presentation and analysis of the data gathered using questionnaires and interview. The chapter therefore, presents details about the forms and functions of youths slang, the domain of its usage, factors that influence slang use and its creation and the impression held by the youth regarding the use of slang. The data collected from the written questionnaire and interview was discussed and analysed below:

4.1 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1.1 HOW DID YOU LEARN SLANG?

Respondents were requested to indicate to what extent they had learnt slang from these categories: peers/friends, siblings, parents and social media. Of the sixty six participants who responded to this question, fifty seven representing 86.4%, testified that they learnt slang mostly from peers and friends, 9.1% moderate while the lowest was 4.5%. Social media is a second striking category where the subjects indicated learning slang from. This might be attributed to the impact of New Technologies on language use. Recently, New Technology plays a very vital role in the process of communication which language is assumed to fulfil. Internet, chat rooms and cell phones are among the most effective, convenient and widely used technological instruments for communication globally; and youth nowadays, are known to have used cell phones messages (SMS) which Mphale and Mashamaite (2005:161) argue to be economically cheaper and reduce the time spent during the process of communication. The findings thus, revealed that thirty eight respondents (57.6%) learnt slang from the social media. However, the result showed that parents and siblings were not among the categories of people where slang is mostly learnt. Only 3.0% and 10.6% said they learnt slang from parents and siblings respectively.

During the interview, 16 of the respondents representing 80% claimed to have learnt slang expressions from their friends/peers better than any other category of people. When asked to elaborate, they attributed it to high frequency of its usage among circles of friends. However, when asked to explain if social media had any impact towards learning slang, 19 (95%) said, social media played an insignificant role in picking slang expressions. This might be connected to the low level of exposure to these social media due to their low level of formal education and also the nature of their job.

From the findings it can be safely said that friends/peers and social media have a greatest influence for learning and picking slang lexical words. The study therefore supports Anderson and Trudgill (1990) claim who contend that most of the slang expressions are the invention of a certain group and basically use them to mark social differences.

4.1.2 FREQUENCY OF SLANG USAGE

Frequency of Use	Count	Percentage
Very Often	14	21.3%
Often	34	51.5%
Seldom	18	27.2%
Total	66	100%

Table1: Frequency of Slang Usage

The table above shows that 51.5% of the respondents often use slang. While 27.2% speak it sometimes. It appears however, that slang is not always used by the respondents anytime (21.3%). Though they admitted speaking it, but did not become their usual variety always. This finding therefore goes with the De Klerk (1991:68-82) position which claims slang is mostly used by the youth and is seen as one of their idiosyncratic aspects which allows them to shape and reshape language to suit their individual needs and status considering the period as a passage from childhood to adulthood which Chambers (2009:182-4) describes as a stage accompanied by extremism in social and language behaviour.

Similarly, the data collected from the uneducated subjects showed that their speeches were often characterized with slang terms. 17 of them representing 85% said they often use slang in their speeches.

Therefore, it can be argued that the frequency of slang usage could be a reflection that highlights them as those who are linguistically adventurous. They think, they are at a crucial stage in their linguistic development to be experimental and creative with language of their own which might serve to set them apart from adults and other younger counterparts who do not belong their group. More so, it can be said that level of education could not be a determinant factor for frequent use of slang. Both educated and uneducated seem to have often adopted slang terms.

4.1.3 Where, when and with whom do you use slang?

Frequency	Context	Percentage
Often	At school or work with peers	15.2%
	Social gatherings (informal context)	74.3 %
	At home with adults (includes parents)	3.0 %
	At school or work with adults and teachers	7.6%
Seldom	At school or work with my friends and peers	60.6 %
	Home with adults including parents	15.2 %
	Social gathering informal context	21.2 %
	At school with adults/teachers	19.7 %
Never	At school /work with friends	24.2 %
	Social gathering/informal context	4.5 %
	Home with parents/siblings	81.8 %
	School with adults and teachers	72.7 %

Table 2: Context of Slang Usage.

From the responses given above, it is clear that slang is not mostly used in every context. The respondents considered Halliday's model of field and tenor, which explains that uttering and understanding a word should go in tandem with the relationship of the parties involved in the conversation as well as the domain/environment in which the speech activity is performed. As it can be seen in the table, the respondents often use slang in informal contexts like social gatherings where they can meet with their peers and friends and discuss freely. This is evident as 74.3% agreed to have been frequently using slang in such occasions where only 4.5% who said they never use it there.

Apart from social gatherings, the respondents tend to seldom use slang in school with peers/friends only. The results showed that 60.6% percent speak it at school with peers, while only 15.2% use it there often. This might be attributed to the view held by some scholars that slang is essentially used in informal context. The respondents, therefore, believed that school environment being formal does not allow speaking slang; hence they restrict themselves from speaking it often. It is also clear that they are rather reluctant to speak slang at home with adults especially parents and also with siblings. This is connected with the topic being discussed; the context (field) as well as the relationships (tenor) do not call and encourage the use slang.

Similarly, some participants who were interviewed revealed that context, age, and the relationship that exist between the speakers are major factors that determine the use of slang. When asked to state under what conditions they use slang, 85% responded that they speak it in informal contexts mostly with their peers and generally avoid using slang with adults including parents and others who do not belong to their group and children below their age. However, 15% vowed to have spoken it everywhere, because according to them they have become used to it, but they would be mindful about some expressions that have vulgar connotations.

It can therefore be argued that, even being a widespread phenomenon in languages, slang usage seems to be deeply rooted in human beings need for belonging to a group. It usage helps to develop and create group identity both as a group member and as an individual. The choice of respondents to

mainly speak slang in social gatherings is tied to the fact that they are aware of the status of slang in language use. They know that slang is sub standard and informal which should be adopted among people with special familiarity. More so, the reluctance to use slang in formal and semi-formal situations (together with parents, teachers etc.) could be attributed to the type of relationship and nature of the subject matter being discussed. Respondents seem to assume that matters being discussed with these categories of people are somehow serious and thus, avoid using slang.

The findings therefore, reveal that the use of slang implies a relaxed and informal relationship between the producer and the receiver. Societal factors such as social status, age and background of the participants are key elements that establish the relationship as Thomas et al (2004:51) contends that ...speakers take into account whom they are talking to and alter their speech accordingly.

4.1.4 FORMS AND COMMUNICATIVE FUNCTIONS OF SLANG

Participants were asked to write down any functions that slang serve in their communication. Various responses were given and they are as follows according to the frequency:

- | | |
|--|------|
| 1. Creativity | = 69 |
| 2. Keeping secret | = 65 |
| 3. Avoid sounding vulgar | = 63 |
| 4. Simpler and easier than standard English/language | = 61 |
| 5. Fashion | = 35 |

From the data obtained, it is obvious that participants mostly regard slang as a platform where they exhibit their talent for being creative and innovative. Slang creates a lexicon of its own by creating new words or using existing words with new distinctive meanings. Thus, slang allows them to shape and reshape language in different ways and coin words that suit their individual needs. The analysis of creativity in the study can be said to mainly operate on the level of lexical morphology, lexical

semantic and phonology. Slang lexical items collected from the participants are formed and generated productively due to various processes involved in word formation which includes coinage (neologism), borrowing, clipping, acronym, and blending. Example:

Coinage:

S/N	SLANG	MEANING
1.	Maxsing	too economical
2.	Bablamojora	an extremely attractive woman
3.	Chaltie	a brilliant student
4.	Muri	one hundred naira
5.	Juth	a sickly pregnant woman
6.	Rightie	a principled lecturer
7.	Langurush	somebody who usually shows off
8.	Zafxie	a hard working student
9	Fammer	a student who does not have registration fees
10	Teepor	a damsel
11	Waskolie	a close friend
12	Nesfert	a shortened semester
13	Gumzer	five hundred naira note
14	Misira	a student who works to pay his/her school fees

An analysis of these slang expressions would show that, they are not standard lexicon but were created and used by the respondents to express their talents. One interesting facet of some of the created slang terms is their recognizable functions. Like any new coinage, a slang word may fill gap in the existing lexicon. For example, there is no single word that describes or defines a “principled lecturer”. So the respondents have coined the term “*rightie*” to refer to this person; and a student who does some manual work to pay his school fees is termed as “*misara*”.

Borrowing from one language to another:

Languages and dialects normally do not exist in a vacuum. They, or more accurately, their speakers, have come into contact with other languages which results into influencing each other. Evidence suggests that some slang terms originate from borrowing, a result of language contact with English and

other African languages (Dumas and Lighter1978:14-15). Thus, because English is the lingua franca in Nigeria, borrowing from English by indigenous languages is considerable during the colonial period and after. This process has even been extended to slang usage, where by some English lexical words are used as slang by the speakers of indigenous languages and some natives words are used as slang for those who speak English as their second language. The following are the examples collected from the subjects:

S/N	SLANG WORD	SOURCE	MEANING AS SLANG
1.	Bukka	a Hausa word (thatched roof)	a fool
2.	Lami	a Hausa name given to a baby girl born on Thursday	a Peugeot 504 saloon car
3.	Scooter	An English word (Motorcycle)	daily meals
4.	Snooker	An English word (Game)	a very fast journey
5.	Lawal	a Hausa proper name for a male person	an old man who loves young women
6.	<i>ja ama</i>	a Fulfulde word (used to welcome a visitor)	406 Peugeot car
7.	Satellite	An English word	a brand new bus
8.	Socket	An English word	a friendly person
9.	Gear box	An English word	family issues

A look at these slang terms, one can say that they are all standard vocabulary found in different languages. But when used as slang their semantic meanings are extended, a process described by linguists as “relexicalisation” where a substituted word may be used for an existing term.

Clipping

Clipping as a process of shortening existing standard words which results into creating new words though the meanings of the shortened words would be retained is another creative way of using slang as identified by this study. Examples:

S/N	SLANG WORD	SOURCE	MEANING AS SLANG
1.	Beb	English word (baby)	An admirable baby

			girl
2.	Assig	English word (assignment)	Assignment
3.	Sems	English word (semester)	Semester
4.	Moth	English word (mother)	Mother
5.	kwas	Hausa word (<i>kwaskwarima</i>)	<i>Kwaskwarima</i> (a quick shower)
6.	App	English word (appointment)	Appointment

The researcher has however, observed that most of the shortened words are used in writing especially when the respondents were sending SMS messages to colleagues.

Acronyms

This is also another process through which the youth in the study displayed their talent of creativity to form slang expressions. Eble (1996:35) refers this process as “sounds are eliminated from words without an immediate change in meaning”. The following are some of the examples found from the respondents:

S/N	ACRONYMS (SLANG)	MEANING
1.	M.Y	money
2.	P.E	phone
3.	P.K	park
4.	T.T	test

However, compound words are abbreviated to form a slang term through using the first two letters of the compound words. Example:

S/N	ACRONYMS (SLANG)	MEANING
1.	C.R	class representatives
2.	S.C	SIM card
3.	D.C	debit card
4.	P.N	phone number
5.	R.F	registration fees
6.	U.G	a Hausa word meaning “a

	godfather”) <i>ubangida</i>
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Moreover, an acronym used as slang by the other group of the participants (uneducated) was changed and became native. The word “car” is abbreviated and pronounced as “*kA*”.

Blending

Yule (1985:53) observes that the process of blending occurs when part of a word is deleted. The same principle applies to some of the lexical items that were collected for this research. The respondents show their talent of creativity to coin and use slang terms by blending some words to form new ones.

Examples:

S/N	SLANG	BLENDED WORD
1.	Difxams	Difficult & examinations
2.	Labfa	Laboratory & farm (used when students are having practical both in the laboratory and farm)
3.	Cxams	continuous assessment & examination. (Used to refer to the permission given to those who missed class test to answer one additional question during exams for the missed test)
4.	Wawo	<i>zuwa da dawowa</i> (Hausa expression meaning “to and fro”) Used by drivers to refer getting passengers to and fro without too much delay.
5.	Saza	“zafi da sanyi” (derived from Hausa, which means chill and heat)- a moderate weather.

Another important feature of creativity identified by this study is metaphorical extension. The use of metaphor as a linguistic tool is common in creating slang expressions among the respondents. Metaphor has the potential to push the boundaries of human thought and experience. It uses analogy or likeness to name one thing by something in another domain.

The respondents characteristically employ metaphor to describe many kinds of things, persons, events etc. the most obvious set of metaphoric word applies to the linkage of animal characteristics to humans ones. A clear example is the transfer of a name from an animal to a person such as “snake”, which is

metaphorically used to mean a “wicked and dangerous person”. This is so because snake is known as a wicked and dangerous creature. Similarly, the word “doki” meaning a “horse”, when used metaphorically connotes a young lady that hails from influential, royal and wealthy background. This connotation is done because a horse is culturally believed to be owned and used by royals and rich individuals.

Yet another example is the use of an expression “Niger Delta” to refer to the person’s work place where he/she earns a living, just as Niger Delta is a region where Nigeria gets more of its income. The word “Malaria” has also been metaphorically extended to refer to a common and yet difficult problem whose solution is not readily available. This is so because malaria has been seen as a disease that cannot be thoroughly and easily treated especially in countries like Nigeria. Also, the term ATM (automated teller machine) is used as a slang expression as it is metaphorically extended to refer to a person who is not extravagant because ATM despite being loaded with huge amount of money, it cannot dispense cash to anybody whose account does not have sufficient funds. Moreover, due to the current insurgency facing some parts of the country, the respondents have figuratively adopted the word “sambisa” which is currently believed to be the forest that insurgents use as their hideouts to mean an “examination hall”. This metaphorical extension is made as a result of the similarities between the two words. The difficult and terrible experience that someone might face in that forest is seen as similar to the experiences students face in the examination hall. Meanwhile, a word “glo” which is a name to a telecom company in Nigeria is metaphorically extended by the respondents to refer to green vegetables soup. This extension is also made because of the similar colour shared between the green vegetables and the “glo” which uses green colour in its trademark/logo.

Onomatopoeia

Equally evident in the creativity function of slang among the respondents, is the use of phonology. Eble (1996) states that, in any language merely putting sounds together can form new words. Consequently, the role of phonology as a productive impetus in slang should not be ignored.

Onomatopoeia or imitation accounts for some slang terms collected from the respondents. The following are examples:

Gherr!- a credit alert. It originates from a sound produced by a cellular phone to alert the owner that a new message has come. This is similar to the short message sent by banks to their customers through handsets when a transaction occurs on their bank accounts.

Shi!- a vehicle inspector officer (VIO). The sound according to the researcher's analysis was derived from the imitation of the VIO when he/she wants to stop a vehicle for inspection.

Kiskis- a handcuff. It derives from the sound heard from the policemen's handcuffs as they are affixed to suspect's wrists.

Apart from creativity, confidentiality (secrecy) is second most important function of slang among the participants. 65 of them said that using slang would make them to keep outsiders outside. This enables them to speak without being understood by anyone who happens to be a non-member as testified by Encyclopaedia Britannica(1926) that slang are words not recognised as belonging to the standard lexicon of a language but being used as a means of concealing secrets. Words such as *waskoli*, *zafxie*, *juth*, *chaltie*, *fammermamar*, *gumzer*, *MY*, *TT*, *snooker* etc, are all slang expressions used by the respondents and it would be heavy going for someone different from them to understand what they mean by these terms.

Also, 63 of the respondents indicated that slang give them an alternative to sound euphemistic. This view expressed by the participants has supported Spolky's (1998:35) position that sees slang is adopted as an alternative to words that have vulgar connotation. Traditionally, there are certain expressions considered as taboo, rude or vulgar when uttered. This might include words related to sex, defecation etc. to avoid sounding vulgar and rude the respondents have adopted the use of some slang expressions that could substitute those words considered to be vulgar or taboo. An example given by one of the participants is using a slang word "*silencer*" to refer to a person who has a disgusting

mouth odour. Socially, it is impolite and rude to say that someone's mouth has a bad smell, but by adopting this slang term the user could be said to have sounded rather polite. Other examples are:

S/N	SLANG	MEANING
1.	Disco	Defecation
2.	Smoking	menstrual period
3.	Bajaj	(an Indian word) - unwanted pregnancy
4.	Tangul	(a Hausa word meaning a big lorry)- a female student seen as prostitute

However, 61 of the subjects showed that slang is important for them as it is easier and simpler than the standard expressions. This might be due to the fact that the words are their own inventions; hence using them would not be difficult. Their pronunciation can also be shorter than the original words. Take for example, this blended slang expression given by the respondents "exams" meaning continuous assessment and examination; instead of saying the full words the slang term "*c xams*" is sufficient and this has prevented the speaker from further elaboration. The findings have thus, supported Dumas and Lighter (1978: 14-15) position who claim that slang expressions are used in place of the conventional synonym in order to protect the sender from the discomfort conventional terms and protect the sender from the discomfort of further elaboration. Adams's (2008) claim also goes with the finding as he describes slang as a type of linguistic jaywalking: "you can stand at the crosswalk and wait for the light to change, but that would be boring, as well as slow , so we rather not".

Being fashionable is the least functions found out by this research. Only 35 of the participants indicated that slang is fashionable. Mostly, they see and use slang not just to show off, or brag, but to avoid being understood by someone or to taste their talent and creativity.

The finding of the study also reveals that youth are enthusiastic and enjoying the use of slang. 64.1% agreed that speaking slang is good and should be encouraged, but context should be taken into consideration. They said they can use slang but avoid it in formal environments. Only 22.7% indicated that slang should be spoken anywhere, while 13.2% totally showed their disapproval of using slang,

describing it as a bad language. More so, during the interview, 80% of the participants disagreed that slang is a bad language and 20% said they could not say whether it is bad or not

The impression shown by participants that slang is good to be used is further buttressed when they expressed that they would be ready to encourage someone to use slang. 54.5% answered that using slang should be encouraged, while 45.5% disagreed. When asked to specify whether the speaking slang is a protest against the use of standard lexicon, 89.4% said NO, while 10.6% answered YES.

To sum it up, this work reveals that participants are keen to use slang, but context should be a determinant factor. They agreed that slang could be used in informal discourses and environments. “Field” can be a major factor for its usage as argued by some researchers like (Eble, 1996,; Anderson and Trudail, 1960) who contend that slang should mostly be use in informal settings.

4.2 THE USE OF SLANG

Section C of the questionnaire required participants to write down as many as possible list of slang expressions: their meanings and the context of use. The researcher had basically demanded this data so as to investigate and identify factors that lead to the creation and use of slang lexical items and phrases. From the data collected, the study identified that the respondents are aware of Halliday’s model of register: field tenor and mode. The creation and use of any slang lexical item is determined by the subject matter, discussants, and the medium. From the list of lexical items obtained and scrutinized by the researcher, it revealed that different slang expressions with similar meanings were used under the same contexts. The relationship between the speakers in a given environment determines the slang item to be used. A respondent who works in the college’s clinic wrote two slang expressions used to mean somebody who is HIV positive. He said when talking to his colleague in the clinic, he uses an alphabet “Z” for that patient, but when in circle of friends he uses the word “leaf” to refer to that particular person. Moreover, contrary to some perceptions that slang is usually spoken, the responses collected showed that slang appears to be gaining ground in written discourse. Many slang lexical items used especially on cell phones and social media were collected. What became interesting about these written lexical words was that, though spelled and written in a different way they are

pronounced as Standard English. Some of the examples are WK “waskoli” (meaning a friend), C u 2 nite (see you tonight), Y? (why), CM (Naira). Beside, with the advent of GSM communication the respondents tend to use some images found inside their phones to express different feelings and emotions especially when sending an SMS. However, the use of these images depends on the medium. If the speakers are in physical contact, this is not used. They only use it when sending an SMS.

Nevertheless, the findings of the work revealed that factors such as gender, occupation, level of education and geographical location are major determinants for the creation of slang expressions. As Martiello (2005) asserts that slang use is group restricted; speakers tend to consider and draw on their gender, occupation, education and geographical location to coin a new slang words or extend the meaning of the already existing words. From the list of words collected, the study identified that though both male and female speak slang, but the words used by the two genders were mostly related to their preoccupations. For example, female respondents gave a lot of slang items as they relate to their ways of their dressing, and other utensils known to be used by females. They mentioned words like “*hand bag*” (a greedy person), “*skirt*” (a prostitute), “*powder*” – (simple/considerate person) “*feggere*” borrowed from “Fulfulde” (standard meaning a ring) but extended to refer to a rigid and inflexible person. The situation was the same with the male counterpart who also extended the meanings of some standard words related to their gender. Example are ; “*Hula*” borrowed from Hausa a (cap) but extended to mean a strict/inflexible person, “*Jampa*” (a Hausa word meaning a gown) = “fool”, “*driver*” = a henpecked man.

Occupation is another factor that influences the creation of slang lexical items revealed by the study. It was found that the words used as slang are somehow related to the nature of occupation of the respondents. Most of the words given by the respondents are words found and used in their respective jobs. Drivers who were interviewed gave slang lexical items related to automobile and driving. For instance, words like “*gallon*” = a bus that is uneconomical, “*clutch*” - a thief, “*spare tyre*” = a passenger who does not have money, “*automatic*” – a long journey, “*Hannun dama*” (Hausa expression meaning right hand) = a law abiding driver”, *Vectra* (a German brand car) = referring to

“fast food”, “*Nebbam*”(a Fulfulde word meaning oil) – referring to crude oil known to be the Nigeria’s economic mainstay, but extended to mean “someone’s daily income, “*Peugeot*”(a brand name of a car) = old woman. In the same vein, some nurses who responded to the questionnaires gave words related to their job as slang expressions they use. Example, “*procaine*” meaning “a dirty patient”, “*injection*” =”eating”, “*malaria*”= a difficult situation”. Likewise, those who worked at the bursary department of the college followed a similar trend. They listed words known to be used in banking and finance as their slang lexical words. Example, “*Paris club*”= an indebted person, “*ledger*”= a windfall, “*cheque*” = a wealthy person, “*ATM*”= someone who is not extravagant.

Similarly, education of the participants is among factors responsible for the creation of slang lexical expressions. This was identified from the responses collected from the participants both literate and uneducated. While educated respondents listed words mostly from the Standard English Vocabulary, the uneducated who were interviewed showed that their slang words were mostly drawn from native languages spoken there. They said they sometimes use English words as slang, but this happened when the words used do not have equivalent as slangs in the native languages.

4.3 FINDINGS

The study has identified that despite being corrupt version of a standard language, slang enhances communication among its users. It allows them to shape, manipulate and use language in their own different ways and for different purposes like creativity, secrecy, fashion and simplicity. The creation and use of slang terms does not only occur in English language alone, but can also happen in indigenous languages. Moreover, in spite of the stigma attached to slang, youths in the study are enjoying and willing to use it in their speeches.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The chapter gives the summary and conclusion of the work. It identifies the major findings and eventually gives suggestions and recommendation for further research.

5.1 SUMMARY

The major objective of this study was particularly to explore the forms and communicative functions of slang. To achieve this, the researcher investigated how slang is generally used, which included how it is learnt, where it is used, the frequency of its usage, and the function it serves among the subjects.

A survey research was used where the questionnaires were given to educated subject and interview was conducted for the uneducated (not literate in western education). The data collected was analysed using Halliday's model of register analysis (Field, Tenor, and Mode). The data collected revealed that although slang is a non standard variety of language that consists of improper, unsystematic, unacceptable language usage and unconventional vocabulary which diverges from that of standard

lexicon but it is gaining grounds among its users (youth especially) who employ it to fulfil certain functions within discourse – whether written or spoken . Context and the relationship between the participants have been identified as major factor that determines the usage. The study revealed that the type of subject matter and the social setting were key to the use of slang. The respondents agreed that before using slang, an informal environment should be taken into consideration. Serious issues that involve people with different statuses are not discussed with using slang. Hence, they mostly shun and avoid employing slang terms when discussing with parents and teachers. Creativity, keeping secret, and easier spoken exposing identity, was the major communicative functions identified by the study. Creativity has been rated highest among all the mentioned functions of slang by the subjects. The participants consider slang as a platform to use language different from others in various ways through the process of coining, blending, clipping acronyms and borrowing. The findings also reveal that gender, occupation and education were among factors that influence the use and creation of slang lexical items.

5.2 CONCLUSION

Although various researchers on slang have argued that slang consists of dirty vocabulary, (Sornig 2002, Halliday 1998), the findings of this study conclude that slang does not only contain dirty vocabulary and anti language words, instead many words are used to avoid sounding vulgar. Similarly, contrary to the widely held notion by some researchers that slang is basically used for fashion, fun and deliberately deviate from standard English/language as not long ago the Oxford English Dictionary characterized slang as “low and disreputable” and in the late 1970s the pioneering sociolinguist Michael Halliday used the phrase “anti language” to describe slang. But this study revealed that despite being stigmatized, slang has important functions among its users. Creativity, concealment and being easier than standard language are rated high by the study. This might be why slang nowadays develops among its speakers. It is therefore concluded that instead of seeing slang as a language of criminals, and persons with disreputable character or groups that lack political power (Parshall 1994,

Crystal 1995), Slang should be considered as pragmatic and living breathing part of a language that can be a motivational tool that provides colours, humour and intimacy among users.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Slang is a language deliberately selected for its striking informality and is consciously used in preference to proper speech. It usually originates in small groups. For these groups, it is a private code that sets them apart and embodies their particular values and behaviour and reinforces their exclusivity. Hence, Summer (1927) quoted in Burke (1939:125) says “a people who are prosperous and happy, optimistic and progressive, produce much slang: it is a case of play: they amuse themselves with the language”. It is therefore recommended that learning language entails not only formal lexicon but also slang which can convey attitudes and ideas more efficiently than conventional usage.

The present study has attempted to explore the forms and communicative functions of slang. However, there have been no or very few empirical studies on slang based on sociolinguistic variables like gender, age, class etc, the researcher is therefore suggesting that, further researches could be conducted on the use of slang among speakers with different socio-economic statuses. Also, a study would be carried on the comparative analysis of slang usage across languages. Linguistic analysis of slang words could also be an important area for further research. It would also be interesting if research would be conducted on the reasons behind considering slang as an inferior variety of language.

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www.worldbank.org

APPENDIX 1: QUESTIONNAIRE

My name is Nasiru Musa, an MA student from Department of English and French, Bayero University Kano, I am currently conducting research on the forms and commutative functions of slang among the youths. I would be grateful if you could assist me by taking a few minutes of your time to complete the following questionnaire. Your identity shall remain confidential.

SECTION A PERSONAL DETAILS

1. GENDER MALE [] FEMALE []
2. AGE

3. TRIBE _____

4. LEVEL OF EDUCATION

PRIMARY []

SECONDARY []

TERTIARY []

5. OCCUPATION

STUDENT []

CIVIL SERVANT []

OTHERS []

1. How did you learn slang?

	A lot	Moderate	Little
Friends /peers			
Siblings			
Parents			
Social media			

2. How often do speak slang?

(i) Very often ☐

(ii) Often ☐

(iii) seldom ☐

3. Where, when and whom do you speak slang?

	Often	Seldom	Never
(a) At school or work with peers			

(b) At social gatherings (informal context)			
(c) At home with adults (including parent)			
(d) at school or work with adults and teachers			

4. Why do you speak slang?

(Please write as many as possible reasons for slang usage).

5. How do you consider the use of slang?

Please tick (✓)

- i. It is good
- ii. It is bad
- iii. It is only good outside formal context

6. Can you encourage someone to use slang?

Yes

No

7. Do you regard speaking slang as a protest against the use of standard language?

Yes

No

SECTION C

Please write down as many as possible slang words and expressions you use in the space provided below. Do not forget to include their meanings and the contexts you often use them.

However, it is allowed to write words that may originate from other languages other than English.

Slang word/expression	Meaning	When to use them and why you use them
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APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR UNEDUCATED SUBJECTS

- A. AGE:
- B. GENDER:
- C. OCCUPATION:

Language as a medium of human communication entails using words to express feelings, emotions to the hearer(s). However, the elements of language such as lexicon, phonology, syntax can be rearranged in different ways to give various meanings. The process of creating new words or extending the meanings of standard words by some group of people is known as slang. Slang is used by so many groups for different reasons. In view of this, I would like to interview you on the use of slang.

QUESTIONS

1. How often do you speak slang?
2. Under what conditions(s) and with whom do you use slang?
3. What slang words do you frequently use? Why do you use them?
4. Is slang a bad language? Why do you think so?
5. Can you encourage someone to use slang?
6. Do you think speaking slang is a protest against standard language?

APPENDIX 3: SLANG LEXICAL TERMS

The following is a selection of the slang lexical terms that the youths in this study provided in section C of the questionnaire.

A

AK47 = Poverty

Acid = hungry

ASS = a married woman

Arrows = woman's eyes

Ace = do the right thing (eg you're going to ace at the interview)

Amoeba = unwanted pregnancy

B

Bananas = mad

Banging = energetic

Bear = money

Beans = a gay

Big sleep = the death

Bird = a girl friend

Babs = a rival

Bark = gossip

Blind = un shameful person

Boieng 7-4-7	=	a highly committed lecturer
Bujwa	=	a wealthy person who loves young ladies
Bom-blast	=	to reveal a secret
Brown	=	a carryover course
Bread	=	an examination malpractice exhibit
Brain	=	a favourable course
Bucket	=	somebody who is maltreated
Butter	=	monthly salary
Balarie	=	promotional exams
Bro	=	unexpected journey
<u>C</u>		
Chees soul	=	a hardworking boy
Cheeks	=	marijuana
Cancer	=	a lower grade
Cabbage	=	a stolen good
Camp	=	sleeping room/bed room
Chiesee	=	to disagree with your superior officer
Chai! L	=	an exclamation
Carpet	=	stealing during examination

Cement	=	a fade clothes
Canary	=	provost's personal assistant
Chopper	=	a very old car
Champion	=	a mistake made by accountants to deduct loans from someone's salary
Cats	=	security men
Century	=	C.G.P.A.
Chawman	=	a womanizer
California	=	a restaurant
Charlie	=	a driver who does not have a bus
Chambawa	=	a villager who is rich
Chinese	=	an innovative person
Caretaker	=	loyalty
Campaign	=	to beg a lecturer
Coke	=	a dark colour lady
Chocolate	=	dinner

D

Demic	=	a torn clothes
David	=	'D' grade
Dirty	=	boring

Dada	=	a strict female lecturer
Damua	=	a close friend
Dumsarer	=	impersonification during exams
Deep sea	=	a failed relationship
Dalla	=	three savere meal
Doobua	=	talking too much
Damper	=	euphemism for sexually transmitted diseases (STD)
Doll up	=	make attractive
Dermica	=	watchman

E

Faggot	=	alcohol
Flozzer	=	farewell
Fish	=	simple questions
Fantasia	=	cringing actions
Founder	=	bursar
Family issues	=	someone with a pimpled face
Flow	=	unpaid salary

G

Gwan	=	cheap cigarette
G-spot	=	old husband
ghetto	=	young male person
Gomodie	=	a lady with big eyes
grace	=	food
gary	=	richness
grass	=	farm
gross	=	when something is annoying
gi-gir	=	punishment
gamzaki	=	in-laws
goat	=	an intelligent but socially inept person
Gee	=	a wicked friend
Galumji	=	a liar

I

Ice	=	a cold/soft hearted person
Ill	=	menstrual period
Indiana	=	a shopping mal
Iron	=	hard earned money
Inside	=	a weak husband

In the city = naked

Imowa = a threat

J

Jackson five = colleges's provost

Jackson four = college's registrar

Jackson 2-2 = heads of department

Johnson ground = football field

Jamaica = students centre

Jigger = member of the vigilante group

Joe taxi = a free ride

K

Kas boy = a boy who is sent to call prostitutes

Kosiko = sexual intercourse

Kick-kluf = premarital sexual intercourse

Kid = a little amount of money

Kneel down = to beg for forgiveness

Kick-off = to propose a lady

L

Laleko = a surprise visit

Lemon	=	assistance
Lampedusa	=	college's garden
Loaded	=	a fat woman
Local	=	a guy who does not want spend his money for his girl friend
Lion	=	to pass all the courses
Lampo	=	to side-line someone

M

Morinho	=	to deceive your friends
Maintaining	=	to be rather well off
Monkey	=	bad idea
My so	=	your lover
Milk	=	time spent with a lover

O

Oliver	=	a strict father
Order	=	to default
Old bag	=	former teacher
O.T.H. (abb) on top of her	=	caught during sex
On picnic	=	to travel during the weekend

Oil sheet = statement of result

Queen = a new car

Quansi = a former friend

Quinne = engine oil

R

Ramshika = to take another wife

Rabe = a visitor

Ringer = a fake product

Ranky = a delay

Rednect = a punctual lecturer

Result = a newly born baby

V

Vescilia = a handsome but poor young guy

X

x-ray = an invigilator during examinations

XYZ = closing hours

Xper = to sleep during lectures

Y

Yab, yab! = hallo

YDJ = Adult and Nonformal Education Institution

Z

Zip = private part

Zita = cordial relationship