

An Attempt to a Sociolinguistic Study of Some Swahili Slangs Spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Case of Goma Town

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Abstract: This article is entitled “An Attempt to a Sociolinguistic Study of Some Swahili Slangs Spoken in the Democratic Republic of Congo: Case of Goma Town”. The study refers to the analysis of some slang used in the Swahili spoken in certain parts of the Democratic Republic of Congo, more specifically in Goma town.

Swahili language, or The Kiswahili, is known as a Bantu language widely used as a lingua franca in East Africa and having official status in several countries. Research shows that there are probably fewer than two million native speakers of Swahili, but it is in everyday use by over 20 million people.

The language dates from the contacts of Arabian traders with the inhabitants of the east coast of Africa over many centuries. Under the Arab influence, Swahili originated as a lingua franca used by several closely related Bantu-speaking tribal groups. Research shows that there are about 15 main Swahili dialects, as well as several pidgin forms in use. The three most important dialects are Kiunguja, spoken in Zanzibar and in the main land areas of Tanzania; Kimvita, spoken in Mombasa, and other areas of Kenya, and Kiamu, spoken on the island of Lamu and adjoining parts of the coast.

Swahili is a bantu language spoken by the Swahili people, who are found primarily in Tanzania, Kenya and Mozambique. The language has a high number of loan words from other languages, mainly Arabic, as well as from Portuguese, English, and German.

As far as the variety of Swahili spoken in Goma is concerned, referred to as slang in this research work, it has loanwords from a number of languages used in the country, such as French, English, Lingala, and some other local languages/ mother tongues according to the speaker. This is therefore the reason I have decided to carry out this study, in order to show how and why those Swahili slang function in people’s everyday communication.

Keywords: Swahili, Slang(s), language, speaking, communication, community.

Résumé: Cet article est intitulé "Essai d'étude sociolinguistique de certains argots swahili parlé dans la ville de Goma, en République Démocratique du Congo". Cette étude fait référence à l'analyse de certains argots utilisés en swahili tel que parlé dans certaines parties de la République Démocratique du Congo (RDC), plus particulièrement dans la ville de Goma".

La langue swahili, ou le kiswahili, est connue comme une langue bantoue largement utilisée comme lingua franca en Afrique de l'Est et ayant un statut officiel dans plusieurs pays. La recherche montre qu'il y a probablement moins de deux millions de locuteurs natifs du swahili, mais il est utilisé quotidiennement par plus de 20 millions de personnes.

La langue date des contacts des commerçants arabes avec les habitants de la côte est de l'Afrique pendant de nombreux siècles. Sous l'influence arabe, le swahili est à l'origine une lingua franca utilisée par plusieurs groupes tribaux de langue bantoue étroitement liés. La recherche montre qu'il existe environ 15 dialectes swahili principaux, ainsi que plusieurs formes de pidgin en usage. Les trois dialectes les plus importants sont le kiunguja, parlé à Zanzibar et dans les régions continentales de Tanzanie; Le kivita, parlé à Mombasa, et dans d'autres régions du Kenya, et le kiamu, parlé sur l'île de Lamu et dans les parties adjacentes de la côte.

Le swahili est une langue bantoue parlée par le peuple swahili, que l'on trouve principalement en Tanzanie, au Kenya et au Mozambique. La langue a un grand nombre de mots empruntés à d'autres langues, principalement l'arabe, ainsi que du portugais, de l'anglais et de l'allemand.

En ce qui concerne la variété du swahili parlé à Goma, appelé argot dans ce travail de recherche, il a des mots empruntés à un certain nombre de langues utilisées dans le pays, telles que le français, l'anglais, le lingala et d'autres langues locales / langues maternelles selon le locuteur. C'est donc la raison pour laquelle j'ai décidé de réaliser cette étude, afin de montrer comment et pourquoi ces argots swahili fonctionnent dans la communication quotidienne de la population de Goma.

Mots-clés: Swahili, Argot(s), langue, parler, communication, communauté.

I. Introduction

The concept “slang” can be seen as the specialized language of a particular group, sometimes used to make what is said unintelligible to those who are not members of that group. Seen in that perspective, it is true that slangs exist in any language around the world. In the same way, it can be easily confirmed that slangs always exist in any society as long as there are distinct social classes.

Therefore, Goma town is, like any other Congolese towns, a town where there are too many different ethnic groups with different mother tongues. In such a context, it is always obvious that people choose one language to communicate among themselves despite the diversity of languages. This language that serves for communication between different linguistic groups is always referred to in linguistics as ‘Lingua Franca’.

In Goma, however, it is the Swahili language that serves as the lingua franca, besides being one of the four national languages of the DRC (i.e. Swahili, Lingala, Kikongo, and Tshiluba).

Now, given that Goma town is inhabited by a variety of people from different linguistic groups, it is possible that there exist different social classes. Besides the social classes seen in the usual classification like: upper-middle-lower classes, there are also different groups according to people’s jobs, financial power, family status, etc. It is also important to mention that each of these classes/groups has specific terms and expressions of Swahili that they use to maintain internal intelligibility between the members. These expressions are what we refer to as slangs; the central concern of our study.

In order to select this specific topic, I have been motivated by different factors. First, the Swahili language used in the DRC has been found to have a lot of differences with that used in Tanzania and Kenya which is known to be the original Swahili. In fact, these two countries, Tanzania and Kenya, more specifically Tanzania, are known to be the only countries in the world where the Swahili language (Lugha ya Kiswahili) is used as the most standard and original. Thus, that of Tanzania being the first best model for Swahili learners to follow.

In addition, many people always make use of slangs not knowing what they are, and in most cases, too many users of the Swahili language are unaware of the meanings of most of the slangs used in the DRC. There are even a number of local terms and expressions in the DRC which are not understood by Tanzanians and Kenyans. Therefore, by carrying out this investigation aiming at analyzing some of the slangs used in the DRC, specifically in Goma town, I also wish to inform people about the meaning of the very Swahili slangs, how they are created and what function they play in the community.

As said previously, slangs are expressions specific to a given social group, aiming at hiding or codifying the message in order to maintain it accessible to only the group members. It is true that slangs exist in any languages around the world. As for the Swahili language, for example, especially the one used in Goma town, there must be different slangs, but the problem is that it is not always easy to point out the meaning of a given slang, especially to non-group members.

Taking into consideration our research aims and questions to address, we assume that the slangs used in Swahili spoken in Goma town are many depending on the different language levels and different aspects of everyday life. This may include: slangs related to foods and drinks, slangs related to problems and mistakes, slangs related to parts of the human body, slangs related to economy and business, slangs related to love and sexuality and slangs related social life and means of transport.

Furthermore, we assume that the meanings of these slangs are dependents to each specific group of the population, and so, the function of the slangs is that of maintaining their message inaccessible to other community members outside the specific groups. Each group aims at keeping some of their communications unintelligible to outsiders.

In order to achieve this research work, I resorted to using some methods and techniques, including: the descriptive method, observation, participative exchanges, psycholinguistic analysis, sociolinguistic analysis, documentary method, and interviews with different people who use such Swahili slangs in Goma town and in its surroundings.

II. Theoretical Views on Slangs and Methodological Framework

II.1. Some theories on slangism

Linguists have no simple and clear definition of slang, but agree that it is a constantly changing linguistic phenomenon present in every sub-culture worldwide (*Dickson Paul; 2010:368*). Following this definition, it appears that it is not easy to find a precise definition for slang.

Some argue that slang exists because we must come up with ways to define new experiences that have surfaced with time and modernity.

Attempting to remedy the lack of a clear definition, however, Bethany K. Dumas and Jonathan Lighter (1978: 14-14) suggest that an expression should be considered “true slang” if it meets at least two of the following criteria:

- ☞ It lowers, if temporarily, the dignity of formal or serious speech or writing; in other words, it is likely to be considered in those contexts a glaring misuse of register;
- ☞ Its use implies that the user is familiar with whatever is referred to, or with a group of people who are familiar with it and use the term.
- ☞ "It is a taboo term in ordinary discourse with people of a higher social status or greater responsibility;
- ☞ It replaces "a well-known conventional synonym." This is done primarily to avoid discomfort caused by the conventional synonym or discomfort or annoyance caused by having to elaborate further.

From all the above theories we can retain that slangism refers to the language outside of the conventional usage and in the informal register. It is the language that is unique to a particular profession, of a social group, sometimes used to make what is said unintelligible to those not members of the group.

As far as the etymology of the word slang is concerned, in its earliest attested use in 1756, the term referred to the vocabulary of low or disreputable people. By the early nineteenth century, it was no longer exclusively associated with disreputable people, but continued to be applied to usages below the level of standard educated speech (Source: www.wikipedia-thefreeencyclopedia.com/slangism). Following the above literatures, the origin of the word is uncertain. Some theories suggest that the earliest use of slangs appears to be connected with thieves.

A Scandinavian origin has been proposed. For example, the Norwegian concept "slengenavn" which means "nickname", but based on date and early associations is discounted by the Oxford English Dictionary. The recent rejection of the Scandinavian origin of the concept slang by the Oxford Dictionary is evoked here above. Jonathon Green (2015:23), however, agrees with the possibility of a Scandinavian origin, suggesting the same root as that of *sling*, which means "to throw", and noting that slang is a thrown language- a quick, honest way to make your point.

Basing on the above theories, we can easily retain two things: first, the exact origin of the concept slang is not known. In other words, it is not easy to precisely indicate where the concept slang came from. Also, it is noticeable that the concept slang is an old concept that has been introduced from a very distant past. So one can say, the word slang is not a newly used concept.

II.2. Formation of slangs

It is not easy to collect etymologies for slangs. This is largely because slang is a phenomenon of speech, rather than written language and etymologies which are typically traced via corpus.

Anderson and Trudgill (1990:143) claim that slang is often considered to be bad language usage and the decay of language, rather than a necessary change. A phenomenon typical of language, however, is that the people have the power and if enough people choose to use certain words then these words gain status and are soon accepted parts of our everyday language. Example, pub and phone which were once slang versions of "public house" and "telephone".

Geographical location also matters in deciding what slang is and what it is not. The word lad (meaning "boy" or "son") is accepted in the northern parts of England but is considered as slang in the southern parts. Even journalists are beginning to use slang in their writing which of course aids in the acceptance of such language. Slang is mainly a question of vocabulary usage as there are not many grammatical features of slang. Hip-hop is a culture that has a language of its own jargon which is very hard to understand if you are an outsider, example 'shackles' and 'Seatown' which means 'handcuffs' and 'Seattle'.

From the above theories, we can retain that slangs are formed from everyday usage of language. However, slang is not so much about the invention of new words as it is about coming up with new meanings for already existing words, such as hot, which originally was a word to describe temperature but now has various different meanings like sexy, stolen, and wanted by the police or popular (Anderson and Trudgill 1990:81). George Yule (2006: 211) adds that what is slang to one 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. Different forms of slang quickly grow old and are replaced by new ones. For example, super, groovy and hip which all mean "really good" have been replaced by dope, kickass and phat.

It is clear that slangs are expressions, which, like any other form of language, grow from culture and evolve with it. That is why, as Yule states in the quotation above, some slangs can lose their status as time passes. That is why George Yule (Op. Cit.: 211) adds that This is a very natural evolution as most adolescents do not want to sound like their parents and therefore need new slang words to distance themselves from that which was 'cool' when their parents were young.

II.3. Functions of Slangs

Slangs are part of language. It is well known that the basic function of language is to communicate. In that case, the primary function of slangs is undoubtedly that of communication. Slang is usually associated with a particular group and plays a role in constructing our identities. While slang outlines social space, attitudes about slang partly construct group identity and identify individuals as members of groups. Therefore, using the slang of a particular group will associate an individual with that group. (www.wikiwand.com/wiki/Function_of_slang).

The above theories just confirm what we have previously said. In fact, slangs serve for communication purposes, but because slangs are usually associated with specific social groups, it is also possible that they serve in identifying the members with these specific social groups.

In the same register, Tim Pedersen (2007:7) mentions that another very important aspect to consider when discussing slang is the different situations where we are most likely and most unlikely to use slang. Most people know the standard form of their first language and in formal situations such as job interviews most people tend to speak as formally as possible, avoiding slang usage to give a good first impression. Another example is that most people tend to speak in a more formal way the first time they meet new people whereas their language tends to loosen up after a while.

In the above arguments, Pedersen emphasizes the context as an aspect of slangism. In fact, this idea is not far from what has been previously said. Speaking to new encounters is likely to sound formal since we are not part of the same social group. But as time passes and as we get more and more familiar, we are likely to change the language register and include slangs in our speeches. In such way, it is obvious that when a boss speaks more informally to an employee for the first time the employee has probably advanced in the company.

Even though many people use a lot of slang in their everyday language there is also awareness that it is not correct language usage. Style-shifting from non-standard to standard language is referred to as overt prestige and is according to George Yule (2006:209) most likely to be used by men and women from the middle class; women also use it more than men. The opposite of overt prestige is covert prestige and refers to the phenomenon that especially adolescents of lower society classes use non-standard language consciously. According to Yule 2006:210, it is used to show solidarity with their social group by not shifting language-style to sound like another social group.

As we can see it in Yule's statements above, slangs serve for communication to members of a specific social group and that with a precise objective of maintaining unintelligibility with non-members of the group.

In the same framework, Eble, cited by Tim Pedersen (Op. Cit: 7) states that three of the most typical functions of slang are to express informality, identify group members and oppose established authority. The point of slang is often to be amusing or shocking.

This is also why the invention of new slang words or coming up with alternative meanings for already existing words is crucial. When words lose their shocking or amusing effect they need to be replaced with new words. This often goes hand in hand with other groups accepting these words and beginning to use them in everyday-language usage.

It is now shown through the above point that slangs can, in different ways shift from one social group to another or sometimes gain universal status of usage. This is what we mean when we state that slang does not differ from other trends but is often invented in big cities and then spreads out to the rest of the country (Ibid, 1990: 78).

It seems that slang is often a substitute for swearing or a substitute for other words that are taboo, a phenomenon referred to as euphemisms (Anderson and Trudgill, Op. Cit: 82).

If that be the case, it is easy to understand that slangs are sometimes used to soften some words which may sound rude in their usage. For example, 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, visit the sand-box, answer nature's call or go and look at the crops.

Similarly, many forms of slang for defecating or using drugs can be found. To many drug dealers slang usage is even a must; an entire conversation about drugs can take place without any outsiders knowing about it. To make this further effective the slang words used change constantly, making it hard for the police to infiltrate these groups (Anderson and Trudgill (Op. cit: 79).

In all the above literatures, the function of slangs is very clearly noticeable. First of all, we have seen that slangs, as such words that we assume to belong to the informal word registers, serve for private communications between specific group members. We have also seen that slangs can serve as a way of softening language in some contexts. In other words, some expressions may sound impolite when used in a formal context. So, for such expressions, it is obvious to use slangs which may soften the expression and sound somehow polite. This is why, as we have seen it in the above theories, some slangs always shift from social group and others and may even gain universality in usage.

II.4. Categorization of slangs

Slangs are too many that the sample of categorization just shown here up is far from being an exhaustive list. Below are some slangs which are commonly used in English:

II.4.1. Slangs related to foods and drinks

The following are some of the slangs related to food and drinks as used in English language as proposed by Shayna Oliveira (2014:2)

Slangs	Meanings	Examples
Get grub/chow	To have food with one's friends	Let's get some grub or let's get some chow
Nosh and sometimes 'Tonosh'	snack-type food, not a complete meal or to have such a food	She is noshing on potatoes chips.
Brunch	A combination of breakfast and lunch. A mid-morning meal eaten around 10:30 that takes the place of breakfast and lunch.	Some churches and social groups like to organize brunches on weekends
To be Stuffed	You have eaten too much and no more food will fit into your stomach	I am stuffed
Veggies	The short form of vegetables	Someone who has a more healthy diet will eat more veggies
A cuppajoe	A cup of coffee	I can't concentrate in the morning until I've had a nice, strong cuppajoe.
Booze	Alcohol	There is enough booze for all the guests.
BYOB	Bring Your Own Booze	The party will include persons of different statuses so you all can BYOB
A watering hole	A popular local bar	Murphy's is the only watering hole in town that has decent beer.
To be a buzz	To be only a bit drunk	Joseph couldn't have lost his ID card. He was only a buzz
To be a lightweight	To be someone who get drunk easily.	Jonathan can come with us for this opportunity, he is a real lightweight
To be three sheets to the wind	To be someone who is drunk is to	Let's call a taxi for him. Ashley always makes hilarious comments when she's three sheets to the wind
A lush	someone who is an alcoholic, or who drinks too much	My ex-husband was such a lush that he'd even bring a water bottle full of vodka to work, so he could drink secretly during the day
To bar-hop	To go from bar to bar, spending only a short time at each.	The weather is too cold today so it will not be easy to bar-hop

II.4.2. Slangs related to drugs

Slangs	Meanings	Examples
Coke	Cocaine	Let's get some grub or let's get some chow
Crack	More pure form of cocaine	This is a big show, so a fresh crack could make it.
Pot / weed	Marijuana	Some churches and social groups like to organize brunches on

		weekends
A joint	A marijuana cigarette	Bob was arrested by the police while trying to enter the stadium with a joint
Speed	methamphetamine (a drug that causes increased energy)	This week I don't want any speed.
A high	The period of intense feelings caused by the drug or a person currently under the influence of drugs.	He is a high that man; let him take a short rest.
A trip	When a drug causes hallucinations and crazy psychological experiences and the person under the influence is tripping.	Joe has been tripping for two hours now; try to prepare for him some hot soup.
Junkies	Persons who are addicted to drugs	There are a few junkies living under the highway bridge
To quit cold turkey	Stopping suddenly, resolving never to use the drug again	Some drug of your friends have tried to quit cold turkey

II.4.3. Slangs related to Sexuality

Slangs	Meanings	Examples
Sixty-Nine (69)	A sex position where two people simultaneously give each other oral sex	We spent too much time in Sixty-Nine with Lesley yesterday.
Foreplay	Everything you do before intercourse.	Successful sex is sometimes dependent to the foreplay.
Blow Job or Going down on	The oral sex or fellatio	She always came to my room for Blow Job in the weekends
To Cum Shot	To ejaculate on his partner, where the semen can easily be seen.	I am always happy when I cum shot with a new partner.
To be Postponed	To be late because of an unexpected sexual encounter	So sorry, I got postponed. I am now on my way to the office.
A Slide Chick	The other woman or mistress	I thought Bernadette was dating him, but it turns out she's just side Chock.
Doppelganger	A person you have sex with in lieu of someone you really want, but don't have chance with.	I heard Alan had sex with Martha because she is basically called Rihanna's doppelbanger.
Sascrotch	Someone's pubic that has not been trimmed for a long time	I took a look at Jenny's Sascrotch and ran as fast as I could
To Netflix and Chill	To have sex with a partner while watching actions and positions from a movie	Hey, you down to come over tonight? We can Netflix and Chill.
Intercourse	Very rough sex	Gertrude couldn't walk for three days after the crazy intercourse she had with Bert.

II.4.4. Slangs used for Money

Slangs	Meanings	Examples
Bank	Used for money, but specifically for salary increase	Since he started working for UNESCO, Benjamin has been making bank
Bankroll	Supply money or money itself	I need some bankroll to get my bread business off the ground
Benji	A nickname for 100 USD Bill. It was conned from the nickname of the man whose photo	This deal will require a Benji.

	appears on the bill of 100 USD	
Big One	1, 000 USD.	If you are buying a car, you will need to collect ten big ones.
Bones	Dollars	These grills cost 100 bones
Brass	Money	Where there is muck, there is brass

II.5. Language levels

The study of speech communities, empirically defined in terms of population and structures of communication would seem to underline almost every aspect of anthropological interest in the relations between language, personality, society and culture (Dell Hymes (1964: 387).

From the theories above we can understand that language usage is dependent to different aspects such as personality, society and culture. Such aspects always result into the distinction of language or vocabulary levels which is seen as high level versus low level.

- **High level language**

The high level language is the language used in professional and business communication. It is the form of English that follows the formal rules of the language. This is most often considered to be the Standard English.

- **Low level language**

The low level language is the form of the language that uses regional or social language variations. Nonstandard English should only be used when there is a purpose for it in writing. For example, it can be used in a narrative to describe a person with a specific regional dialect. Otherwise, the standard form of English should be used.

It is clear that such differentiations are reported to present in every languages and this is noticeable with any group. As states Dell Hymes (Op. Cit: 383) ‘few generalization can be hazarded at the present time, but there are two which are essential to proper understanding of the scope of the problem. First, variation in speech are recognized and evaluated in every community. Even a small and tight-knit hunting or horticultural society will recognize differences in linguistic competence and prestige and distinct levels of usage’.

The above statement clearly globalizes and universalizes the language levels phenomenon. It appears clear that there is no language without distinctions of levels of usage. This is even what Dell Hymes means when he concludes that ‘just as there are no primitive languages without grammar, so there are no primitive speech-communities without socially recognized standards of speech. (Dell Hymes, Op. Cit: 383).

In the English language, therefore, such distinctions between high level and low level language are frequently perceived through many linguistic aspects inclosing vocabulary. As mention W. Lincoln & DeKalb L.(2021:2) ‘among the aspects that are used to set apart the high and low levels of the English language mention can be made of the choice of vocabulary, the sentence structure and the use of personal pronouns’.

Of course, the elements that are listed above are essential in determining which level of the language is used in such or such other context. And recognizing one of these above aspects, Dell Hymes states that synonyms are often differentiated by such distinctions in ranking.

To desire and *want* have much the same denotative meaning, but one is on a relatively high and dignified level in contrast to the neutral of the other (Dell Hymes, Op. Cit: 397)

The recognition of the choice of vocabulary by Dell Hymes as mentioned in the above statements emphasizes what has been previously stated. Still, in addition to the choice of vocabulary W. Lincoln & DeKalb L. (Op. Cit.: 2) list other elements including the use of personal pronouns and the sentence structure. This is can be summarized in the demonstration below:

- **Choice of vocabulary**

Low level language or Informal usage	High level language of formal usage
The study checked out the health effects of passive smoking.	The study examined the health effects of passive smoking.
This experiment worked out just fine	This experiment was successful

The above illustration demonstrates how words, though seen as being denotatively the same, can still bear distinctions depending on whether they are informal (Low level) or formal (high level). The words check

out and work out can be, as W. Lincoln & DeKalb L. suggest, used in informal writing and speech, but using them in a formal research paper would not be appropriate.

• **Sentence structure**

Speaking about the sentence structure in this perspective, focus is much more on the form of the verbs. This contrasts the contracted verb forms and long forms of verbs as used within a sentence:

Low level language or Informal usage	High level language of formal usage
The outcomes of the study haven't been documented yet	The outcomes of the study have not been documented yet

The sentence that uses long form in the above illustration sound more formal than the one with the short form. This is, according to W. Lincoln & DeKalb L., because **Contractions** are more casual, and if you are striving for more formal style, they should not be used. Contractions in negative sentences should be especially avoided since they are easy to miss.

• **Use of personal pronouns**

According to Lincoln & DeKalb L (Op. Cit: 3) Formal language tends to be impersonal and precise. The **use of pronouns**, therefore, is restricted. In formal writing, when addressing the audience, you may use the passive voice or an adverbial clause in place of the personal pronoun.

Low level language or Informal usage	High level language of formal usage
As you examine the health effects of passive smoking,...(1)	When examining the health effects of passive smoking,...
I believe the health effects of passive smoking can...(2)	It is believed that the health effects of can...

The illustration above also shows how the use of personal pronouns can rend a piece of writing sound informal, also creating a low language still. In the sentence 2, for example, the second sentence (**It is believed** that the health effects of can...) is more formal and can be perceived by the audience to be more credible.

All the above elements combine to distinguish language levels. The informal language or low level language is characteristic to low social class members, while the high level is characteristic to the high social class members.

✓ **Language levels and Slangism**

Slangs are expressions which are characteristic to a specific social group, often used to maintain unintelligibility with other ethnic groups. For the question to know whether slang usage is part of the high or low level language, Stanley Newman (1964:399), states that ‘for the purpose of definition, slang will refer to those low-valued words and expressions which enjoy only a very brief period of currency. In contrast to the sacred vocabulary, the ephemeral vocabulary of slang is said to be understood only by children and young adults’.

Following the above statements, the idea that slangs are part of the low level language comes to mind. Although Newman tends to assimilate slangism to the early childhood and early adulthood usage within the community, the expression that slangs are part of the low language is heard.

And associating the classification of slangs with their purpose in communication, Stanley Newman (Op. Cit.:401) adds that ‘the rapidly changing vocabulary of Zuni slang shows some distinctive peculiarities: a large proportion of slang words and expressions are denotatively meaningless or indeterminate and possess a communicative function that is largely intentional. Slang contains many unique forms, not used in everyday neutral discourse; many of its expressions are based upon specific local incidents; it is a low-valued level of language primarily associated with the usage of young people.

In the above statements, the expression that slang words are ranked as low level language is highlighted. In fact, it appears that most of slang words and expressions have a conventional meaning which can be figured out only by initiated members of the social group which is characterized with the slang. In that case, slangs are undoubtedly expressions which have usage in a rather restricted social or special sphere. This lack of universality in usage renders slang words and expressions to be ranked as part low level language.

In fact, through all the above theories, we have discussed slangism. Starting from the definition, origin or etymology of slangs, function of slangs, some slangs used in English... the aim of this part has been that collecting theories essential to the analysis of the intended components of the present paper; some Swahili slangs used in Goma town.

III. Linguistic Situation of Goma Town

Linguistically, Goma town bears the characteristics of the Democratic Republic of Congo in general; that is of multilingualism. Goma town, as the Chief City of the North-Kivu Province, is inhabited by people of different linguistic backgrounds.

Taking into consideration the density of the linguistic group members in Goma town, the following local languages are spoken in Goma: Kiswahili (The Swahili), Kinyarwanda (known as Kinyabwisha, that some people call “Kihutu” for political and tribal reasons, which is a variety of Kinyarwanda), Kinande, Kihavu, Mashi, Kihunde, Kitembo, Kinyanga, Kilega, Kikumu, etc.

Besides, there are other languages spoken in Goma, but their proportions are too low. It is also important to note that Lingala, Tshiluba, Kikongo and Kiswahili are, as the four national languages of the Democratic Republic of Congo, spoken in Goma. However, as Goma is in the eastern part of the country, the use of Kiswahili is more common than any other of the national languages.

Therefore, as a multilingual town, there is a need for people from Goma, to have a lingua franca. This is Kiswahili. Kiswahili is used a language to bridge communication among the different linguistic groups as shown above. The meeting of this language (Kiswahili) with other local languages creates new language realities. These realities also generate some changes given that Kiswahili; the lingua franca has neither tribal nor historical look, some of the interlocutors are going to create their own way of using it. This lower use of the language is commonly called slang.

It is, therefore, thanks to this proportion that we have spoken, in this research paper, about some slangs used in the Swahili language which is spoken in Goma town.

IV. Sociolinguistic Study of Some Swahili Slangs Spoken in Goma Town

As the title suggests, the present chapter deals with the sociolinguistic study of some slangs from the Kiswahili language, but with a particular emphasis on the Kiswahili that is used in Goma town. In this chapter, we try to describe the slangs by giving both their connotative and denotative meanings. In order to be so concise; we try to group the slangs according to their families, including the slangs related to money and economic activities, slangs related to food and drinks, those related to love and sexuality, those related to social life as well as those related to education.

IV.1. Slangs related to money and economic activities

In Goma town, there are too many expressions that people use in order to refer to money and economic activities in general. In their daily activities, people from Goma use slangs among which, the most common are:

1) Mago/Lare/Pekunia

All the above three slangs are used to refer to money. The expressions are commonly used in Goma in different contexts. Example; *letalare*; a statement commonly used in the market when the seller, after a discussion with a customer who has been cutting down the prices, finally accepts the money. Other expressions in use with the above slangs can include: *haunamago petit* (you don't have money, young man), *nipekulare kaka* (give me some money, brother), or *pekunianjoshida* (only money matters or the only matter is money), to the high use we say *pesa*. Example; *Meyawamjiwa Goma, alipewapesayingikwakufanyausafiwamjiwote* (They offered a lot of money to the mayor of Goma to clean the whole the town), etc.

2) Mwanzo

Another slang which is commonly used in Goma so as to refer to money is *Mwanzo*. Literally, the concept means ‘the beginning’. In Goma town, the word *Mwanzo* is commonly used and it generally means ‘startup’; little and generally incomplete money that someone has when he/she wants to do something. People may use the slang in statements like: *sinaataMwanzo* (I don't have any startup), *letaMwanzo* (bring the startup) or *nikonaMwanzo, letawako* (I have something, bring yours), and many other sentences as such.

3) Madogo

Like the slang *Mwanzo*, the expression *madogo* is used in Goma to refer to little money as well. The expression *madogo* literally means ‘little’. This slang is used generally when someone wants to sell something of second hand. For example, *Letamadogotu* (Bring only little money), *nimadogotu* (it's only little money) or *nikonalombamadogotu* (I am only asking for little)...

4) Zakuvimba

Another slang for money in Kiswahili is *Zakuvimba*. The concept can be literally translated into English in ‘bigger amounts’. This slang can be the opposite of both *madogo* and *Mwanzo*. It is generally used when

someone wants to refer to a deal of much money. For example, *tafutazakuvimba* (look for much money) or *nachungazivimbe* (I am waiting until the amount grows bigger).

5) Tengo/kuwatengo

The slang *Tengo* or *Kuwatengo* is also used in Goma. This means that someone has no money at all. For example, one can say *nikotengo* (I am completely moneyless). This can also be associated with other verbs such as *kutoshatengo*, or *kutiatengo/kuachatengo*. *Kutoshatengo* (or to release from moneyless state). Example; *ule grand alinitoshatengo* (that elder brother released me from the state of being moneyless). In the same way, *kutiatengo/kuachatengo* means to render someone moneyless. This is used when, after a given deal in which one spends all what he/she had, someone becomes moneyless. We can say for example, *ileKopeiliniachatengo* (that deal left me moneyless).

6) Bunga/Murongo

The two expressions are also used to refer to money. The expression *Bunga* literally means flour. As for the word *Murongo*, it is a bowl-like dish which is used to measure flour in the retail sale. The use of both *Bunga* and *Murongo* as slang to refer to money might have come from daily life practices. In fact, most of people in Goma do not have stable jobs, and so, they work for daily bread. When someone gets little money, they immediately buy one *Murongo* of flour for that very day and so life continues. Therefore, the expression *kutafuta Murongo* has come to be associated with the fact of looking for money for daily survival. Now, the slangs *Bungaiko* (there is money), *kamandapata Murongotu* (only if I shall get money)... are commonly used in Goma town.

7) Kurimya

The verb *kurimya* literally means to borrow someone's money and refuse to pay it back. The slang is used when someone has borrowed money or always borrows money, but never does he pay his debts. Someone can say, *ulemastaalishakanirimya* (that guy did not reimburse my money/his debt).

8) Bombere

The slang *bombere* comes from the French verb 'Bomber' which can mean to 'Overload'. In daily life, the slang *Bombere* is used for a persons who helps the conductor to welcomes passengers on a bus, boat or ship in exchange for some money. These are people who stay at bus stops and when there is an empty bus, they warmly welcome passengers so that the conductor can pay them some money.

9) Atalaku

Like the slang *Bombere*, the expression *Atalaku* is used to refer to transportation activities. An *Atalaku* is the work for an Assistant driver; the person who, on a bus, welcome passengers, bargains the transportation fees with the passengers and receives money from them. The *Atalaku* is the person who pays the *Bombere* for the assistance in welcoming passengers.

10) Juakali

The slang *juakali* literally means (fierce sun/hot sunshine). So, a *Juwakali* is a person who does not have any fixed job or at least, a person who does not have any job at all. These are persons who spend their days surrounding up and down looking for some occupation from which they can get *Murongo*. They also make a class of persons who are ready for any kind of jobs provided that it brings a *Murongo*.

11) Frapere/Frape

Both concepts are used to refer to bad deals. A *Frape* is a bad deal; a deal that brings no fruits or again a deal in which someone loses instead of gaining. For example; someone can ask you to bring 100 USD so that in one month, he gives you back 300 USD. In case the money is not paid back, it becomes a ''frape''. Now the word *Frapere* is used to name someone specialized in bad deals (*Frape*). We can say for instance, *ulemastani Frapere* (that guy is a bad dealer). The slang *frape* is also associated with verbs such as *kufrapper* or to induce someone in a bad deal. We can say for instance; *bameishakufraper* (you have been induced in a bad deal/ you have been victimized by such bad dealers).

12) Kushona

The expression *Kushona* is a verb in Swahili which certainly means to 'to sew' in English. In Goma town, however, the expression is used as a slang for lack of money. If someone says for example, '*nikonashonaizisiku*' to mean *I am sewing nowadays*, this means he is in an extreme lack of money or just a

total financial crisis. This expression might have been taken from the fact that poor people usually sew clothes instead of throwing them away when they are torn. In this context, the word should be associated with one's inability to buy new clothes; hence, extreme poverty. It is now true that the concept is commonly used in Goma to denote financial crisis.

IV.2. Slangs related to foods and drinks

Apart from the slangs which are related to money and economic activities, there are other slangs, in Kiswahili, which are related to foods and drinks. In Goma town, for example, there are too many different expressions used for foods and drinks, among which we can list the following:

1) Boke/Doze/Kwiti

In Goma town, all the three expressions are commonly used as slangs to refer to alcohol. It is therefore, frequent in Goma for people to say; *twendepigaboke* to means let us go to drink alcohol, *anatoka mu ma Kwiti*; to means they are coming from drinking beer or again *nilibakuta mu ma doze*, to means I met them drinking beer. It is also important to precise that, while the first two expressions originate from Kiswahili, the last (Kwiti) has its origin in Lingala, one of the national languages in DRC. Expressions such as *Moto yaKwiti*, or drunkard, *AzaKwiti*, he is drunk, are common expressions in Lingala. It is from Lingala usage that the word came to be adapted and nowadays, it is commonly used in Goma as to refer to beer at the same rate as Boke and Doze. That probably because both Kiswahili and Lingala are national languages from the DRC, but more probably because of its contingency with drinks/beers.

2) Kubutuka/Kuduluka/Kukatika/Kutetuka/Kukatamoto

All the above expressions are slangs used in Kiswahili to means to be drunk or to get drunk. The expressions (Kuduluka, Kutetuka and Kubutuka) are rather vulgar expression of which, the association with beer seems random. They are only used for being drunk. *Kukatika* and *Kukatamoto*, however, seem to have a rather reasonable association. *Kukatika*, meaning being cut and *Kata moto* can be literally translated into *to cut fire*.

The association of these two expressions with the fact of getting drunk can be due to the fact that people who are drunk always lose their mind or control. So the connection could be that of mind disfunctioning which is caused by alcohol when someone is drunk. In addition, the expression *Katamoto* can sometimes mean drunkard. It can also be used to refer to someone who is always drunkard. So, to say *Ule grand ni Katamotowa danger*, we mean, that guy is a drunkard of high level.

3) Kudumba

The verb Kudumba is also used as a slang in Kiswahili and it has much connection with drinks. In fact, the expression means to beg for alcohol. The expression Kudumba is often used for the fact of being unable to buy beer for oneself, and always want other people to buy for one. This is also applied for the fact of staying where people are drinking beer while having no money. Example, *namiyenikonadumba*, bro; can be a common reply to someone who asks you to offer him/her a bottle when you have no money, and you are only being bought by another person.

4) Dumbere

The slang *Dumbere* can be taken as a noun from the verb *Kudumba*. As for the verb, the expression is used to mean someone who never buys beer for himself, but who gets beer from other people who have bought it without any payment, but only by asking. In other words, a Dumbere is someone who always begs for beer. We can say for example, *ulemastani Dumbere*, to mean that guy is a beggar of beer.

5) Kipandé/Kizima

The expressions *Kipandé* and *Kizima* are used like opposite words, the first being a half, while the last means a whole. These slangs are frequently used to refer to some strongly alcoholic beer which is sold either a half bottle (*Kipandé*) or a full bottle (*Kizima*). Sometimes, when someone has no money to buy a whole bottle of the so-called *Sapilo* (strongly alcoholic beer), he/she may request for a half bottle. Thus, it is frequent in Goma to hear young people say, *Niko tunaza Kipandé*, or I only have money for a half bottle, *Tuuziyeata Kipandé Mastaa*; buy for us even a half bottle man, *Tulimaliza Kizimamoyajana*, we finished a whole/full bottle yesterday, etc.

6) Buyi/Lindra

The slangs *Buyi* and *Lindra* are used to refer to a type of local beer which is common in Goma and which is made from corn. The corn beer, which is locally called *Mandale* or *mandrakwa*, is a porridge-like drink and from that appearance the slang *Buyi* might have been drawn. In fact, the concept '*buyi*' means porridge, but in Goma, young people use *Buyi* to mean *Mandale* or corn beer. *Lindra* is also used to mean corn beer. This probably was created by singularizing the short form of *Mandale* in a way that sounds a bit different. People can say for instance, *Tungepataata Buyi*; to mean if we could get even corn beer, most often when they have not sufficient money to buy beer.

7) Machangé

The word *Machangé* comes from the Swahili verb *Kuchanga*, which means to mix. In Goma town, the concept *Machangé* is used to denote the fact of drinking different qualities of beer at the same time. *Machangé* is the fact of mixing beer while drinking. We can say for example, *Ulemastaalifanya Machangé Jana*, to mean that guy mixed different qualities of beer yesterday.

8) Byoteka

The slang *Byoteka* might have been created from the word *Byote*, which means everything. *Byoteka* is another slang which, in Goma, is used to refer to someone who does not have any taste for beer. In other word, a person who drinks everything that comes across on his menu. So, saying that *Ule grand ni Byoteka*, means that brother has no choice for beer or he drinks whatever taste he meets.

9) Mabuteye

Another slang which is associated with drinks is *Mabuteye*. The word *bouteille* is a French word which means bottle in English. So, saying *Mabuteye* would be a way of putting the word into plural to denote beer, drinks. One can say, *tulipigamabuteye Jana*, is a way to say that we drank beer yesterday.

10) Fao/Femba

The slang *Fao* or *Femba* are used to refer to hunger. While the concept *Femba* seems to have its origin from the deformation of the French word *Faim*, which means hunger, *Fao* seems to have been created from *FAO* (Food and Agriculture organization) the United Nations agency in charge of agriculture and feeding around the world. However, both concepts are used to mean hunger. One can say for instance, *Naskia Femba danger*, to mean I am very hungry or *Jana nililala Fao*, to mean I did not eat yesterday or literally, I slept being hungry, without eating.

11) Damer/Manjer

The verbs *Damer* and *Manger*, from French are frequently used in Goma to mean eating. We generally say *Twende manger*, let us go to eat, *Nilikutabikona Damer*, I met them eating ... In the same way, the word *Damaje* is applied as a creation from *Damer*. In daily usage, the word *Damaje* means food. It is frequent in Goma to say, *Bikonatayarisha Damaje*, which means they are cooking/preparing food.

IV.3. Slangs related to love and sexuality

Like for foods and drinks, money and economic activities, there are slangs in Kiswahili which are used for love and sexuality. In this range, we can list:

1) Momi/Baby/Chérie/Zozo

All the above expressions are slangs used for girlfriend. Although not all of them are from Kiswahili, they are commonly used in Goma as slangs to mean girlfriend. These are common expressions among young people in Goma. They always use these in sentences like, *nilishapataka Cherie*, to mean I got a girlfriend, *UleMomiyakoniwaprope*, your girlfriend is beautiful, smart...

It is also common for these expressions to be extended to mean girl, woman... For example, *Nilionaki grand Cherie*, I saw a big lady, *Ba momibikotromwaile quartier*, there are many ladies in that quarter...

2) Muti/Mutiste

It is also common in Goma for people to use these words *Muti* as slang for sex and *Mutiste* for sex maker. The expression *Muti* may probably have been created from the association of penis with a stick. *Muti* itself is the Kiswahili word for stick and so, people use *Muti* in Goma to refer to sex. People can say for example, *Alipigamuti, alipatamuti...* to mean he made sex with, she was fucked... The word *Mutiste* is, therefore, used for

someone who is known that he regularly has sex with many different partners. So saying for example that *Ule grand niMutiste*, means that brother is a fucker.

3) Shanga/Kesheni

In the same way, *Shanga* and *Kesheni* are slangs used for ladies who are not married despite the advanced age. *Shanga* means aunt and the use of it for a lady who has no husband is like a mockery. *Kesheni* rather comes from the verb *Kukasha*, which means to stay up. It is common in Goma for people to use these slangs to refer to unmarried aged ladies.

4) Kishakoshi/Ki-groupé

Ki-groupé and Kishakoshi are other slangs which are common in Goma. Kishakoshi can be literally translated into a Big Bag while Kigroupé means big generator. Both Kishakoshi and Kigroupé are used to refer to a sugar daddy, an old man who loves small ladies for sex by giving money. The phenomenon of Kishakoshi has become common in Goma town.

5) Ndogondogo

The slang Ndogondogo, literally small small, is probably closely linked to the phenomenon of Kishakoshi. Ndogondogo is the slang used in Goma to refer to small girls who have sexual relationships with old men. If, in Goma, someone says *Alisha anza penda Ndogondogo*, it means a man has started sexual affairs with small girls.

6) Yamado

The slang Yamado is also used to refer to ladies with big buttocks. In Swahili, the expression has no logical root. However, its usage may have come from the song Yamado, by the Congolese musician Fabregas Metis Noir. The musician used the expression Yamado while dancing with a lady with surprising buttocks and now, the same word has been spread in usage to denote ladies with such big buttocks.

7) Shofere

The word Shofere is the French word for a driver (Chauffeur). In Goma, the Chauffeur is used as a slang and it is directly opposed to Yamado. In its common usage in Goma, Chauffeur means a lady with very small buttocks. So, if a girl is not a Yamado, she is likely to be called Chauffeur, since a driver it is supposed to lose the size of his/her buttocks due to spending much time sitting and driving.

8) Yeyeye/Ngongingo/Vodo/Derrière/Kisusu/Inye

All the above expressions are slangs used in Goma town and they all mean buttocks. In Goma, and probably in the Congolese tradition in general, women or ladies with big buttocks are always awarded particular attention. So, in order to refer to buttocks, there are different expressions which are used, among them, the above expressions.

9) KupigaMayi

Like Muti, the word Kupigamayi literally means (to hit the water or woman's humidity and ejaculation 'squirting' with man's penis). The slang kupigamayi is used for making sex. Mayi is water in English and its association with sex possibly comes from the semen and secretion. The fact, for a man, of ejaculating, she releases a kind of liquid, so, it is from such resemblance that the expression *kupigamayi* is linked with making sex.

10) Nchere/Chéché

The two slangs above mean prostitute. So as probably to attenuate the expression *Mbaraga* (prostitute) which rather sounds awkward, people use the slang Nchere or Chéché. It is common to hear people say, *uleniNchere*, to mean that one is a prostitute.

11) Sinziya

Another slang related to love in Goma town is the word Sinziya. The word means in English, to sleep. However, in its usage in Goma, the slang Sinziya has a different meaning. In fact, the expression is used to mean someone, especially a boy or man who does not know how to bring ladies around or who is unable to woo a girl (a verbless/shy).

12) Kurumbata

The verb Kurumbata is another slang in Goma town. The expression does not have any clear origin and its usage is rather vulgar. However, in its use, the verb Kurumbata is used for the act of suddenly engaging in sex affairs with someone without any prior arrangement. For example, if you go to a bar and meet aNchere, if you propose her to have sex, people will easily call that Kurumbata.

13) Kutoka

The verb kutoka literally means to leave. In Goma town, this verb is also used as a slang for the fact of going out with someone, often a girl and a boy or man, for a date. People often use this in expressions like, *napendatutokenaweeye*, to mean I wish we went out together. Still, in its strict sense, kutoka can mean to have a sexual affair with someone. This is what people say when they use expressions like *eule Cherie anatokakanamwalimu wake*, to mean that lady has sexual affairs with her teacher.

IV.4. Some slangs related to social life

In Goma town, there are too many other expressions which are used to denote things related to everyday life. Among the slangs related to social life, the following ones are very frequent:

1) Bibonde/Bisodo

These two expressions, though seem to have no logical link, are used to mean the same thing. Normally, the word Bibonde is the plural of Kibonde, a salty dry fish. Bisodo is rather a vulgar creation. In Goma town, both slangs are used to refer to things that make people laugh. Bibonde/Bisodo can be for example, where people are fighting, where someone is caught having sex with a wife or husband of someone else, where a robber is caught, strange event... If people come to watch Bibonde or Bisodo, then there must be something that is to be watched or that can make people laugh.

2) Ku Revenser

Another slang used in Goma is Ku revenser. The expression is a mere creation and can mean different things depending on the context. However, in its normal use, the slang means to be mistaken, to make a mistake, to do something stupid or unwise... For example, someone who is drunk the day time, a teacher for instance, and then his pupils see him walking with no equilibrium, that one *anaRevenser*. People can also use the slang for a range of mistakes that visibly bring shame on the doer or simply where one betrays his friend in a deal. It is then possible for the expression to be used with some modification or derivatives such as *revense*, *revenseur*... A *revense* is an unwise, or a stupid action, while the one who does the unwise or stupid action is called *arevenseur*.

3) Kuingiamayi

Kuingiamayi which can be literally translated as to get into water, is another slang used in Goma. Kuingiamayi has almost the same meaning as Kurevenser. It is used in the same way to refer to stupid and/or unwise actions. So, when someone *ameingiamayi*, it is undoubtedly that they are met in an unwise or stupid situation.

4) Kupakala

It is also common in Goma to hear people use the slang Kupakala. This is a verb which can mean to roughcast over something. In Goma, however, Kupakala is used as a slang for the fact of telling lies. When someone says, *nilibapakala*; I told them lies, or *Ndabapakala*, I shall tell them lies, is to show that they do not speak the truth. That is also a common expression used in Goma town.

5) Ligne/Kistari

Ligne is the French word for line. Kistari is its Swahili equivalent. So, either the French Ligne or its Swahili version Kistari, both are used in Goma to refer to an invitation. This is often used when someone invites for beer, or where there is food and drinks. When people say, *kukoLigne/Kistarikesho*; this means that they have an invitation to go somewhere to eat, drink... the following day.

6) Ku gérer

Another slang in Goma is kugérer. It is also a French word which means to manage. In Goma, the verb *Gerer* is used to mean, like Kupakala, to tell lies. So, saying that *Ikonabagérer*, to mean he is telling lies, is a habitual expression used when people are telling lies. The expression kugerer also has some derivatives such as *ma gerance*; to mean lies. One can say, *ilikuwa ma gerancetu*, to mean, they were just lies.

7) Kuzerera

Kuzerera is another verb which, in Goma, is used as slang for wondering. The verb means that someone is walking with no precise destination. When people say, *baliendazerera*, they mean that they went to walk without any precise destination. It is a borrowing from Kinyarwanda.

8) Kuponda pile

The expression Kuponda pile is another common slang in Goma town. This slang means to waste time. When people sit somewhere while doing nothing, people can say *Bikonaponda pile*, to mean they are wasting time. A person who wastes time regularly is likely to be called *Ponda Pile*, or sometimes abbreviated into PP.

9) Kubuder

Another verb used as slang in Goma town is Kubuder. The expression means not to care about, to bypass someone or something. It is common for people in Goma to say *Nilimuitaakanibouder*, to mean, I called him/her, but he/she did not care of my call/invitation.

10) Kushana

The expression Kushana is a borrowing from Mashi language. It is another Kiswahili verb which is used as a slang in Goma. Kushana means to bring food or drinks home either from a party, a reception or any other ceremony. When people take food home from a party, it is what is called Kushana. The verb also has some expressions associated with it such as shanage, shanable... while shanage seems to have the same meaning as the verb Kushana, itself; shanable is a creation to denote things that can be taken away.

IV.5. Some slangs related to school activities

As mentioned earlier in this study, slangs are expressions which are specific to such or such other social group. As for the case of school, pupils try to create their own slangs which are often used at the school setting. Among the common expressions used by pupils, the following ones can be listed:

1) Chike

The expression Chike is a slang used by pupils, and it certainly means school. Pupils regularly use this slang as to refer to school activities, for example, *keshositaenda Chike*, to mean I will not go to school tomorrow, *Keshohatuna Chike* as for we do not have class tomorrow.

2) Chikeson

As the expression Chike means school or class; the word Chikeson is another slang used by pupils at the school setting. A Chikeson is a pupil who likes school. The expression is always used to name pupils who are always present, always come early, never miss any class works, always do their best to answer questions...

3) Muchele

Muchele is another slang related to school activities. Muchele is the Kiswahili word for rice. However, pupils always use this word, to mean, not rice, but state exam questionnaires that are distributed before the exam as mass or collective cheating. So if pupils say they have *Muchele*, it is undoubtedly that they have exam questionnaire before the exam is taken.

4) Connection

The expression connection is used by pupils to mean cheating. When pupils say for instance, Connection, they certainly want their colleagues to share answers during an exam, quiz or any other class activity.

5) Chezambele

The verb *Kuchezambele* is also appropriate for pupils. This can be literally translated into move forwards, but in the context of schools pupils use it to mean to leave class without permission. So, if the teacher is not present or if pupils are tired they can say among themselves, *tuchezembele*. In doing so, they only want to escape and go home without any official permission.

6) Kukunywamayi

Kukunywamaji which means to drink water is another slang expression which is regularly used by pupils. Instead of drinking water, the expression means to fail. So when pupils say, *Mwenzetuamekunywamayi*, they only mean that their colleague has failed.

7) Masisteme

The expression Masysteme, taken literally, means systems. In such case, it seems to have no meaning. However, for the pupils, masysstem is the word for corruption. So, when pupils say, *Tutaweza mu Masysteme*, to mean we shall succeed by corruption, *uleanapitakatu mu Masysteme*; they mean that one only passes classes thanks to corruption.

8) Prêtre

Another common expression among pupils in Goma town is Prêtre. This is a French borrowing which means, in English, a priest. For pupils, therefore, the expression Prêtre is used to denote intelligent pupils. Sometimes, the expression is extended in usage to name teachers who master their materials very well. Also, in some case, when a pupil is extremely intelligent, they can use it with exaggeration and say Grand Prêtre. Furthermore, sometimes the expression is used with a negative meaning as for mockery. When a pupil, if older than his colleagues, is not intelligent, the colleagues can also call him Grand Prêtre as a way to attenuate his level.

9) Chai yarangi

The slang chai yarangi is certainly the opposite of Prêtre. Chai yarangi, which is tea made by only tea grass, water and sugar; is used to refer to pupils who are less intelligent within a classroom. Like for the expression Prêtre, Chai yarangi is also applied for teachers who do not master their materials well. When pupils say that one is chai yarangi, it is undoubtedly that that one is not intelligent. As we have said it earlier, slangs are creations of new meanings or new words or simply a denotative meaning that is appointed to a word by a given social class. Let us mention that this social use of the language is low, middle or high. The slang is to be classified in the low usage of the language since it can never be used in formal context.

Partial Conclusion

The present chapter has been centered on the sociolinguistic study of some slangs used in Swahili in Goma town. In order to be concise, we have grouped these slangs according to some sub categories: slangs related to foods and drinks, those related to money and economic activities, the ones related to love and sexuality, some slangs related to social life as well as those related to school activities. In each sub-category, we have listed some slangs, especially the ones which are commonly used and have provided the situations in which these slangs are normally used.

V. General Conclusion

A retrospective glance through the content of this article shows that slangs, as a low form of language, are not easy to understand the message or grasp the meaning. Like any other languages, the Swahili used in Goma must have too many slangs, of which the meaning is still unknown to many persons.

The aim of this study has been that of pointing out the meanings of some slangs, how they are formed and the function that they play in the society. In order to achieve this study, we have asked ourselves too many questions among which the main ones have been the following ones:

- What are the different slangs used in Kiswahili spoken in Goma?
- What is the meaning of these slangs?
- What is the function of the slangs used in Kiswahili in Goma and how are they formed?

The above questions have been temporarily answered as follows:

First of all, we have assumed that the slangs used in Kiswahili in Goma town are many depending on the different language levels and different aspects of everyday life. This may include: slangs related to foods and drinks, slangs related to problems and mistakes, slangs related to economy and business, slangs related to love and sexuality and slangs related social life and means of transport.

Furthermore, we assumed that the meanings of these slangs depend on each specific group of the population, and so, the function of the slangs is that of maintaining their message inaccessible to other community members outside the specific groups. Each group aims at keeping some of their communications unintelligible to outsiders.

As for the results, by the end of the investigation we have found out that there are too many slangs used in Kiswahili in Goma town. So, in order to be precise, we have grouped these slangs according to some categorization: slangs related to money and economic activities, slangs related to foods and drinks, the ones related to sexuality and love, those related to social life as well as the ones related to school activities. We therefore have noticed that these slangs are used in order to maintain communication accessible only among

members of such or such other social group. Thanks to these findings, we have found out that our hypotheses have been confirmed.

To come to these findings, we have exploited the following methods and techniques which have been very useful for us. We can list for example, sociolinguistics which has helped us to study the way language (Kiswahili) is used by different social strata, psycholinguistics to get meanings of some slangs. We also had to mingle sometimes to the users of these slangs joining them in their daily activities and trying to live as they do. We have also used some techniques such as the interview where we had to meet different people of different social classes. We also have used the documentary technique in order to be informed of the function of slangs in general before we have a specific application on Kiswahili. Of course we cannot neglect the contribution of the net browsing through which we also got non negligible data.

However, it is true that research is always complex, and no single paper can cover the whole field. For that reason, we cannot claim to have developed this topic in a complete way. Anyway, we can only be proud of our efforts for having made this step to scientific research. So, we call upon other researchers who can enlarge this research gate by developing any other point they find suitable for the completion of this study. For example, they may study other slangs related to religious aspects, or simply tackle the different levels of Kiswahili spoken in Goma town.

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