

Linguistic Manipulation In Kiswahili Slangs Used On Instagram and Implications on the Development of the Language

By

Joseph Fred, Moses James Olenyo Malande and Kulikoyela Kahigi

Abstract

The study analysed Linguistic manipulation in Kiswahili Slangs used on Instagram. Specifically, the study concentrates on three areas which were: to identify forms of Kiswahili slang used on Instagram, to examine the reasons for using Kiswahili slang on Instagram interactions and to examine contextual use of Kiswahili slang on Instagram. Data is collected through textual analysis, questionnaire and focus group discussion to obtain the data and from 20 active informants who were sampled through purposive sampling. We used the DM to collect data from Kiswahili slang Instagram users. The study employed Communication Accommodation Theory as developed by Giles and Ogay in 1971 and Stylistic Theory for data analysis and presentation. The findings of the study discovered that Kiswahili slangs are formed by compounding, borrowing, abbreviations, metaphors and so forth. Moreover, the study revealed that the use of Kiswahili slang on Instagram was influenced by word economy, for in-group communication and euphemism. Analysis of the collected data also uncovered that Kiswahili slangs were acquired from different sources including TV and radio sessions, music and from other social media.

Key words: Kiswahili slang, Instagram-ers), Linguistic manipulation, style and morphological features.

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Introduction

Kiswahili slang is an argot predominantly used on social media such as Facebook, whatsapp, TikTok, Instagram and so forth. This code (language) exhibits quite a number of linguistic features. Like any other languages, it has got its own users who linguistically manipulate Kiswahili to form slang. Research on languages in Africa has shown a great deal of linguistic manipulation at levels of language such as Phonology, Morphology, Syntax Semantics, Pragmatics, Stylistics, Sociolinguistics and Discourse analysis (Nassentein, 2017). Researches in Africa often demand a deliberate choice of language and linguistic tools that would communicate the most desirable message (Malande, Vikiru and Kabeya, 2020).

The origin of slang is debatable with varying opinion of its originators. Fasola (2012) considers its origin unknown and hypothetical. Skeat (1982) opines that the term slang originates from of Scandinavian nature with the Norwegian verb *slengia* to mean sling the jaw and the Norwegian noun *Slengjeord* used as an insult. Hartmann and Stork (1972, p.57) define slang as:

Variety of speech characterized by newly coined and rapidly changing vocabulary, used by the young or by social and professional groups for in-group communication and thus tending to prevent understanding by the rest of the speech community.

The quotation above suggests that slang is newly coined and it is used by the young, social or professional groups or anybody in an informal setting. Moreover, slang prevents a conversation from being understood by the rest of speech community. Once slang has spread across social groups understanding may not be a problem unless other factors come in such as respectful speech, may be not used that is it can either fade away or enter into common usage. For instance, *pig* has been used with reference to police officers for a long time and still remains a slang (Coleman, 2012).

Statement of the Problem

Instagram as one of the most commonly used social media platform is considered to play an important role in facilitating communication among people. To achieve this, a specific language or code such as Kiswahili slang is used. That slang is often a manipulation of standard Kiswahili variety. This study attempts at understanding the type, the form (structure) and the linguistic use of Kiswahili slang usage depending on the contextual need of the instagrammers. Kiswahili slang formation obtains conversations. This conversations are sometimes inclusive or exclusive-thus facilitating or hindering communication. Furthermore, this study investigates ways in which

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instagrammers accommodate each other by highlighting cases of linguistic manipulations, linguistic uses, convergence, divergence and maintenance in the deployment of Kiswahili slangs.

Review of Related Literature

Bergstrom & Backman (2013) postulate that Instagram was launched on October 6, 2010. It has been used for effective communication and it has become more popular for it allows for the sharing of information between the Instagram users. Crystal (2005) affirms that in the 21st century the use of the software applications had changed the way people communicate. Shortenings like abbreviations, acronyms, vocabulary and orthography, grammar, pragmatics and style over the language used in the social media. Crystal (2011) adds that many words have adopted new meaning because of social media.

Various studies such as Muhartoyo and Wijaya (2014), Kolowich (2020), Rullu (2017), Trask (2001), Rosita (2012) in USA, Fattaut (2020) on Twitter, and Fathonah (2018) in India have been studied on use of slang. For instance, Rosita (2012) courses on analysing slang language used in the movie entitled 21 Jump Street. According to Rosita (2012) there are various classification of slang linked with the context used in the movie. Fattaut (2018) and Fathonah (2012) analysed the findings of the Kiswahili slangs used by BTS ARMY Community on Twitter and classified them into types of slang based on Chapman (1988).

The study examines on different classification of slang as used in the movie and Twitter. According to the studies from scholars mentioned, they said that slang emerge due to the need of users to vary their communication style from the other members of a larger society. Mostly, the words which are used are very common but they are given the meanings which are beyond their conventional meanings in the society. The new associated meanings may give negative, positive or neutral connotation to the society. In application, slang can be found in the conversation of the teenagers and young people. Teenagers give the great contribution to the forming of slang. In other words, slang as variety of language, it creates more fluent in conversation, more intimate, and it agrees with an informal situation. For example: the word *wanna* means *want to*, the word *cool* and *hot* can both mean *good looking, very good, or impressive*.

On the other hand, Manurung et al. (2020) claim that the users form slang through abbreviations, acronyms, words or phrases that are used to express something new or old-fashioned in a new way and use slang to make sentences shorter and easier to say. Sometimes the slang is more vivid, more expressive than the standard words. For example, people use the terms ‘brilliant’ and ‘awesome’ to describe something they approve of. Further, the word ‘crazy’ is used to mean beautiful, excellent or exciting.

Another example is the acronym ‘IMO’ which means ‘In My Opinion’ which are widely used on the internet. On his part, Lebrian (2018) affirms that slang is unconventional words or phrases that express either something new or old or it could be a combination of them which is presented in a new way. Also, slang is known as flippant language because it is inconsistent in terms of meaning and dynamic changes. This happens because slang deals with lexicon or vocabulary which are liable to change. Muhartoyo (2014) asserts that on Instagram, people use slang as the way of saying something. For example, the abbreviation such as “AMA” is stand for “Ask Me Anything” (mostly used by popular people such as musicians, players, influencers, to invite their followers to ask questions), “CSL” to mean “Can't Stop Laughing”, “OOTD” means

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"Outfit of The Day", "GOAT" to mean "Greatest of All Time" and MOTM to mean "Man of The Match".

For instance,

I'm a big girl who did a smoothie detox. Every big girl should do whatever they want with their bodies." Lizzo responded to critics that say she's promoting "diet culture" with her smoothie cleanse. FYI, she's doing what SHE wants.

From the post above, the FYI stands for "For Your Information".

In the same line, Cheikh bella (2019) notes that acronyms and abbreviations are words formed from the initial letters of each word. For instance, acronyms are common among the youth which employs it specifically in web communication since it is fast and brief description to what they intend to say. Slang such as BTW (by the way) BRB (be right back) KIT (keep in touch) are few examples of acronyms and abbreviations. This shows that the reconstruction of words comes from the existing words that is a Kiswahili slangs form a different meaning from what the common usage of meaning such as chick is a slang of a normal word girl. The usage of metaphors and metonymies is usually associated with beautifying linguistic tools may reduce the level of formality and seriousness. Additional features would be wit and humour, Kiswahili slangs regularly have funny and sarcastic character which offers it a reputation of lack of seriousness and formality but in return its witty character has extended its notable popularity among users that seek to sound cool and have no time to form sophisticated well-formed expressions.

Kiswahili slangs are mostly used by society prisoners, drug addicts and criminals, or under world (Wang 2007, Burdova 2009, Moore, 2012 and Coleman, 2012). But, the use of slang now is not only used by the mentioned group but also most of people from different statuses including middle or lower class use slang often to express their feelings or to try to say something in different ways. Additionally, people use slang so as to create their social identity and at the same time strengthen their solidarity.

People use language for communication differently. When talking to someone who is older than the speaker, polite forms are used than when talking to someone who is younger. According to Holmes (2001), people's speech reflect not only aspects of their identity such as their ethnicity, age, gender, and social background; it also reflects the contexts in which they are using the language. The way people talk to each other reflects the formality of those context and the social roles people take in them.

Moreover, Halliday (2007) opines that apart from slang being fashion, it observed as a symbol of identity and delineator of groups, a marker of an in group and from the out-group. Furthermore, in the usage of language, participants of the social groups be likely to execute two actions, either to attract similar members or counterattack those who are different. Van Hark (2012, p.105) affirms that "people try to sound more like their interlocutors, to converge towards the people they are talking to (and occasionally, if their interlocutors are jerks or if they want to establish social distance from them, to diverge, or sound less like them". This implies that when social members coin new linguistic forms, they are trying to frame their uniqueness within the socio-economic changes in that world-wide.

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It is clear that there are a number of studies on Kiswahili slang that have previously been undertaken before the proposed study. However, this study is important following the fact that to the best of the researcher's knowledge there is no single study that has examined the use of Kiswahili slang specifically on Instagram. For instance, Mwansoko (1990) focused on the street slang, Hokororo et al (2021) focused on the slang used on transport sector operators and Malima (2018) focused on social media slang. Malima (2018) dealt with investigation on the uses of the of slang in social networks among scholars in Morogoro Municipality analysing the amount of use of Kiswahili language terms used among scholars and the challenges of using language terms in communication among scholars while Hokororo et al (2021) examined the use of slang among youth involved in transport sector in Nyamagana Municipality. The research, however, did not cover the usage of Kiswahili slang especially on social media. This is what inspired the researcher to conduct the study of Kiswahili slang to clear the gap left by previous researchers. In this research, we discuss the linguistic manipulation of Kiswahili slang within the confines of CAT and stylistic theory.

Theories

Two theories were applied:

Communication Accommodation Theory

According to Griffin (2012), Communication Accommodation Theory (henceforth CAT) was developed from Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) in 1971. SAT was based on explaining what encouraged people to change communication style during discourse and some social consequences which evolved from these shifts but in 1987 the main focus had sharpened and broadened to cover a wide array of communication behaviours. These changes resulted to change its name from SAT to CAT. CAT was proposed by Giles and Ogay (2007). The theory states

An individual uses communication in order to indicate their attitudes towards each other and as such is a barometer of the level of social distance between them. This movement towards and from others, by changing ones communicative behaviour, is called accommodation. (p.326).

According to Giles and Ogay (2007), CAT is divided into three main accommodative categories namely convergence, divergence and maintenance. This means that when people accommodate or get together to each other so as to understand in conversation is known as *convergence*. This convergence is reflected through speakers or group's need for social integration or identification with another. Hence, the need for belonging to a group and covering to a specific linguistic style in order to identify with that group is realized through efficient communication (Giles and Ogay, 2007).

The second aspect of accommodation of CAT is known as *divergence*. It is about how the individuals speak that makes him or her to be different to enhance the fact that they fit in to a certain group that is someone adjusting communication behaviour to be more dissimilar to another. (Giles and Ogay, 2007). This informs that, sometimes, slang is used to exclude the unwanted people in the conversation.

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Another strategy on CAT is maintenance, in this strategy, communication among conversers occurs without any special modification to smooth or hinder understanding the topic. Therefore, interlocutors use certain strategies either to accelerate or hinder the understanding the conversation. For example, in social media some of the communicators use slang that understood by the few.

According to Tracy (2007), the main purpose of communication is to work as tool through which people reveal who they wish to be. It is through communication individuals communicate to converge in a group while others communicate to diverge from others. Therefore, people choose to communicate to each other and this likely to happen when they have the same traits.

The theory is generally focusing on the effects that language has in the process of communications. Convergence and divergence are different ways of accommodation that reveal the intended goal that a speaker have in the mind when participating on conversation. The main intention and function of communication are either to establish identity or to show or maintain group belonging through accommodation.

Assumptions of the Communication Accommodation Theory

The theory is guided by the four assumptions as proposed by Giles and Ogay (2007):

- i. Social-historical context of conversation.
- ii. How people perceive and evaluate a conversation.
- iii. The role played by language and behaviour.
- iv. The accommodation process varies in degree and appropriateness, and is guided by norms.

First assumption states that in any conversation, people do not talk only on the present issues but historical issues are involved. It is about social-historical context of an interaction (Giles and Ogay, 2007). This means that before a conversation, there is pre-existing relationship of the interlocutors. Naturally, the more people are similar, the greater the extent of accommodation.

The second assumption asserts that firstly, people observe what is taking place before involving in a conversation. They will try to interpret the message and judge worth of the conversation that is perception and evaluation (Giles and Ogay, 2007). It is influenced by a person who engages in a conversation and topic.

The third assumption illustrates the role of language and behaviour. According to Giles and Ogay (2007), language and behaviour are the basic indicators of social status and group belongings. For instance, if a Kiswahili speaking person have a conversation with an English-speaking person, the language of communication is likely to be the one of the higher social status a person.

The fourth assumption mainly focuses on the appropriateness and what is dictated by norms. Norms guide people on what is appropriate to accommodate in the conversation. A good example is when a young person speaks to an older one and does not use slang in order to show respect.

Therefore, CAT offers two important major aspects which will be important for the generation, analysis and the discussion of the findings in the current study. According to the theory, the researcher is informed that sometimes people communicate in a certain way in order

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to be closer to other to the people whom they are communicating with. With the application of CAT into the context of this proposed study. One may argue that instagram user sometimes use slang as a way to show their closeness to the people they are communicating or to be accepted as the members of the groups that are chatting with them on this social medium. This was an important lesson in this research and, accordingly, the researcher needs to know if this is among the reasons that instagram user do use slang in communicating.

The second important aspect of the CAT is that interlocutors communicate to show divergence. The theory postulates that speakers use a certain style of language to make themselves appear different from others. In other words, speakers may be using language in a certain way because they want to show identity or exclude others from their communication. Through this aspect of the theory, research tools were appropriately constructed to determine if these are among the reasons for the use slang on Instagram. In fact, the theory itself could not be the jack of all trades, but the researcher will depend on the information provided by the informants of the study to confirm the theorizations by Giles and Orgy (2007) through the Communication and Accommodation Theory.

Stylistic Theory

It deals with studying the meaning of text. It arose from the late 19th and early 20th century.

The improvement of stylistic theory in its recent form is credited to the works of Roman Jakobson done on the literariness in the poetic language. Jakobson (1960) in his paper state that “poetics deals primarily with the question, what makes a verbal message a work of art? Because the main subject of poetics is the *differentia specifica* of verbal art in relation to other arts and in relation to other kinds of verbal behaviour, poetics is entitled to the leading place in literary studies” (p.360). In this quotation, poetics refers to the stylistics.

The first aim was to establish whether there is anything unique about the language of literature that differentiate it absolute from other language use. On other hand, they needed to discover out in what way style affected such significant issues as political and social change, through the text faced by citizens for the purpose of emphasizing thought mainly hidden ideology rather than for the purpose of enlightening aesthetic effects.

Crystal and Dav (1996) opine the method for identifying textual style based on regularity of occurrence of certain linguistic features in texts, linked to (situational and other) external features. Stylistic includes the following:

- i. Style deviation from norm.
- ii. A manifestation of the individual.
- iii. Content and or form.
- iv. Choice between alternative ways of expressing the same idea.
- v. Product of context
- vi. Good or beautiful of writing.

According to Simpson (2004), stylistics as an inquiry has a significant ability since it can shed light on the very language system it derives from. Stylistics expresses about the rules of language because it regularly discovers texts where these rules are bent. In this study, the researcher sees in what way language is employed in order to create Kiswahili slang on Instagram. Furthermore, Simpson (2004, p.4) affirms that “interest in language is always at the fore in contemporary

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stylistic analysis, which is why one should never undertake to do stylistics unless one is interested in language”. This proves that stylistics helps to decipher the language use by Instagram user.

The theory hypothesized that at any utterances whether spoken or written, it displays features which simultaneously identify it from a number of different points of view including information about the speaker's regional background, or his place on a social scale of some kind, for example; other features may reveal aspects of the social situation in which he is speaking, the kind of person to whom he is speaking, the capacity in which he is speaking (Crystal and Dav, 1996).

The most important task of stylistic theory is to study a text and bring out those linguistic features that mark out a writer or a speaker as distinctive in his/her own way, and also draws consideration to those linguistic features that separate a variety as a unique discipline different from other disciplines. Stylistic analysis may be carried out at the literary level or at the linguistic level. Literary stylistics investigates literary/stylistic devices employed by a writer or speaker to create a text. Such literary stylistic devices include the use of figurative expressions that include repetition, simile, metaphor, parallelism, lexical matching, personification and many other literary stylistic devices (Balogun, 2014).

Its major focus is the examination of language structures and patterns in a text. In this respect, it is possible to look at different levels of grammar including phonology, morphology or syntax. In the present study, the focus is on some aspects of structures and style.

Linguistic Manipulation Of Kiswahili Slangs

This section presents and analyses data on Kiswahili slangs found on Instagram.

Kiswahili Slang Collected on Instagram

The table below presents data on Kiswahili slangs collected from 20 informants on Instagram from 01.10.2021 to 31.10.2021

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Table 1 Slangs gathered on the Instagram

Kiswahili slang	Gloss	Meaning
Pisi kali	no gloss	The Beautiful Woman
Pasi kali	no gloss	Opposite of <i>Pisi kali</i>
Mchicha mwiba	spinach thorn	A gay
Bomba La Mbele	Water front pipe	Male reproductive organ
Dingi Lai	an insect	Aged person/Father/A close friend
Paka Mweusi	A back cat	A female Commercial sex worker (prostitute)
Kibanda umiza	shut	A local hall where fans watch football matches
Kuupiga mwingi	To beat a lot	To do something in extraordinary
Dingide	Father	A close friend
Figisu figisu	Native	Tricking on football to win the match
Salunyo	Salute	Appreciation
Dunise	no gloss	World
Mbese	front	Developed countries
Unafyode	Sucking	Drinking beer
Danga	Unripe fruit	A prostitute (commercial sex worker)
Choko	No gloss	A person that is gay
Ngada	No gloss	Abusive drugs
Kiswaswadu	Scepticism	Feature phone or mobile phone (limited in capabilities)
Papuchi	Native	A Female sexual organ
Friji haligandishi	refrigerator does not freeze	Failure to keep secrets
Kwenda mjini	To go to town	To hook to with social media
Tako la nyani	Monkey's behind	Harrier New model
Mtaro	Terrace	Women reproductive organ
Mkwaju	kick	A beautiful woman
Kwio	no gloss	how or why
Nyumbu	Mules	A member of oppositional party
Jiwe	Stone	Strong man
vibamia	Okra or okro	Tiny male reproductive organ
Tango	Tango	Big male reproductive organ
Tumepigwa	We are beaten	deceived or robbed

Source: Field data, 2021

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Linguistic Manipulation of Kiswahili slangs used on Instagram

The first specific objective of the study aimed at identification of forms of Kiswahili slang used on Instagram. The researcher collected Kiswahili slang used by the Instagram user on Instagram. Firstly, the researcher collected Kiswahili slang which some of them are commonly used on Instagram. Kiswahili Slang items were collected from the Instagram using textual analysis as a method of data collection. The researcher visited Instagram several times and then screenshot the Kiswahili slang found in the conversations which were going on.

In this sub section, linguistic manipulation is discussed as the Instagram user make use of slang in order to adjust their language and construct a different linguistic identity. On analysis of Kiswahili slang, the analysis were grouped into various strategies as manipulation of language is concerned including phonological, morphological, Syntactic and semantic this agrees with Nassentein (2017) who stated that linguistic manipulation is divided at levels of language such as Phonology, Morphology, Syntax Semantics, Pragmatics, Stylistics, Sociolinguistics and Discourse analysis.

Linguistic manipulation is implemented by an individual upon another or a certain group of people over language and non-verbal means focused on attaining a certain goal that involves in shifting of the recipient's performance, perceptions and purposes in the course of communicative contact. On linguistic actions, manipulation can be deliberate and non-intentional.

Morphological Features

Katamba (1999, p.139) states that morphology deals with studying the word structure. Under morphological, Kiswahili slangs are classified according to their structure. On this subsection morphological features includes compounding, borrowing, reduplication, clipping and conversation.

Compounding

Yule (2010) states that compounding involves the combination of two separate words to produce a new single form. There are some words that can occur in a single word that is combined with another word, there are another word that occur in many words combining with different words, but for which it is difficult to find a constant meaning (Malande, 2012, p.141). The linguistic manipulation is applied in the formation of word *pisi kali*, *pasi kali*, *kibanda umiza*, *mchicha mwiba* and *sigara bwege* whereby the morphological (word formation) process compounding provides the framework upon which compounding are formed (see the table below):

Table 2 Compounding Process

Free morpheme 1	Free morpheme 2	Compounding
Pisi	Kali	Pisi kali
Pasi	Kali	Pasi kali
Mchicha	Mwiba	Mchicha mwiba
Sigara	bwege	Sigara bwege
Kibanda	umiza	Kibanda umiza

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The Kiswahili slang is formed from the combination two words which is *pisi* and *kali*. The two words gives a single word which is *pisi kali* as also applied to the *pasi kali*. The word has stylised by using *pisi* to mean piece and *kali* to mean hot while *pasi kali* is vice versa of *pisi kali*

Example 1

Instagram user A: “PISI KALI YA MJINI NA CO PASI KALI” (The beautiful woman in town and not the ugly)

Instagram user B: Pisi ya moto eti sio PASI KALI (with laughing emoji) (hot girl and not ugly one)

The instagram user A posted the picture accompanied by the statement in capital letters and B replied with three emoji. The conversation shows that they agree each other on how the beautiful she is . On the other hand, men use the term to praise the beauty of the woman they admire although some of the instagram user rejected the meaning of that name as he wrote:

Hilo neno silipendi watu wanatumia kama kudhalilisha wanawake hivi. Mimi naona kama kumuuta mwanamke pisi kali ni kama unamuona Malaya Malaya hivi na ambaye anajiuzua hivi halijakaa kiheshima sana. (I don't like that word since people use to humiliate women. To call a woman pisi kali is to liken a woman to a prostitute who depends on a man economically).

Therefore, the Instagram user use *pisi kali* and *pasi kali* interchangeably depending on the intention of the message someone wishes to communicate. This implies that their choice of using such slang is associated with traits of the person referred to. Therefore, the slang *pisi kali* is used by the instagram user to appreciate the beauty of someone where is *pasi kali* used to refer to woman whom to their concern are not beautiful. The two terms *pisi kali* and *pasi kali* were used to suit the conversation basing on the situation and social networks of the instagram user.

Another slang used on Instagram was *mchicha mwiba* which literally means that spinach thorn. The word is formed from two free morphemes which is *mchicha* to mean spinach and *mwiba* which stand for thorn. The Kiswahili expression is styled the way spinach bend. One of the most famous gay on the instagram is known as James Delicious. Followers of his account call him *mchicha mwiba* to imply a man involved homosexuality. One instagram user wrote “*Huyu ni mchicha mwiba ata ukimwona mapozi yake*” to mean this is a thorny spinach (gay) even just by looking at his poses and the next commenter wrote “sio kwauno hilo” (not for that waist). The word used by instagram user as politeness strategy. Instead of saying someone is *shoga* (a gay) they opt to use *mchicha mwiba*. The slang as used by the instagram user fits in the language and context used is referring to the traits of that person.

The slang *kibanda umiza* which is the compound word formed from *kibanda* and *umiza* refers to hurts' hut. It is called *kibanda umiza* since people are free to do anything they wish to-for there are no rules to freedom of speech. The Kiswahili slang used to refer to the environment as it is associated with the use of abusive language, smoking, drinking local brews and insecurity. The cost paid to watch a match range between Tsh 500 - 1000. The instagramers use the expression when talking about football on the instagram. Look at **Figure 3.1** discourse on *kibanda umiza*. The conversation implies that some interlocutors understood the topic while

Journal of Popular Education in Africa: ISSN 2523-2800 (online)

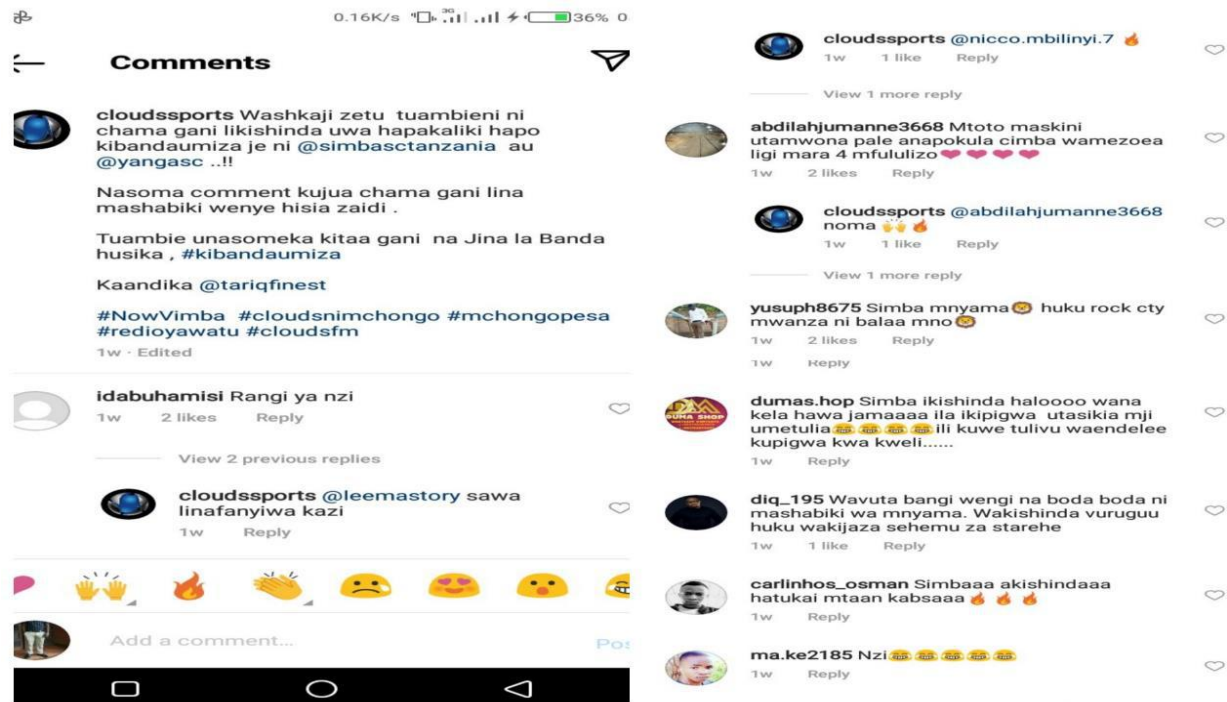
October, November & December 2022, Volume 6, Number 10, 11 & 12

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others wrote contrary to what has been asked on the caption. Some of the interlocutors comment what feels without considering the topic presented for instance look the figure below.

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Figure 3.1 Kiswahili slang *Kibanda Umiza*



Source: Instagram, 08.10.2021 at 14:25

The slang *kuupiga mwingi* is also a compound formed by the two free morphemes which are; *kuupiga* referring to *beat* and *mwingi* which refer to *a lot*. *Kuupiga mwingi* is used on Instagram with conveying several meanings depending on the context. When used in a political arena, *kuupiga mwingi* implies good governance or points at a leader that has done something good. For instance one of the Instagram user wrote this:

Jana nilikua nafuatilia rais wa Tanzania, her excellency mama @samia_suluhu_hassan live alipotoka kule Glasgow, Scotland kuupiga mwingi kimataifa. (Yesterday I was making a follow up on the president of Tanzania, her Excellency @samia_suluhu_hassan from Glasgow Scotland on performance of her duties)

The quotation above shows that the president of Tanzania had done something good for the country.

In football, the slang *kuupiga mwingi* refers to how well a team plays, factoring in the ball possession and the final goal tallies or differences.

In other context, when there is a debate and someone canvases strong points, to defeat his or her opponent, then the expressions in meaning reflects the context in which it is used by the Instagram user.

Therefore, the context in which a word is used plays a significance role in understanding what exactly a slang means. For example:

Citation: Fred, J; Malande, M. J. O & Kahigi, K. (2022). Linguistic Manipulation In Kiswahili Slangs Used On Instagram and Implications on the Development of the Language. *Journal of Popular Education in Africa*. 6(11), 108 – 150.

Instagram user A: Sasa ndio tumeanza ligi (now we have started the league)

#Tunaupiga_mwingi (we are playing well)

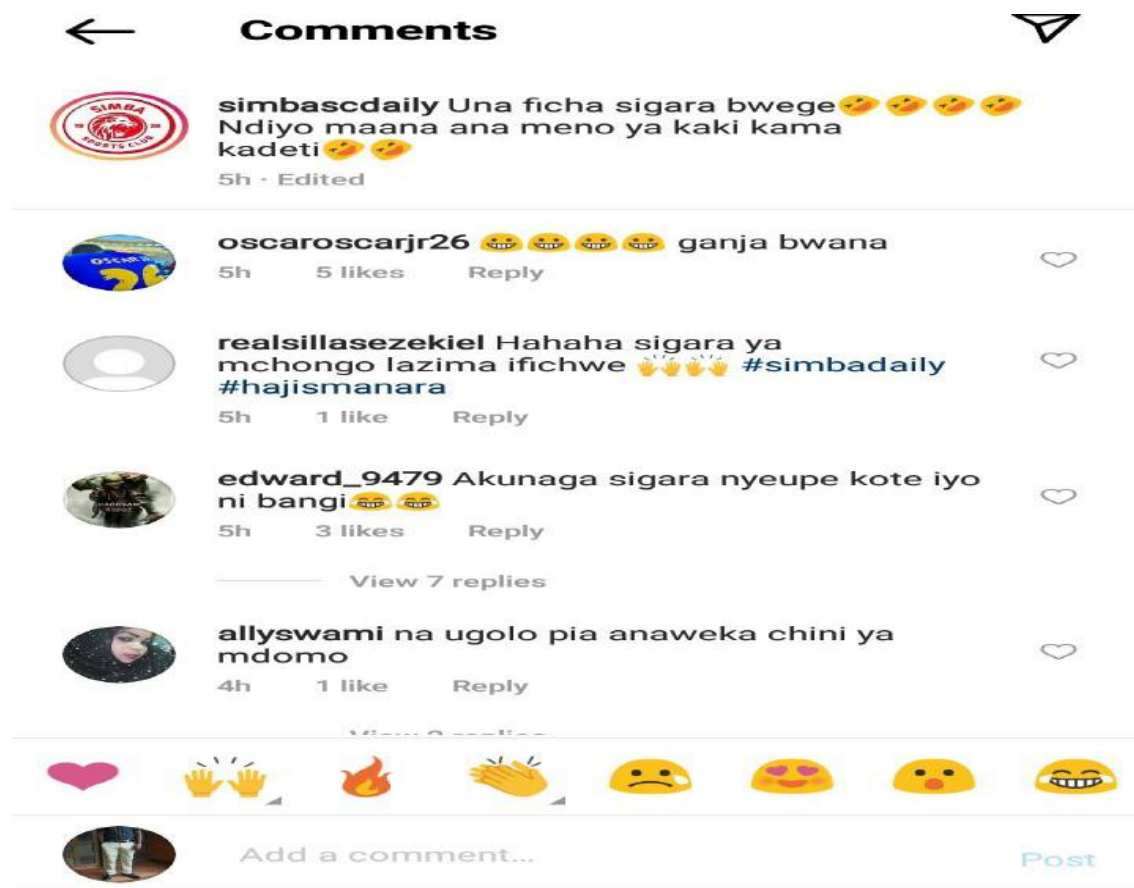
Instagram user B: Tuo8 Kwa Mkapa 11 (see you at Mkapa on 11)

Instagram user A: litakufa jitu 😊😂😂 (the giant will die)

NB Tuo8 is Kiswahili short form for tuonane; the numeral for nane is 8. Yet tuonane also means lets meet and not *lets eight*.

The conversation above shows that one of the Simba Sports Club fans is all joy after their team won the match by playing well and the fans were satisfied with the results. Although next commenter (probably an opponent) commented by asking that they meet on eleventh (11th Dec). The slang *tuo8* which is combination of letters and number refer tuonane which means see you. Instagram user A means that one team will loss the match on that day. The conversation shows that the third instagramer diverges from the caption by introducing different thing which is contrary to what has been posted.

Another compound Kiswahili slang used is *sigara bwege*, it is formed by two words which are *sigara* + *bwege* which literary means stupid cigarettes a code for *marijuana*. The instagram user used such slang as a pointed insult at the former information officer of Simba Sports Club. in the conversation many Simba Sports Club fans attacked the former information officer alleging he is a drug-substance abuser. Moreso the conversation shows that the Kiswahili slang *sigara bwege* is understood as one of the commenters wrote: “akunaga sigara nyeupe kote iyo ni bangi” to mean there are no white cigarettes anywhere it is marijuana. Follow up comments imply it is not only using marijuana but other stuffs are involved. Look on the chat shown below:**Figure 3.2 Kiswahili slang *Sigara Bwege***



The findings revealed that the instagram user use slang when mentioning male reproductive organs (penis). The slang used by the instagram user to describe male reproductive organs as *bomba la mbele*. Ordinarily, *bomba la mbele* refers to a water tap/pipe. *Bomba la mbele* is used as euphemism for male reproductive organ (penis). The researcher established that *bomba la mbele* is mostly used by social media accounts that advertises drugs associated with drugs enhancing-strengthening masculine erection.

In addition, some instagram users may decide to use these terms to hide their secrets or conceal these words because if they are used openly, they sound impolite-as it goes against the accepted norms of the society.

Borrowing

According to Antony (2017) who studied word formation processes on Kiswahili slangs in Gads teenage magazine, the most common source of new words in English is borrowing. Borrowing involves taking words from one language and using into another language. Slang were taken from other language and used in Kiswahili with some of the modifications.

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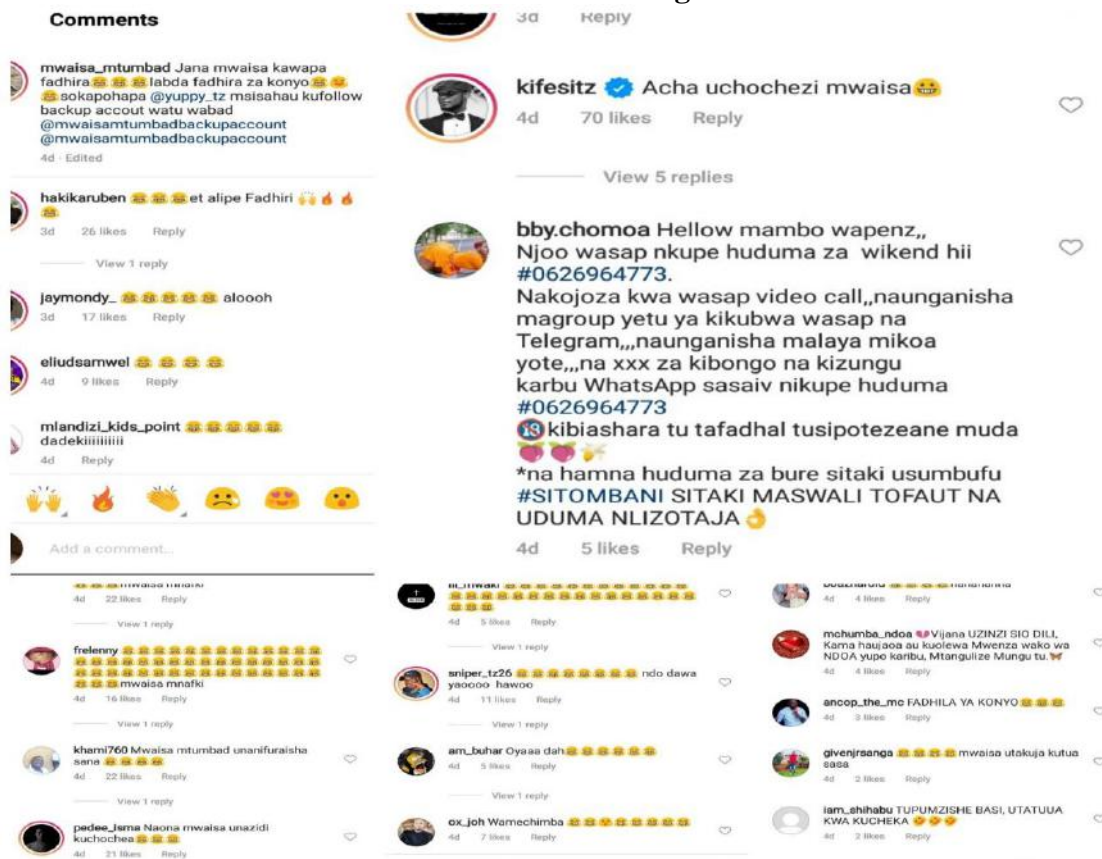
Table 3.3 Borrowing Process

Word	Origin language
Mwaisa	Kinyakyusa
Sokapo	Kinyakyusa
Shoo	English
Kubeti	English
Mbadi	English

Source: Field data, 2021

The study revealed that some of the Kiswahili slangs and expressions are loaned from English and other local languages. On Instagram terms like *Mwaisa* to mean friend, *sokapo* to mean leave here were taken from Kinyakyusa language and used on Instagram. The two slangs (*mwaisa and sokapo*) used on Instagram with a joke. The slang passes as a joke when one is commenting on posts from their friend (followers and following) on instagram. Look on the data set presented below:

Figure 3.2 Kiswahili slang Mwaisa and



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The conversation above has mirrors topics; some of the instagram users show interest by commenting on the topic under discussion, others just emoji. Some still are into marketing others are advice their fellow instagram users on issue of faithfulness in relationships.

Additionally, *shoo shoo*, *singo* are used as loans from English. The slang *shoo shoo* originated from South Africa as a form of greetings. *Shoo shoo* on Instagram is used to encourage someone to perform at his or her level best. *Kubeti* originated from betting games that involved guessing or probability and *mtu mbadi* was used by any person who did something in the best way. In this conversation, the commenter appreciates the post as the poster is requesting people to vote him in as the media personality of the year. The instagram user thanked the poster writing “*mwaisa mtu mbadi sokapohapa*” to mean thank you my friend, you are a good person and *sokahapa* is used mostly used by the poster to mean leave here, therefore the commenter who thanked the poster used to imitate the way it is used by the poster.

The use of slang at first was associated with speakers of the source language in question who knew the meaning of that word. But nowadays it is as a teaser. This idea concurs with Kemmer (2018) who stresses that people use words which they are not familiar with from other languages. Later on, become familiar with a new foreign words. Later on, the uses of these words grow to the point that the meaning of these words were then understood. For instance, the terms Mwaisa and sokapo have grown in leaps and bounds and are understood by most of the Kiswahili users of Instagram. Even although they were borrowed from Nyakyusa language.

Reduplication

Reduplication is used when the word is repeated exactly or with a slight change. According to Malande (2006), some compounds have two or more elements which are either identical or only slightly different. It involves the duplicates all or part of words to which it is applied to make a grammatical contrast. It can be partial reduplicates or full reduplication. According to O'Grady, Archibald (2000, p. 131) states that “common morphological process in some languages involves reduplication, which marks a grammatical or semantic contrast by repeating all or part of the base to which it applies .. ”. This indicates reduplication is forms a new words by doubling either a whole free morpheme (total reduplication) or part of it (partial reduplication).

The findings of our study illustrates that reduplication is used on Instagram by Kiswahili users depending to what he or she intends to write.

Table 4 Reduplication Process

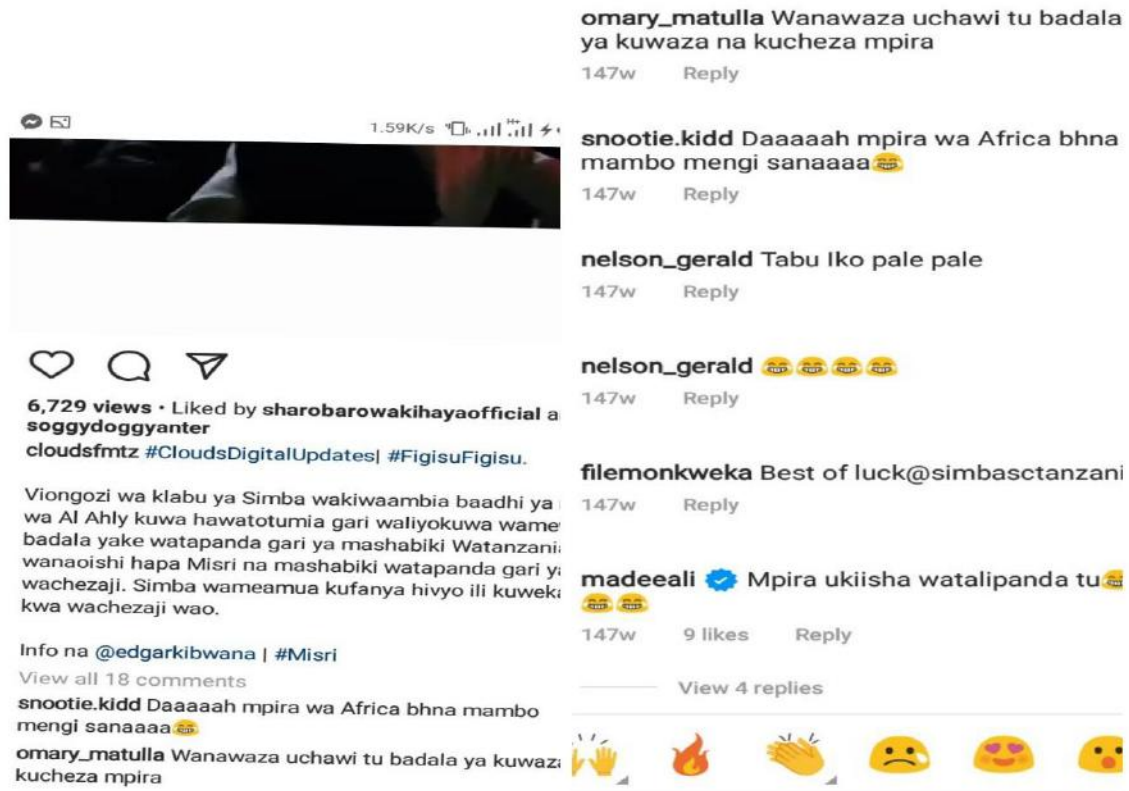
Morpheme 1	Morpheme 2	Reduplication
Chupli	Chupli	Chupli chupli
Figisu	Figisu	Figisu figisu
Shoo	Shoo	Shoo shoo
Yente	Yente	Yente yente

From the data collected it shows that Kiswahili slang like *chupli chupli* and *figisu figisu* are formed from this process as *chupli and figisu* are full duplicated to form *chupli chupli* and *figisu figisu* respectively. For instance, the Kiswahili slang *figisu figisu* and *chupli chupli* used to refer

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to team that invokes trickery so as to win a match as the some football laws are violated. Look on the appendix below:

Figure 3 Kiswahili slang *figisu*



figisu

On the photo above, it shows that Simba Sports Club's leaders were harassing their opponent team's player's psychologically. It is a trick used most by African clubs when playing at home ground as one of the commenter wrote. The terms *figisu figisu* is understood from that conversation that it is unfair treatment for the visiting team. The commenters understood it and gives their experience towards the African football as one of them wrote “*daah mpira wa Africa bhna mambo mengi sanaaaa*” to mean that African football has a lot of thing which is out of the guiding laws of football.

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The Kiswahili slang *yente* and *shoo shoo* also are formed by duplicating the word *yente* and *shoo* used to show something is good or as an appreciation to something. These slang has no single meaning but it is used purposely depending on what is being posted. The instagram user used it to show that they are fan or to show an appreciation of what has been posted by the writer. For instance, when the instagram user appreciate something or want to say it is good or the good music the slang *yenteyente* is used as seen below:

Instagram user A: Mbele ya hilo kosi alikufa Barcelona ile ya moto (before our eyes this

Team defeated the fierily Barcelona)

Instagram user B: Mambo yalikua yente yente siku hiyo (Things were okay on that day)

The conversation shows that the two instagram user were discussing the time when their team was at the peak. They were unbeaten for a long time even FC Barcelona of Spain were beaten as one of them wrote “hapo kami ilikuwa moja kuuliza who is next” meaning that the only task was to ask who our next opponent is. On the other hand, an interlocutor introduced the issue which is contrary to the topic by asking the one who posted about the account of Instagram.

Additionally, the slang expressions are used in the conversation and the pre-existing relations. For example, most of the instagram user who commented on the post of Twaha Kiduku (Tanzanian boxer) used the slang *shoo* since the boxer used as show show as his motto (before the fighting).

This current study agree with Izmaylova (2017) who stresses that slang is the outcome of the games among the young who often engage in word play by renaming things and actions. Those words are made with good or bad imagination of the user. Moreover, Nutakus (2003) emphasises that people create certain linguistic selections based on the situation or with a particular group of people and that language is not used everywhere. Therefore, the analysis made above shows that the choice of words used by a group of people fit with the situation or the group of people who are connected with activities or interested issues as not understood by others.

Clipping

This cases of clipping in Kiswahili slangs occur mostly in names. The subtraction of one or more syllables from a name may occur at the end, both ends of a name or at the beginning of the name (Malande, 2012). For the case of clipping, the researcher found a number of Kiswahili names that had been clipped to form slangs.

Words are shortened from the longer words to form new word. It is commonly use the extended word if the circumstances is more official and the shorter word if the circumstances is more unofficial. However, the new term may completely substitute the extended original term but it does not modify the word class and the sense of the word itself. This may be back clipped or fore clipped words. Look on the table below

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Table 4 Clipping Process

Name	Clipped affix	Kiswahili slang	Type of clipping
Konyagi	Ko-	Nyagi	Fore clipping
Msemaji	M-	Semaji	Fore clipping
K vant	k-	Vant	Fore clipping
Utopolo	-polo	Uto	Back clipping
Makolo	Ma-	kolo	Fore clipping
Shemela	She-	mela	Back clipping

This is another instance of morphological processes where prefixes and suffixes are deleted in order to derive some new words. It is a linguistic manipulation whereby an affix (prefix or suffix) is clipped in order to form a new word.

For instance, the new Kiswahili slangs *nyagi*, *semaji*, *vant* and *uto* are formed from the words *konyagi*, *msemaji* and *utopolo* respectively. Mostly, a majority of Kiswahili slangs are fore clipped.

Example: consider the screenshot from the Instagram displayed below:

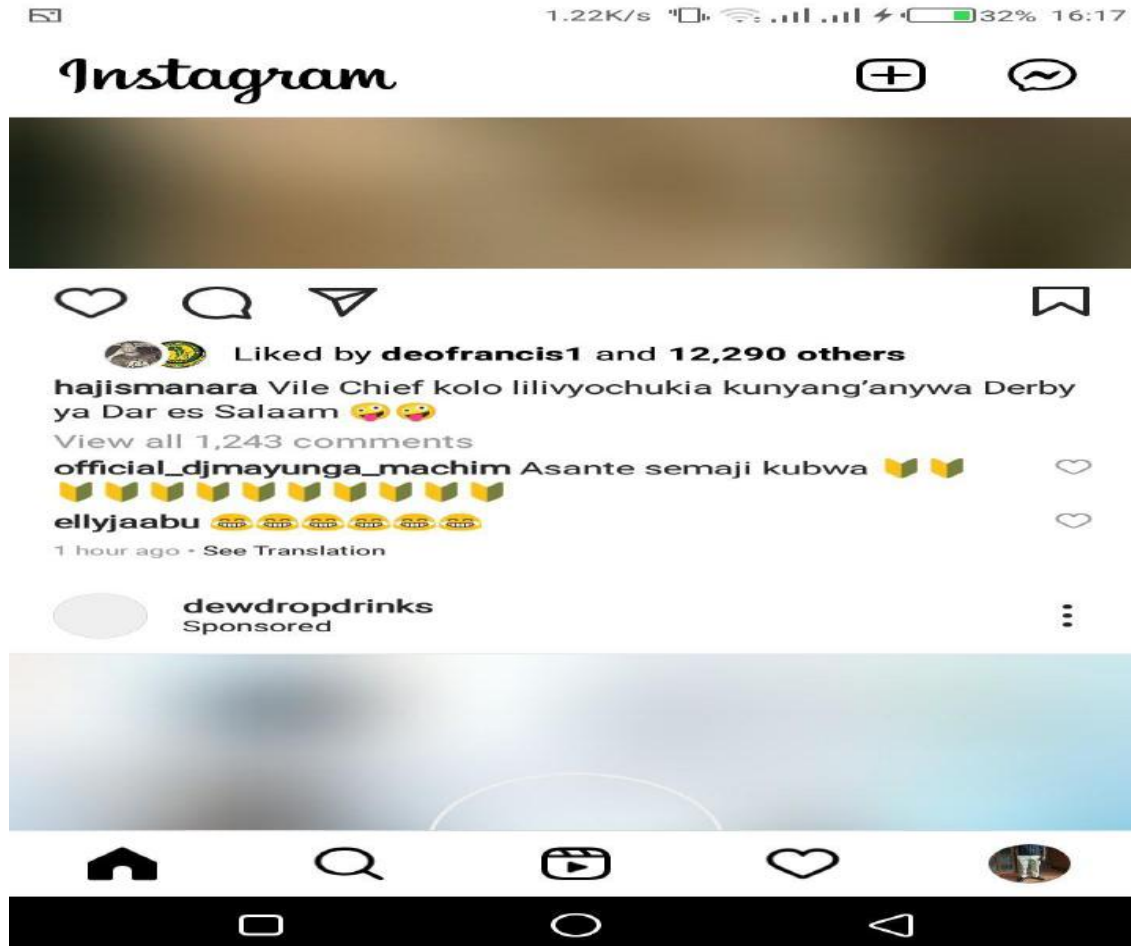


Figure 6 Kiswahili slang *Kolo* and *Semaji*

To Begin with, the conversation from the screenshot shows that one commenter has used clipping by writing *Asante semaji kubwa* (“thank you big spokesman”) following the post that were annoying to one of the fans when an opponent called them chief kolo (illiterate). The last one maintains the situation by using an emoji for laughter which does not show whether she concurs or agrees with what has been posted.

Secondly, the slang *uto* is from *utopolo*, a term that refers to Dar es Salaam Young Africans Sports Club (Yanga). The word *uto* is subtracted at the end and it is used to refer to the way Yanga Football Club plays as it is considered to be playing in disjointed way. One of the 20 informants wrote this:

Hakuna tafsiri halisi ya hilo neno Uto. Kuna yule mshabiki kindaki ndaki wa yanga fc ndio alilianzisha hilo neno siku moja yanga walipocheza mchezo mmbovu sana pale uwanja wa taifa (kwa Mkapa)...Jamaa alijikuta anaropoka "Sasa hii yanga ama Utopolo?"

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Msemaji wa Afrika Mashariki na kati the Superbrand Al Hajj Bin Sunday Manara ndipo alipolikamata hilo neno kisawa sawa na kuli promote hadi leo limeshika haswa.

There is no literal translation for the word Uto. It is a Yanga FC fanatic who first introduced the word on the day when Yanga played a very bad game at the national stadium (Mkapa)... He found himself wondering loudly "is this yanga or Utopolo?"(Then, the spokesman for East and Central Africa, the Superbrand Al Hajj Bin Sunday Manara, was the one who seized the word utopolo, which he has been promoting it to this day.)

Furthermore, the meaning of uto (utopolo) also refers to a stupid person or to a meaningless speech. For instance, when someone wrote things that the other side did not agree with, they would call that person *uto* or the ideas he presented as *utopolo*. Look at the example provided below:

Instagram user A: Eng. Hersi Said kuhusu usajili wa Yanga SC msimu huu (Engineer Hersi Said talking about the club signings of Yanga SC this season)

Instagram user B: Utopolo FC mnatusumbua tu mna nni cha kuongea kauzeni karenda zenu (Utopolo fc you are just a bother what is there to talk about)

Instagram user C: Sasa huyu anaongea utopolo gan (now what kind of utopolo in this talking)

This means that the choice of language is shaped by the idea presented. A Kiswahili slang is used to explain some social concerns arising out of them. One principle of the CAT is justified by the findings of the study that people use perceive and evaluate conversations as influenced by interpersonal factors, intergroup factors or the combination of both.

Thirdly, some of the instagram user uses clipping to insult others on the comment. For instance, someone wrote 'mamae' as mentioning the private organs to the post which asking about the Instagram user's team. The clipped words were used to express their happy, joy and anger according to the Instagram user of the term.

Moreover, the findings discovered that the word mela is subtracted at the beginning as first part of the original word are removed. For instance, Kiswahili slang *mela* is clipped from the slang *shemela*. Some of the instagram user employ the term *mela* in the conversation because they are in the same group that it will be understood by each other. Therefore, the slang expressions meet their choice of words as understood by conversant. The users converged to each other as they know what it means on that context.

The studies done by Fathonah (2018) and Cheick Bella (2019) speak to this study. In their studies, they revealed that slang used as an indication a kind of someone's style or to shows a particular attitude such as acting tough or strong. Thus, the informants said slang on the studies by the mentioned scholars used to express manhood.

Conversion

According to Fathonah (2018), Conversion is defined as a change in the function of a word or phrase, as for example when a noun comes to be used as a verb, that is to say, without any reduction (p.58). Some of the scholars in linguistics said that conversion is termed as zero-

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derivation. Yule (2010 p.57) details that a change in the function of a word, as for instance when a noun *school* becomes a verb *school* (without any reduction), is normally recognized as conversion.

To begin with, the researcher found only three slangs on this form *mtaro*, *Kwa mpalange* (female sexual organ-vagina) and *mkwaju* (beautiful woman) which were used on Instagram. The meaning of these slangs were not similar to the previous meaning of the original word. For instance, on the following conversation below

Instagram user A: Kibao kinakwenda kwa jina la #KwaMpalange. @naytrueboytz

Ameweza kuzungumzia hali ilivyo Kwa Mpalange (The song is known as Kwa Mpalange sang by naytrueboytz talks about the real situation of female sexual organ)

1. Kwa mpalange Kuna joto (At Mpalange its hot)
2. Kwa mpalange mvua ikinyesha kuna utelezi (At Mpalange its slippery when it rains)

Instagram user B MH ngoma zako hua nazi elewa sana ila hii ya kwa mpalange kwa kweli sijaelewa. (MH I understand your songs but this Kwa mpalange I don't)

Instagram user C Dah

The conversation shows that interlocutors who understood the meaning of the Kiswahili slang used emoji's for laughter while those who diverged from the topic asked for the meaning. Some indicated surprise by writing *dah* which does not show whether or not they agree or disagree.

Secondly, the original meaning of *mtaro* is a terrace while *chawa* used to connect to a person who depends on someone else for survival or a person who is close to any Bongo fleva musician with a stipulated duty of defending them on social media. Also, terms like *vumbi* which denote dust but refers to a traditional verbal medicine that supposedly enhanced masculine libido. Some of the words do not change the word class but their meaning acquires to negative meaning (connotations).

The examples given above discovered that the Kiswahili slangs are only used and understood by a certain group of people. For instance, an instagram user compared *mtaro*-which connotes female sexual organs-when they shift from the formal language to slang so as to benefit from the needs for exclusivity.

This concurs with the findings by Fathonah (2019) who states that some words can shift substantially in meaning after changing the word category through conversion. For example, the noun, doctor, changes to a verb doctor often with the negative sense.

Syntactic Manipulation

This deals with linguistic manipulation of language when it involves morphemes that are combined in the same order than they would otherwise abound as isolated words in a corresponding construction. This case is prevalent for agglutinative languages such as Kiswahili. We provide examples:

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Sentences

Kiswahili slangs are manipulated to form sentences. A set of words form a sentence made up of slangs. The sentence *friji haligandishi* which literary means the fridge does not freeze to refer to the person who cannot keep secrets. The instagram user writes *Friji haligandishi. Hata kigogo nae atakuwa ameelewa au unasemaje?* Which means that she cannot keep secrets. Even Kigogo (name of the person) knows it. Other commenters on the post did not show indicate whether they understood the topic or are not within the topic, they just uses emoji's specifically those of laughter.

Another Kiswahili slang used by the Instagram user is *chupa limeamka na chai*, which literary means *a thermos is awakened with tea*. *Chupa imeamka na chai* is a Kiswahili slang which refers to someone who is suffering a hangover after a night long drinking. It is used when someone writes something that is pointless. The conversation below shows the use of such Kiswahili slang:

Instagram user A: Muda wa mastori na Oscar. Njoo tu na dk 60 za urafiki

#ChupalimeamkaNAchai (it is time for stories with Oscar Oscar. Just come I have 60 minutes for socialization # thermos is awakened with tea)

Instagram user B: Nini maana ya chupa imeamka na chai? (What is the meaning of thermos is awakened with tea)

Instagram user C: mimi sina cha ziada naona tu nimechelewa kukufahamu. (I have nothing extra, I took a little long to know you)

Chats on that post point out at interlocutors who understood the intention of the poster with some who did not understand what the Kiswahili slang meant yet enquired about its meaning. Furthermore, some advertised things irrelevant to the topic.

Semantic and Pragmatic Manipulation

The most frequent linguistic manipulation gathered on Kiswahili slang on Instagram was at the semantic and pragmatic level. Furthermore, metaphors, neologism and coinage are some other manipulations that occur in Kiswahili slang on Instagram.

Metaphors

According to Simpson (2014, p.43), metaphor involves the mapping between two different conceptual domain with the qualities and associated features of an object transferred to another object or person so to create a mental picture. Korolyova (2016) opines that metaphor is an essential asset of human mind since it is related with a number of cognitive operations, assimilation, conversion, storing and transmission of knowledge. In literature, metaphors are images that are used especially in poetry and prose. We regularly use this literary device unintentionally and automatically in our daily communication for the purpose of making our talk more expressive, emotional or express our thoughts. Look on the table below:

Table 3.4 Semantic Manipulation

Kiswahili slang	Gloss	Connotation
Vibamia	Okra or okro	A pin sized male sexual organ
Tako la nyani	Monkey’s behind	kind of car
Mtaro	Terrace	Female sexual organ
Chura	Frog	Hips
Jiwe	Stone	A certain Leader

To begin with, the study found that the Kiswahili slang *vibamia* which means okra or okro commonly known as ladies’ fingers (clitoris) is used by instagram users to refer to pint-sized penis as it is written “*Wanaque wenye vibamia.*” This expression is mostly used by instagram users who deal in marketing herbal medicine associated with lengthening and or thickening the size of male sexual organs. These term used compares the pin sized male organ with that of the tiny okra; that is to say that *vibamia* is used as a reference to pin sized male sexual organ. This shows that in this context, the Kiswahili slang *vibamia* is used by marketers on Instagram to specifically refer to the small size of the penis. These concurs with the idea of Merhabian (1997) who discovered that a name has a shared sense and can convey an important and distinguished impression, both positive and negative. In relation to the Kiswahili slang explained above, the slang *vibamia* has got a negative connotative meaning for men facing challenges with the size of their penis.

Secondly, Kiswahili slang ‘*tako la nyani*’ literary means a monkey’s behind (buttocks) which often used refers to a Harrier new model. The hind part of this vehicle’s behind resembles the backside of a monkey. One instagram user wrote in the example shown below.

The informant 15

“Neno TAKO LA NYANI limetokana na hii gari taa zake za nyuma zilivyo. Yani zimekaa kama makalio ya nyani gendaeka. Yule mwenye makalio mekundu”.
The word THE MONKEY’S BEHIND comes from this car with its rear lights resembling a monkey’s behind.

Figure 7 Photo of Harrier New Model (tako la nyani)



The picture in figure 4.1 represents the image of Harrier new Model. The instagram user used the image to ask for the price of the car. The Harrier new model rear lights resembles the monkey's backside; that's why the car is famously known for that name. The language used here was understood by the instagram users who got involved in the conversation. For instance:

Instagram user A: TAKO LA NYANI ya mwaka 2008 mpka naitia mkononi bei gani?
(Monkey's behind of 2008 how much?)

Instagram user B: 32M (To mean 32 millions)

Tako la nyani is mostly used by the agents based abroad who sell cars to Tanzania's. The advertisements written on the Instagram promotes their business to their intended customers. The

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advertisement were accompanied with image and specifications of the car. The picture displayed has a slang *tako la nyani* as used by instagram user to refer to the specific model of the car especially Harrier.

This shows that the Kiswahili slang expression *tako la nyani* is well understood in that context. That is the reason as to why instagram user B replied by revealing to instagram user A the cost for that kind of car. The context used to this slang was understood by the people who were familiar with that term. This prove that in order to understand the meaning of the expression the associated environment is very important.

Thirdly, *mtaro* is used as a slang to which literary refers to terrace. The instagram user used to refer to the women reproductive organs. The slang is delivered from formal Swahili slang but some of the instagram user assigned the new meaning to suit their needs. This Kiswahili slang also used in the song Diamond Platnumz, Lava and Mbosso lyrics (Bongo flewa musicians). Mbosso lyrics contain this verse, “*Baby papasa kichwa mjusi kafirii, Nisafishe mtaro*” which literary used to mean that baby touch my head of infidel lizard, to clean the terrace. The slang used here was referring to the woman that she is supposed to touch a male reproductive organs and sex. This slang used by the Mbosso and it was understood by his followers what it means as used on the Instagram. The instagram user compare *mtaro* with the women reproductive organ as to reduce the harshness of the word. They use this word as they want to hit the target message to the audience. Therefore, since Kiswahili slang is used on the Instagram where people can read the conversations, the instagram user develop their special language features to meet their needs. Moreover, slang were used purposely on the Instagram for the purpose of some of the people who know them personally as they are using real name will not understand the conversation.

Neologism

According to the Shahlee and Mustaffa (2019), the term neologism refers to the formation of new words which diverge from the existing words. In linguistic studies, various parts of speech are studied although the classification of neologism has not been established in linguistics that is to say, there is no single way of categorizing (Usevičs 2012, p.2).

The word *kiswaswadu* used to refer to the mobile phones which are limited in capacity. The slang used on the instagram are referring to the phones which cannot store applications like whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, and others from apple or play store. Moreover, the meaning of slang *kiswaswadu* has extended to refer to the woman who is too much talking and not official married. One of the instagram wrote this: *Usiombe umiliki #Kiswaswadu arafu ujitambe kuwa una mke kila siku utajiskia vibaya-which means don't ask to own a mobile phone then praise yourself that you have a wife since every day you will be ashamed of her antics. Another instagram user posted this:*

We unatumia #kiswaswadu au SMATI-FONI? ukizunguka nchi hii utagundua bado kiswaswadu ni mkombozi wa jamii.hashtag Kiswaswadu on fleek. (Are you using mobile phone or SMATI-PHONE? If you go around this country you will find that mobile phone is still saves the society. Hashtag Kiswaswadu on fleek)

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Therefore, the meaning of slang Kiswaswadu will depends on the context used either to refer to the mobile phone or to the certain woman. On his study, Ivona (2021) concludes, that the significant use of neologisms are observed in the social media as it adjust communication among the users through promoting the relationships and making business.

Linguistic manipulation of abbreviations

Abbreviations

Yule (2006, p.57) states that acronyms are formed from the initial letters of a set other words, it can be CD (Compact Disk), VCR (Video Cassette Recorder), VAR (Video Assistant Referee) as pronounced separately and NATO, NASA are pronounced as a single words. Malande (2020) states that in linguistic studies, abbreviations are grouped according to the phonological and orthographic features. They can be pronounced by naming each individual letter.

The findings reveal that the Instagram user use different types of abbreviations when communicating on the Instagram. The posts and comments sometimes got the abbreviations which were used with different purposes. Some of the common slang used in this subsection delivered from Instagram as observed in the table below:

Table 3.4 Abbreviation Process for Kiswahili Slang

Kiswahili slang	Stand for	Meaning
V3	Viache Vingine vipite	Leave other things
WWB	Wacha Wanywe Bia	Let them drink
MAP	Mungu Ampumzishe Pema	Rest in peace
7bu	Sababu	Reasons
Cc	Sisi	Our

Source: Field data, 2021

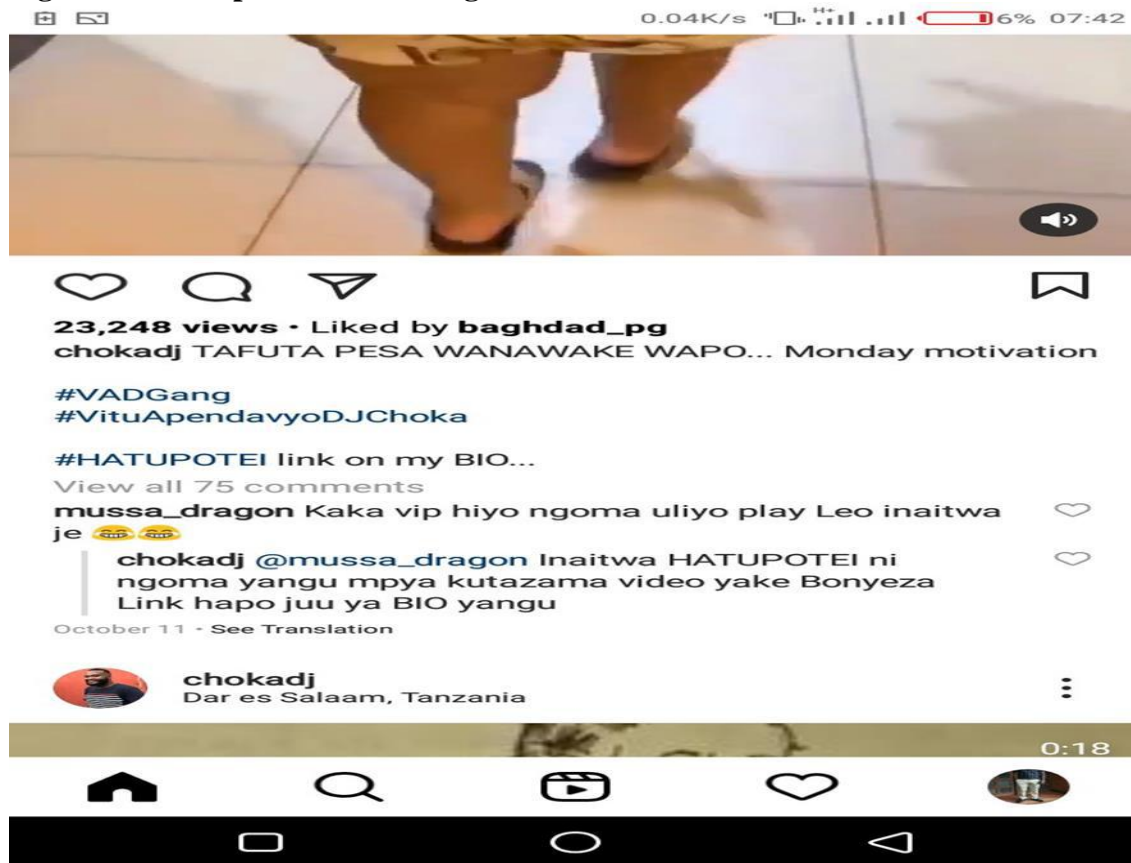
The formation abbreviations were classified basing on their forms and how they were constructed on Instagram. Malande (2018) states that abbreviation are created by taking away one or numerous parts of a lexeme or lexemes and forming a new form of the word. Orthographic and phonological properties are considered to be the way of grouping abbreviations. From the table 3.4 abbreviations are formed in the following manner:

- a) Combination of numbers and letters.
- b) Combination of letters only.

They are written either with capital letters or lower letters depending to the choice of the Instagram user.

Furthermore, abbreviations involve acronyms. It is formed from initial letters or multi word names. It should be noted that an acronym must be a word to mean that it is joined various initial letters to be pronounced as a single word. The Kiswahili slang used include: MAP when commenting or posting information concerning death, VAD used by the famous Disco Jockey (DJ) namely Choka. Although nowadays other Instagram users write VA (Vitu Avipendavyo) followed by the initial letter of their names for instance someone write VAJ (J stand for a name of the person). Most of this expression in this category are preceded by the hashtag symbol #.

Figure 3.8 A snapshot with a slang VAD



The poster is talking about the way he loves beautiful women with hips but the commenters asked about the ngoma which literally mean drum but here it is used to refer to a song. The instagram users who commented on that post diverted from what the speakers questioning by talking about the name of the song although the post it is all about the beauty of the lady.

Look on the example provided (also see appendix 51) as one of the informants wrote:

Instagram user A Tatizo sio kuacha. Tatizo unamuachia nani? Wa kuwaachia hawaaminiki kabisa. (The problem is not stopping. The problem is who do you give to? They are not trusted)
Jana mida ya wanga (At the mid night)
#WWB
#V3

Instagram user B Naona kinywaji chako umeacha kamixer flanii kakilimanjaro (I see you have left your drink)

Instagram user A hahahahaha nakubali mtu mbadiiii. (I appreciate you).

Another slang used is *MAP*, which is abbreviated from the words *Mungu Ampumzishe Pema* or *Mungu Ampumzishe Peponi* which mean may God rest him or her in peace. Most of the instagram user commented to show their condolences to what have been posted although there contrary comment towards what have been posted asking about the issue of CAS, it does not

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have any link with the content written. It is used to appease someone when they post or comment on death of a person. It is a pray of wishing someone that he or she has to rest in peace. In connection to the present study, Ivona (2021) stresses that the use of acronyms and abbreviations on social media is significant to present society as it is highly appreciated and it is significant for the users to adjust their style of communication in for the purpose of expressing things in a shorter way. Furthermore, online communication allows and offers users with the chance of sending and receiving information quicker than ever. Hence, it is observed that users tend to abbreviate words or write expression which involves the combination of letters.

Moreover, there abbreviations used bring some confusion to the readers. Such ambiguous comes from the way terms are abbreviated. For example,

- a) Ss – this abbreviation used to mean sasa (now) or sisi (our)
- b) Km – for kama (like) or women sexual organ
- c) Xn - stand for sina (I have not) or sana (more)
- d) Mm – for mama (mother) or mimi (me)

Also, the current study is supported by the findings from the studies by Cheikh Bella (2019) who reported that some of the informants mentioned that the use of slang is associated with their happy, angry and excited emotions. According to Cheikh Bella's study, anger is expressed by taboo words while *LOL* to mean Laughing Out Loud used to express being happy similarly to slang wow and yay. *OMG* to mean Oonh My God used for surprise. Moreover, the present findings of the study concur with the study done by Fattaut (2020) who revealed that slang is used to express something in secret way as it is restricted to a certain group that understands the meaning of that acronyms or abbreviations.

Linguistic Reasons for using of Kiswahili Slang on Instagram

This sub-section deals with the presentation of findings for the second objective of the research which needed to understand the factors that influences the usage of Kiswahili slang on Instagram. It is majorly identifying sociolinguistic reasons behind the deployment of Kiswahili slang on Instagram. The use of Kiswahili slang is associated with some of the sociolinguistic reasons including word economy, euphemism, code, for in-group exclusivity (communication), to add new flavour to conversation, for fashions and trends and to get more likes and comments.

Word Economy

The findings discovered Instagram user used Kiswahili slang so as to make the communication easy and faster. According to Winda (2013) and Thong (1998), one of the main reasons that people use Kiswahili slangs is to make the sentence short is to fasten and easy understanding of the communication to each other. This implies that slang is developed for the need of saying something in a brief and easy way. A number of informants commented that simplifying communication was one of the reasons which motivates them to use slang in their posts and comments in the Instagram conversations.

Instagram user want to compose in brief and quickly due to the presence of restrictions in the writing characters and letters made them to use short form of the words on Instagram. This

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includes abbreviations, acronyms and clipping to make communication fast so as to avoid boring the readers. For example;

Instagram user A: Kuteleza co kuanguka mbaya ni kushindwa kunyanyuka (to slip does not imply you have fallen. Failure to pick up yourself is the mistake)

Instagram user B Umetisha sana (you are very scary)

Instagram user C Ulipiga kazi xn kk ni suala la pwenti bc halikutimia (you worked hard bro. It is a matter of point that does isn't fulfilling)

On the conversation above, the instagram user C, used short form to appreciate and encourage the player the way he played. The interlocutors understood what the message that portrayed by the poster on what happened during the match played before.

These are some of the slang that instagram user used to shorten their communication when commenting and posting or commenting on the instagram. Some Instagram user who were involved in the study had the following write:

The informant 1:

Mfano mimi natumia misimu ili kuokoa muda. Humu Instagram huitaji kuandika maneno mengi sio hotuba ya rais hii. Watu hawawezi kukaa saa zima wanasoma post yako wakati wana vitu vingine vya kuangalia humu. (For example, am using slang to save time. Here on Instagram, you do not have to write a number of words, it is not a president's speech. People cannot read long posts since there are number of issues to do)

The above quotation from questionnaire shows that the Instagram user use slang to simplify communication. Furthermore, slangs were used to make things shorter and ensure that they do not waste much of their time in a conversation and they convey intended meaning quickly as slang is used purposely.

Furthermore, ideas relating to the use slang in relation to hiding secrets were informed by the Instagram user. Through questionnaire, one of the instagram user responded that: *Swali la pili ni kwamba natumia misimu kurahisisha mawasiliano na kupunguza uwingi wa maneno ndo maana naweka vifupisho kama ulivoona hiyo WWB na V3.* (This mean that, for the second question I used slang to simplify communication and to reduce a number of words thus why I opt to use short form like WWB and V3)

The informants 3:

Napenda kutumia Slang/Misimu kwa sababu hadhira yangu inayonizunguka ni rahisi sana kunielewa kama nitazungumza nao Lugha moja. Lakini sababu ya pili, ni kuathiriwa na mitaa ambayo tunatoka/tumezaliwa tunakuwa kila siku tunasikia maneno mapya ambayo tunajikuta/najikuta nimeyapokea na kuyatumia. (I like to use slang because my audience will easy understand if I speak to them in the same language. But the second reason is, the influence of the streets from which we live. On every day basis, we hear new words (slang) that we or I receive and use them in communication).

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From the quotations above, the Instagram user confirmed that they easily and quickly understand each other when they communicate through slang than they can when they use what is called the standard Kiswahili. In their arguments, slang makes them feel close to the people they are communicating. Furthermore, during conversations, Instagram user wrote by using short forms, a good examples were drawn in the table below:

The above findings match with the findings of Wahyuni (2017) who stresses that people use abbreviations to express their status, comments, message and meme. The informants admitted that abbreviations is mostly important since they need to write briefly and quickly, the limited time of typing space (especially on twitter) and as a trend in society (p.51). Furthermore, the findings of this study agree with the findings by Hokororo et al (2021) who asserts that, youths have the tendency to create new forms of expression to serve specific communicative needs including easy and quick communication. Her study discovers that those who are in charge of ticketing speak and write with abbreviations like Shy (Shinyanga), Mz (Mwanza), Bk (Bukoba) and Mby (Mbeya). It was noted that Instagram user easily and quickly understand when they use slang than standard Kiswahili. In their opinions, slang makes them to feel fresh to the people they are communicating. In line with this finding, Mazer and Hunt's (2008) study shows that teachers and students appreciate the use of slang in the classroom since it easy communication and understanding of the subject being taught in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. Bakari (2017) asserts that youth use slang rather than formal language which to them has some of the formalities that are complicated. To them, slang make them communicate easily and quickly as to their age they do not want to complicate things with formalities. He concluded by saying slang makes them very close to their friends are communicating.

Therefore, from the analysed findings of the study it is observed that acronyms and abbreviations considered to be used as the way of minimizing the characters of typing. The findings of the study presented justify that slang that Instagram user use slang purposely to easy and quickly understand each other when communicating rather than employing standard Kiswahili. This makes them feel very close to the people they are communicating with as one of the Instagram user wrote on DM during this study.

A code for in group communication

This sociolinguistic factor is admitted by some of the Instagram user who wrote they use Kiswahili slang since they do not want other people to understand what their conversation is about. Kiswahili slang are created to form a more complex message that understood by few. They use Kiswahili slang so that other people who will read their conversations will not understand the code used. The informants 4 mentioned this factor of Kiswahili slang during the questionnaire.

The informant 4:

Tunaepuka mengi tunapotumia misimu. Si kila jambo unaloandika lazima liwe wazi huwa tunapendelea litambulika na wachache. Mfano badala ya kumtaja kiongozi au mtu maarufu kwa jina lake natumia msimu ili nisije kupata tatizo lolote. kuna sheria siku hizi najilinda kwa kutumia misimu kwani nakua salama

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Zaidi. (We avoid many things when we communicate through slangs. Not everything you write must be clear and we prefer to be known by a few. For example, instead of naming a leader or a celebrity by name, I prefer to use slang so that I do not get into any trouble. There are laws thus why I protect myself by using the slang. So, when I use slang, it will be safe)

The informant 5 wrote that *tunatumia Sharubu au afsa ili wageni wasijue tunaongelea nini. Ukisema sharubu maanake simba na afsa maanake fisi* (we use a mustache so that strangers do not know what we are talking about. If you say mustache means a lion and officer means a wild pig {wild swine}).

From discussion, one of the informants had to say this,

Those are informal languages. I think Instagram user use them to hide something for instance, instead of writing the name of the government leaders have their own saying (slang). Bashite was once the famous name referring to the one of the government commissioner, although current is associated with other stuffs. You and I probably can understand nothing but they will understand each other when wrote on Instagram as you will see some commenters are laughing as they understood what has been presented.

With justifications to the quotation made above, it is discovered that hiding secrets was among the reasons that influence the Instagram user to change language when are communicating on social media. It is done purposely to avoid conflicting with the public figures. This happens as only members of the group have an opportunity to understand what is going on at that time. Those who are not members of that group are excluded and what has been said remain a secret among the members of that group. The presence of laws such as cybercrime law influences Instagram user to use slang for the purposes of being in safe side. During discussion one of the informants said that sometimes instagram user especially who use their real name and are against the ruling political party use slang to criticize the rulers as had to say this:

On Instagram people who write about the government try to use indirect language when mentioning the names of the leaders as it can cause trouble to them. Slang are used to avoid naming and to avoid problems that may occur. Most leaders do not like to be criticized only a group who understand that slang will comment on the post or reply. For instance, we experienced a slang *jiwe* referring to the government leader. Using slang is safe than saying direct mentioning the name.

The quotation above justifies that slang is used by a certain group who are who have the chance to know what is going on at that time. People who are not familiar with that slang are excluded to what is said and the secret remains as it is. On his part, Yusuf and Ismail (2018) state that slang are frequently linked with group membership and is taken to be some specialized kind of

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‘inmate’ or in-group speech. They are usually used by people who have the common interest and it is used deliberately to attain certain degree of secrecy.

The current study concurs with Allan and Burridge (2004) and Rezeki and Sagala (2019) findings. From their studies, it is argued that one of the reasons for using is to exclude outside is only understood by the insiders what is discussing. Similar to Saputra and Leni (2019) states that teenagers have a tendency of using slang in their daily conversation aiming to exclude others who are not members of their conversation. The findings above reveal that secrecy is among the reasons that encourage Instagram user to use slang in their Instagram’s conversations. Moreover, Meriem (2015) adds that slang is about the individuals who share the same background, history and experience. The mentioned factors plays a significant figure on maintaining their secrecy and privacy. Slang is incomprehensible and confusing hence aims to exclude outsiders or authorities. Additionally, Nassentein (2017) argues that one of the common factor of shared in-group rights is the existence of mutual urban-based identity as youth adhere to communal practices that are considered city-bound and fashionable, they will be recognized and integrated, if their rural lifestyle components still continue (after having come to city).

To Add New Flavour to the Conversation

The Instagram user accepted that the use of slang is associated with a new flavour in conversation. This makes them enjoy and happy in using slang than formal language as one of the informants said:

“Nashindwa kupangilia vyema lkn kwangu misimu Ni POA ili mradi sio matusi na unajua misimu inachangamsha Sana, Kuna ubunifu ndani yake.

Asante” (I cannot organize well but for me the slang is good (enjoyable) as long is not abusive; you know the slang are very exciting, there is creativity in it.

Thank you).

The present findings of this study concur with the idea from Fernandez (2015) in his study entitled Learning Spanish sayings in the Spanish as a foreign language class. According to Fernandez, the Spanish language has many expressions including idiomatic expressions, fossilized metaphors, similes, maxims, proverbs and slang through which speakers add flavour and colour to their speech. For that matter, the instagram user shift from formal language to informal language that is slang adds a new flavour in the Instagram conversations. Slangs add a new taste since they are characterised with a creativity compared to formal language which is commonly used by many people everywhere.

Therefore, slang used by instagram user since they feel better to use them as they are free to communicate in the way that it is not limited to the formal language. The creation of words depend to the message they want to communicate on Instagram.

Using slang as a trend and fashions marker

Furthermore, Instagram user admitted that the use of slang for trending words. During questionnaires, one of the Instagram user admitted that slang is used when there are currently

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popular words. Slang is used because it is trending for that time that influence to write on Instagram. One of the Instagram user wrote:

“Huwa napenda kutumia misimu kwa sababu huwa ndo kitu kinachowika kwa mfanoo neno pisi kalii liliwikaaa kwa kipind hiki so nkaamuaa kulitumiaa pia”.
I like to use slang because it is trending for that moment. For example, the word ‘pisikali’ (a beautiful woman) because it was a trending word for that time, therefore, I decided to use it.

Elbe (1996) comments that speakers use slang to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within or with a trending fashion in the society. From this finding, it is clear that the instagram user used slang because that word is trending for that moment.

Euphemism

Moreover, the informants admitted that sometime they use slang to reduce harshness of the unpleasant words when commenting on the posts or replying to the comments which are against their view or political part and teams especially the giants of Tanzania football namely Simba sports club and Yanga (Dar young African sports club) or their favourites artist such as Diamond Platinum versus Ali Kiba. During group discussion, one had to say this:

‘Some of slangs used on Instagram use to reduce the severity of word with sexual acts or human private organs. For instance, one of the Instagram user commented *‘ww choko kweli afsa habari msaidizi ni nani’* to mean you are a gay, who is the assistant information officer’.

The quotation above shows the reaction to the post which is joking on the issue of Simba having several information officers after Haj Manara (ex- information officer of Simba sports club) left the club. The comment showed the reaction to the post and probably it was a Simba’s fan who commented on that post. Also, there was a comment with some words that used to mention private organs as one commented that *‘Yani ___ (Omitted name) ni mpuuzi uyu mamae’*. The comment was insulting one of the celebrity who made the promise if his team will fail to get results on the match.

In addition, the usage of slang on social media is widely associated with the policy established by TCRA which regulates the misuse of social media including the prohibition of abusive language through social media. Hence, the researcher found that users decided to use slang purposely as an alternative way. Also, the usage of Kiswahili slangs to reduce the severity of words and also to express and express their feelings in networks. During discussion one had to say this:

I think people who use social media like Instagram are using slang as a way to reduce the harshness of words and fear TCRA. Since the law has been signed in some way it has been helped to make people find for alternatives on the usage of harsh language.

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Therefore, the instagram user use slang to reduce the harshness of the words by omitting some letters or opting another word which is indirect as aimed to reduce the severity of the language but still remains as an insult. The current situation concerning the use of social media the users of instagram find the best way to communicate by shifting from formal language to informal language.

This idea is supported by Hokororo et al (2021) and Zou and Fan (2013) who declare that the speakers use slang to reduce the severity of the words as they use slang in their daily conversations. Moreover, from their studies, most of the words used are associated with human private organs. In the same way the findings presented by Marhana (2017) agrees with the previous scholars. Marhana (2017) discovers that teachers use slang in teaching and learning for the purpose of reducing seriousness between the teacher and students. Moreover, the students admitted that the use of slang in the classroom make them to relax.

To get more likes, comments and views

Another reason which influences instagram user to use slang is to get more followers. During focus group discussion, it was admitted that instagram user use slang as they need to get likes and comments from the followers. On other hand, the use of slang on instagram results to the users to make a follow up on the meaning of the expressions used for the purpose of understanding what it mean. The informant 18 wrote this:

Wakati mwingine mimi naweka hivi vimaneno maneno kwa ajili ya kupata comments na likes, humu mitandaoni watu wengne wanaingia kuondoa stress kwa hiyo haitaki sana mambo serious. Pia nikiona mtu katumia msimu nisiouelewa au ulinifurahisha ntalike au ntacomment nimuulze anamaanisha nini? (Sometimes I used to write words just to get comments and likes think that, some of people use social media to remove stress as therefore they don't want serious issues. Also, when I read a slang that I do not understand I used to like or comment asking the meaning of that slang).

This shows that instagram user use slang to understand what is being discussed on the conversation. The slang influence the instagram user to join on the conversations.

This idea is related with Lee (n.d) who comments that the use of slang on Instagram is associated with the need to get followers. Sometimes, someone may post or comments by using a popular slang which is accompanied by the hashtag may influence the Instagram fans to follow the account so as to understand what the word refers to.

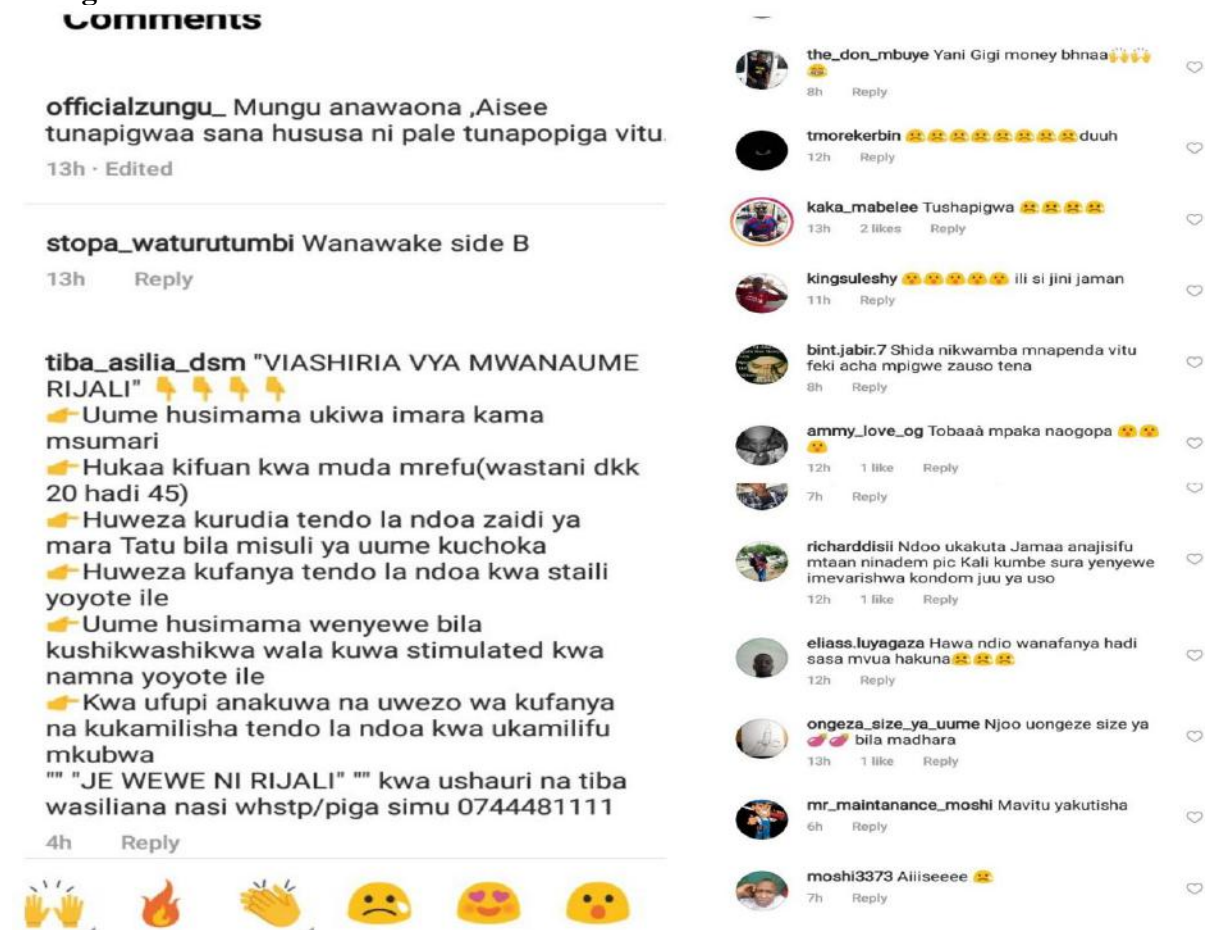
Convergence, Divergence and Maintenance on Instagram

The interaction of people in communication is influenced by extra linguistic factors surrounding the conversation including the topic, language used, context of interaction and so forth. Instagram user comment and likes the post that they are interested with the topic being discussed. In this line, convergence is understood as process people adjust to involve in the conversation. This is associated with understanding what subject matter of conversation is. This means that

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when the caption covers the interest of the readers the post will have a lot of comments and likes. On other hand, instagram users distance themselves from the conversation since they are not interested with the topic. This implies that divergence is linked with setting boundaries and distance from the topic. There are some factors sought to trigger distancing from the conversation includes less interest on the topic and the language used.

Figure 3.13 Conversation Showing Convergence, Divergence and Maintenance on Instagram



This concurs with Johnson (2013) who states that CAT as a means of understanding the theory's interaction concerning likes and number of comments on Facebook. The study shows that there are levels of accommodation crossways several posting approaches (neoliberal, social, team related, open code) and the following number of likes and number of comments associated with each post. The accommodation scores are measured through the language inquiry and word count. Some evidence proposed that the number of comments were correlated to LSM scores, while various posting types were significant at the team level. Study B was designed to measure the differences between the most and least liked Single-A MiLB Facebook pages in terms of levels of accommodation.

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Generally, Instagram user ease and amplify communicative similarities and differences between themselves in day-to-day communication whether the contact is in the online mode or face to face. The social significances of reducing and/or magnifying social similarities and differences in contact are definitely an expression the complexity of any given society.

Conclusion

The findings of the study discovered that Kiswahili slangs are formed by compounding, borrowing, abbreviations, metaphors and so forth.

Moreover, the study revealed that the use of Kiswahili slang on Instagram was influenced by word economy, for in-group communication and euphemism.

Analysis of the collected data also uncovered that Kiswahili slangs were acquired from different sources including TV and radio sessions, music and from other social media.

The findings of the study discovered that there were various reasons for the usage of Kiswahili slang on Instagram. There were three major reasons which motivated Instagram user to use the informal language in their chats.

To begin with, word economy makes communication brief, simple, easier and faster to communicate. This made communication interesting and less boring the users.

The second linguistic reason for deployment of Kiswahili slangs was as code(s) for in-group communication by excluding others especially when gossiping (chatting) about high-ranking government officers.

Lastly, euphemism is used to for it speaks to the culture of as politeness especially when we come to the use of taboo words or words that could stir unnecessary emotions like those associated with anger.

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