A Socio-academic Reflection of College Students' Slang Expressions

Emmanuel Ilonga[*]

Abstract

This paper sought to contribute knowledge to the field of sociolinguistics (register). It specifically identified and categorised slang expressions used by the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) students studying Bachelor Degree of Arts with Education (BAED) and Bachelor Degree of Education (BED) in day–to–day socio-academic interactions. Data were collected through questionnaire from forty (40) students. The slang expressions were categorised in respect to the meanings/interpretations expressed by the respondents. The categories include slang expressions associated with academics, food and drinks, money, body shapes/parts, people and studying areas. It is concluded that the application of slang expressions motivates DUCE students' socio-academic interactions as well as strengthening their relationships and bring forth a sense of belongingness.

Key words: *College students, socio-academic interactions, slang expressions*

Introduction

> *Like clothing and music, slang is an aspect of social life that is subject to fashion, especially among adolescents. It can be used by those inside a group who share ideas and attitudes as a way of distinguishing themselves from others* (Yule, 2010:211).

Slang expressions forge a part of language application in multi-diverse forms of communication. Eble (1996) in Arua and Alimi (2009:16) defines slang as "an ever-changing set of colloquial words and phrases that speakers use to establish or reinforce social identity or cohesiveness within a group or with a trend or fashion in a society at large." Ellis (2002) in Arua and Alimi, 2009:16 defines slang as "a variety of language used in certain context by means of which people express their sense of belonging to a particular group within the community which is not specific to any geographical location."

Despite the argument from the Ellis' (ibid.) definition, that slang expressions are not associated with geographical setting, the study

[*] Assistant Lecturer, Department of Languages and Literature, Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE), P.O. Box 2329 Dar es Salaam, E-mail: ilonga@ymail.com

by Forsskåhl (2001:106) in Ekenas and Helsinki found that "slang vocabularies do provide a means of marking gender and geographical identity". Apart from geographical setting, language usage might differ from one social cluster to the next (Wijaya, 2013). It is asserted that members of a community may possess knowledge of their language but the degree of competence in respect to the use of slang expressions might vary from one individual to another (Agha, 1999). The variation of competence of the application of slang expressions might be attributed to the social limits in relation to the groups which an individual person is involved with (Agha, 2015). Such variation could be associated with pronunciation, grammar and words (Liaw, Dani and Johari, 2013).

Dozie and Madu (2012) report that slang expressions are either newly coined words or the standard ones with a manipulated meaning and they are subject to change through time. Each generation of people might come with new slang expressions which reflect their social belongingness (Pedersen, 2007). Such belongingness improves social bond of a given group against 'outsiders'. Lewandowski (2010:64) adds that there is "general slang vocabulary used by young people regardless of their social group". Fisher and Lapp (2013) and Liaw, Dani and Johari, (2013) have observed that students coin and use slang expressions and they can manipulate the discourse from standard to colloquial words when the audience change. The current study aims to identify and categorise slang expressions used by the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) students in respect to their socio-academic interactions.

Literature Review

The review of literature highlights the relationship between slang expressions and its users. The relationship cuts across slang expressions and youth, features and roles of slang expressions in day-to-day communication requirements. The section further offers insights from related studies.

Features of Slang Expressions

It has been observed that slang expressions are characterised by a number of peculiar manipulative linguistic features. According to Saal (2010), slang expressions include assigned connotations; coined expressions, short forms of words (some slang expressions are made up of only two words), and the use idiomatic expressions. Some slang expressions are characterised by foreign language traits particularly

phonemic treatment. Arua and Alimi (2009) argue that slang expressions are of poor status as are hardly used in official settings. They also acknowledge that the use of slang expressions clearly indicates user's internalised knowledge of the language. Thus, slang expressions are considered unsuitable in official occasions. Apparently, students have been noted to be using slang expressions and the expressions are mostly applied in informal situations, since they share a common background (being students) especially when they converge to discuss various issues. The current study highlights the socio-academic circumstances in which DUCE students apply slang expressions in respect to features and interpretations.

Reasons for Using Slang Expressions

Studies show that there are many reasons for using slang expressions among different groups of people within a speech community. According to Gomaa (2015:103), Saudi youths use slang expressions in order to "sound more funny and humorous". Other reasons for the use of slang expressions include pressure from friends, taunting, and to laugh at or offend mates. Wijaya (2013) asserts that slang expressions are used to economize the language while talking or texting. Some people use slang expressions for fun and others for discriminating 'outsiders'. Yaghan (2008:39) points out that young Arabs used the word *Arabizi* – "a slang word describing a system of writing Arabic using English characters" due to technological challenges as the mobile phones lacked Arabic writing system. Others used slang expressions because "they felt relaxed using Arabizi system" and it was "cool and free of errors" (Yaghan, 2008:44).

In Zhou and Fan (2013:2212–2213), respondents highlighted that they used slang expressions for "self-identity and "achieving politeness." Pedersen's (2007) respondents indicated that the use of slang expressions brings about commonality and improves social bond among group members. Others make use of the expressions as euphemisms.

Slang expressions are used for various purposes, and they are as important as any other forms of communication. Studies show that they are useful in strengthening social togetherness as well as addressing a number of communicative needs. The current study illustrates slang expressions as supplied by University students and how they bond together in day to day socio-academic interactions.

Slang Expressions and Youths

Dozie and Madu (2012) stress that slang expressions are used by individuals who share a common background and understanding. The expressions are normally non-standard, lasting in a short period of time and mostly, semantically idiomatic. Studies have revealed a connection between slang expressions and the users. Dozie and Madu (ibid.) found out that students used slang expressions as a way of communicating within their respective groups. It was uncovered that students used slang expressions in order to appear 'modern'. The use of slang expressions is not random; rather, it is an intentional selection of words that youths use in their interactions. Eble's (2009:79) study shows that Egyptian youths' use of slang expressions is associated with "describing personalities and objects", whereas Al-Kharabasheh and Yassin (2017) observed that Arab youth made use of slang expressions more often than adults. Mazer and Hunt's (2008) study shows that students appreciated their teacher's use of slang expressions as it simplified understanding and improved the bond between teachers and students. In terms of frequency of use, Pedersen (2007) observed that slang expressions are highly used by male youth. Basically, these studies concur that youth and the use of slang expressions are inseparable.

Related Studies

Agha (2015) gathered a record of slang expressions from American colleges. The purpose of the study was to collect and index slang expressions with regard to semantic configuration across time and identify the word formation processes used. The study found out that some slang expressions were coined through manipulating meaning of standard words. Expressions such as *crasher* 'one who cannot tolerate alcohol', *killer* 'excellent' and *wanker* 'undesirable person, situation or thing' (Agha 2015:325) were observed. Other slang expressions referring to 'a stupid person' included *butthead, yo-yo, jerk face, cracker jack*, etc. (p. 326). It appears that the expressions manifest social bonds between individuals, behaviour and the context in which the naming occurs. Such an observation offers room for a study in a local context, to investigate the relationship between slang names and individuals behaviour.

Investigating slang expressions used in 'Ride Along' movie, Adrianto (2015:48) identified and categorised slang expressions found from the movie. The purpose of the study was to note down the types of slang expressions and their functions. The author categorised slang expressions into three: slang society – slang expressions that are

used in daily conversations; public house slang – related to workplaces; and slang in medicine. Some slang expressions found in the movie include *shit*, *damn*, *cop* 'police', *pussy* 'female genitals', *nigga* 'black person', *nuts* 'crazy' and *dude* 'male friend'. The study illustrates that slang expressions could be categorised into different types based on their semantic properties.

Mazer and Hunt (2008) investigated students' perceptions toward teacher's use of slang expressions in the process of teaching and learning. The study specifically sought to investigate the effect posed by such expressions. The findings revealed that the use of positive slang expressions in teaching was positively appreciated by students. One respondent commented that the use of slang expressions "helped me to relate to the subject", while the other said, "it felt more personal, like one-on-one communication" between the teacher and students. Another respondent had the following to say:

> *The slang the teacher was using was helpful, because it helped me to relate [and] to understand what point he was trying to make* (Mazer & Hunt, 2008:24).

The comments from respondents clearly justified that the use of positive slang expressions could improve the relationship between individuals who share the same/similar context.

El Falaky (2016) conducted a study to determine the extent of use of slang expressions among Egyptian youths. The study aimed to investigate semantic interpretations of the slang expressions too. The findings of the study revealed that 51% concurred to purposely using slang expressions. The respondents' slang expressions basically referred to human behaviour and things. For instance, words such as *chick* 'a beautiful girl', *idiot* 'a naïve person', and *sheep* to describe an individual who follows Muslim Brotherhood beliefs were observed. The study also identified other words such as *amen* which is used to concur with someone's argument and *shave* which refers to ignoring something. Such slang expressions seem to associate individuals and situations or behaviour.

Another study was set out by Arua and Alimi (2009) with a purpose of investigating students' invention of academic slang expressions at the University of Botswana. Methodologically, the study used questionnaires to collect data. The study aimed to examine semantic connotations of the slang expressions obtained. The findings revealed

a number of slang expressions related to academic issues, social and love affairs and relationships among students and teachers. The study identified slang expressions such as *toolbars* and *witches* for excellent learners, *clippers* and *boiling point* for high grades, while lower grades were called *red zone, under the belt,* and *sinkers*. Further, the study revealed slang expressions such as *computer, the messiah,* and *professor* for competent teachers, *false prophet*, and *bad pill* for less competent teachers (Arua and Alimi, 2009:20). The study current study manifests a connection between slang expressions and human behaviour. Individuals are attached with slang names to reflect their traits.

Methodology

Research Design

The current study is descriptive. According to Kothari (2004:37), a descriptive research is "concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or group". The current study identifies various slang expressions used by the college students in different occasions and categorise the expressions in respect to semantic properties. The current study shows the relationship between the college students, their slang expressions, and how the slang expressions reflect their socio-academic relationships.

Research Site and Participants

Data for the current study were gathered at the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE). Since the researcher was teaching at the College, it was easy to access respondents who provided the data. The study involved a total of 40 second and third year students, who were pursuing Bachelor Degree of Arts with Education (BAED) and Bachelor Degree of Education (BED). The respondents were purposively selected because they were more familiar with varieties of language used at the college. The selection of the said students aimed to simplify data collection process.

Data Type and Data Collection Tool

The current study relies on the primary data – slang expressions, collected primarily from DUCE students. Kothari (2004:95) underscores that "the primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character." The data for this study were gathered through questionnaires as they are "…free from the bias of the researcher and items are in respondent's own words" (Kothari, 2004:101). In this study, the tool required the respondents to mention slang

expressions they normally use in daily conversations and provide their interpretations where necessary. The tool contained twenty (20) slots for the respondents to fill in the expressions and their interpretations.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

This study adopted a descriptive and explanatory approach of analysing the data. The descriptive analysis aimed to simplify the interpretation of data in respect to their semantic properties. When the data gathered is large, it is necessary to classify the items based on homogeneity. Words with similar semantic expressions were grouped together to simplify comprehension. Such classification of data normally would show the relationship among research variables (Kothari, 2004). The data in the current study were classified on the basis of their meanings or interpretations. The slang expressions referring to the same/similar aspect were grouped together. The interpretation of the slang expressions was provided by the respondents.

Findings

The study identified and categorised slang expressions from the research respondents. The expressions were categorised on the basis of interpretations. The categories include slang expressions associated with academics, food and drinks, body parts/shapes, money, people, and studying areas. This section offers the expressions, categories and their interpretations.

Slang Expressions Associated with Academics

Slang expressions associated with academics were sub-categorised in respect to four aspects. The aspects include expressions about behaviour of individuals toward learning, study materials, examinationination results, and activities related to studying at the College. The interpretations of slang expressions about behaviour of individuals focused on what some individuals frequently engaged in and academic competences. Slang expressions related to examinationination results focused on the results, whether the highest or average. Other slang expressions depicted activities related to studying styles, as illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1: Academic Slang Expressions

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
1.	Desa/Madesa (plural)	Summarised notes/handouts	Learning materials
2.	Desa boy/girl		a) An intelligent student (mostly males) who is used by another student (mostly females) for studies b) A male/female student who spends most of his/her time studying
3.	Kipanga	Northern goshawk; a bird of prey that feeds on chicks or rats. It never misses to pick prey.	An intelligent student
4.	Kilaza	From Swahili word *laza* 'make someone sleep', thus *kilaza* is 'an ever sleeping person'.	A slow learner, an average student or an incompetent student
5.	Banda	From Swahili; a cone shaped traditional thatched or bamboo hut	'A' grade
6.	Karai	A large round bottomed pan used to warm cold water.	'C' grade. It curves at the bottom like a C.
7.	September conference	Supplementary examinations are scheduled in September.	Supplementary examinations period
8.	Kupiga msuli	a) Kupiga 'to hit' b) Msuli 'muscle'	To study very hard
9.	Kukamatwa	To be arrested and detained under police custody. To get caught.	To fail an examination, get a D/E grade
10.	Kubeti	It originates from 'betting games', involving guessing/ probability.	To sit for an examination without prior preparation
11.	Msuli bed	Msuli 'muscle'	To studying while lying on bed.
12.	Msuli bata	a) Msuli 'muscle' b) Bata 'duck'	Extensive reading/studying for leisure

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
13.	Msuli yatima	a) Msuli 'muscle' b) Yatima 'orphan'	Individual/private study
14.	Msuli mande	a) Msuli 'muscle' b) Mande (slang) 'more than one person' doing the same thing	Group discussion

The study found out that the slang expression *desa* (*madesa* in plural) refers to the learning materials that students use. The learning materials mostly include copies of books, handouts, journal papers, book chapters and lecture notes. A *desa boy* is a student who spends most time studying and discussing academic materials. The expression changes to *desa girl* when a female student is involved. In a restricted sense, the expression *desa boy* is used for an intelligent male student that female students rely on for academic assistance. The female students would always cloud the *desa boy* and offer him treats to keep him for academic support. The support could be joining them in group discussions, and sitting strategically close to him during tests or examinationinations. During such times, the *desa boy* is surrounded by female students who expect his support. The expressions *kipanga* and *kilaza* reflect two contrasting facts. *Kipanga* refers to an intelligent student while *kilaza*, an incompetent student. *Kipanga* (equated to northern goshawk) is an 'A' material student while *kilaza* is an average student, and sometimes, it refers to a student who never contributes anything in group discussions and fails tests and examinations.

Banda (a hut) refers to an 'A' grade in examinations. It is assumed that it was named so since its letter shape resembles a hut, while *karai*, a 'C' grade, resembles a steel-round shaped washing basin. Slang expressions from (8) to (11) refer to learning activities. *Kukamatwa* 'to get caught' is when a student fails a final examinationination, hence required to sit for a supplementary examinationination, while *kubeti* 'to bet' is when a student sits for an examination without prior preparations hence they guess the answers. *Msuli* 'muscle' is a Swahili word which is used with other various words for different interpretations which reflect studying. From the researcher's experience in football grounds, *kupasha msuli* (*kupasha* – to warm something up) refers to the time when players warm up. In the college, it refers to studying styles. *Msuli* is combined with other Swahili/English words such as bed, *bata* 'duck'–

slang expression for enjoyment, *yatima* 'orphan' and *mande* – a slang word for group sex. September conference refers to that period when supplementary examinations are administered. The expression remains the same regardless of alternation of supplementary examination period (October/November) with regard to the University's calendar.

Slang Expressions for Food and Drinks

This sub-section offers slang expressions related to food and drinks. The category is divided into varieties of meals, drinks and activities related to food and drinks. Food is among the basic human needs. Around the college, students obtain a variety of meals from cafeterias. The college students name such meals, drinks and eating habits in respect to the shape of food, abbreviation, and other criteria. See Table 2 below.

Table 2: Slang Expressions for Food and Drinks

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
1.	Misumari	Nails – Building materials	Sardines
2.	Suji	A coined slang	Rice
3.	Bente	A coined slang	Rice
4.	Kiwiko	Elbow	A slice of bread
5.	RB	Abbreviation	Rice and beans
6.	Joro	A coined slang	a) Leftovers b) Rice crust
7.	Soda kubwa	A big bottle of soda	Alcoholic drink
8.	Maji ya ku-download	Water poured from a water dispenser –like object	a) Tap water b) Boiled/treated water for drinking
9.	Pasi ndefu	Long pass	To skip meals
10.	Kupiga deshi	a) Kupiga 'to hit' b) Deshi 'dash'	To skip meals
11.	Neutral	A gear in automatic transmission cars	To skip meals

In this category, it was realised that the slang expressions come from standard words and coined ones. From the above data (in Table 2), the words *joro*, *suji* and *bente* are coined while the rest are Swahili

standard words with an exception of English words 'download' and 'neutral', and an abbreviation *RB*. Sardines are called *misumari* 'nails – building materials', a standard Swahili word. The name resembles the shape of sardine, which is similar to the shape of nails. Soda – a drink has been combined with a standard Swahili word *kubwa* 'big', and the combination refers to any kind of alcoholic drink including beer and wine. *Kiwiko* 'elbow' is a standard Swahili word whose meaning has been manipulated to reflect a slice of bread. *Maji ya ku-download* refers to the drinking water straight from the tap. Such water is normally used when the students have spent the entire stipend hence they cannot afford to buy bottled water.

Slang expressions (9) – (10) refer to an act of skipping meals. *Pasi ndefu* 'long pass' (in football), refers to an act and the moment when students do not afford three meals per day; hence they skip breakfast or lunch. *Deshi* is a nativised Swahili slang expression from an English word 'dash' – a punctuation mark. In writing, when a dash is used, no word is placed on its top. The same way in the college, when students place a 'dash' in the morning or afternoon, it means they skip a meal. Neutral – the position of the gears in automatic transmission cars applied when the car is not engaged in any moving gear reflects the action of skipping meals – breakfast /lunch.

Slang Expressions for Body Shapes/Parts

This is another category of slang expressions gathered from the students. The category basically relies on one aspect; the expressions which reflect parts of human body. Mostly, the expressions refer to female body parts and shape, and few for males' body parts. It includes standard words and coined words as well. See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Slang Expressions for Body Shape/Parts

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
1.	Kimbweta	A cement-made seat	a) A female student with big bums b) Big bums
2.	Koziweki kubwa	Higher coursework	Big bums
3.	Msambwanda	A female dancing group	Big bums
4.	Chura	Frog	Big bums
5.	Flat screen	A flat screen TV	A woman with flat/small bums

6.	Bastola	Pistol holster	Hips (females')
7.	Papuchi	A Spanish gynecologist Julio Iglesias Puga nicknamed Papuchi	Female genitals/vagina
8.	Kibamia	Okra	Small/short penis
9.	Mkonga	a) A trunk b) An elephant trunk	Big/long penis

In (1) above, *kimbweta* refers to the brick-made kind of outdoor chairs that are used by students for individual study and group discussions. They are placed in different areas around the college. They are bigger compared to normal/office/home chairs. Additionally, the word refers to (a woman with) big bums. *Koziweki* is a nativised Swahili word for coursework. A higher coursework (koziweki kubwa – big/higher) refers to big bums. *Msambwanda* and *chura* are slang expressions for big butt. *Msambwanda* comes from a female musical dancing group named *Kibao Msambwanda*. Their dancing style involves shaking/twerking bums. *Chura* is a standard Swahili word for frog. It comes from a dancing style whose dancers sleep on belly while twerking bums. From researcher's experience, the expressions (*chura* and *msambwanda*) are also used outside the college. But *koziweki kubwa* and *kimbweta* are exceptional for college surroundings or used by college students outside the college.

Flat screen refers to a type of TV set with a flat back, as opposed to a cathode ray tube (old style TV set) which has a huge back part. Female students with small butt are equated to flat screen TVs due to the shape, that they are almost flat. *Papuchi*, *kibamia* and *mkonga* are expressions for female and male genitals respectively. *Papuchi* was derived from the Spanish gynecologist (Julio Iglesias Puga) who dealt with women's reproductive health diseases. He was nicknamed *papuchi*. *Kibamia* comes from a standard Swahili name *bamia* 'okra' while '*ki*-', is a diminutive. Considering the size of okra, a small/short penis is named the same. *Mkonga* is a standard Swahili word with multiple meanings. It refers to a tree trunk or an elephant trunk. A trunk's hugeness is equated to male's penis size. An expression *bastola* 'pistol' is equated to female's big hips. It reflects the way female police officers place the pistols on the side of the waist.

Slang Expressions for Money

The slang expressions associated with money are into two groups. The first group is about the names for money while the second one reflects actions. Some college/University students in Tanzania receive money from the Higher Education Students' Loans Board (HESLB) to finance their studies. Thus, the slang expressions also reflect the moment when the students are required to sign loan forms, before the loan (stipend) is deposited in students' bank accounts, and also when the students have spent the entire stipend provided (see Table 4 below) .

Table 4: Slang Expressions for Money

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
1.	Boom	Deep loud sound	Money for meals and accommodation (stipend)
2.	Madini	Minerals	Money
3.	Shimo limetema	a) Shimo 'hole' b) Limetema 'it has spit/released'	Stipend being deposited in students' bank accounts
4.	Boom limehit	a) Boom 'money' b) Limehit 'it has hit'	Stipend being deposited in students' accounts
5.	Boom limekata	a) boom ' deep loud sound' b) Limekata 'it is finished'	To go broke after spending all stipends
6.	Kutia kidole	a) Kutia 'to put something (in)' b) Kidole 'finger'	To write a signature on students' loan forms

From Table 4, it is clear that there are slang expressions which reflect money in general, and other expressions for actions that are associated with money, stipend in particular. The expressions (1) and (2) all refer to money. 'Boom' is a common word which refers to the stipend which students receive from the Loans Board. *Madini* is a standard Swahili word for minerals. The concept of wealth/money that is obtained through the Loans Board is equated with the stipend that college students receive. *Shimo limetema* (*madini*) is a short sentence that reflects the moment when the stipend has been deposited in students' accounts. *Shimo* 'hole' in this sense is used as a mine while *limetema* 'has spit' refers to the moment when minerals have been extracted.

Boom limehit is similar to the previous expression (4). *Limehit* 'it has hit', is a combination of Swahili prefixes *li-* , an object marker, *-me-*, a tense marker (completed), and an English verb hit. Together, *boom limehit* refers to that moment when the stipend has been deposited. *Boom limekata* is mostly used when the students have spent the entire stipend. In this slang expression, *li-* is an object marker, *-me-* is a tense marker, *kat* 'cut' is a root and *-a* is a final vowel. Further, *kutia kidole* 'to put a finger (on/in something)' is often used when the students are required to sign the loans forms before the stipend is deposited into their bank accounts. *Kutia* 'to put something in' is a standard Swahili and the same to *kidole* 'finger'.

Slang Expressions for People

This section presents slang expressions for names of people. Such individuals are given names to mirror their behaviour as perceived by others. The names reflect both males and females. The names also echo students names and other individuals not necessarily students. The names are made of coined words as well as standard words with a connotative meaning (see Table 5 below).

Table 5: Slang Expressions for People

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
1.	Sponsor	Financial assistant	A male (married) person who is used by a female student financially
2.	Mwanaume suruali	a) Mwanaume 'man' b) Suruali 'trousers'	A poor (financially) man
3.	Kibenten	Ben10 cartoon	A young male who engages in sexual affairs with an older woman
4.	Mwanaume mashine	a) Mwanaume 'man' b) Mashine 'machine'	a) A male with large/ longer penis b) A male who knows how to satisfy a woman's sexual needs
5.	Konki master	a) Konki 'conk' – to hit someone on the head with a heavy object b) Master 'a skilled person'	A person who went through tough times/ challenges
6.	Slay queen	A young and naïve girl/woman who does	a) A female student who offers sex for

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
		not fall in love with poor men.	money b) A female student who likes expensive styles of life
7.	Maharage ya Mbeya	a) Maharage 'beans' b) Mbeya 'a region in Tanzania'	A slut /whore
8.	Mtoto si riziki	a) Mtoto 'child' b) Si riziki 'not a blessing'	A gay
9.	Mzee baba	a) Mzee 'old man' b) Baba 'father'	A male friend
10.	Kontena jipya	New container	First year female students

In this category, the slang expressions manifest the behaviour of the intended targets or the perceptions of the users of the expressions. A sponsor around the college refers to a male person who provides financial support to female students in exchange for sexual pleasure. *Mwanaume suruali* is a combination of nouns; *mwanaume* 'man' and *suruali* 'trousers'. The expression reflects men who are financially poor. In *mwanaume mashine*, a word *mashine* was borrowed from an English word 'machine'. In this context, *mwanaume mashine* reflects a male person with big/long genitals or that man who knows how to 'operate his machine' well and knows his ways to satisfy women sexually. The expression *kibenten* comes from a cartoon named Ben10. A prefix *ki-* plays a diminutive role as it reflects a young male who involves himself with sexual affairs with older women.

Additionally, *slay queen* reflects that woman who likes expensive life styles. It also means a young woman who is financially poor; hence, she offers sex in exchange for money. In *maharage ya Mbeya*, maharage is a standard Swahili word for 'beans' and Mbeya is a region in Tanzania. Beans from Mbeya get ready quickly when cooked. In this sense, they reflect a female person who is easy to have sexual intercourse with, a slut. *Mtoto si riziki* is a common saying mostly used when a child passes away. The saying portrays that when a child dies, then it was not a God's blessing. *Mtoto* refers to 'child', *riziki* is 'God's blessing' and *si* is a negative associative marker. But when the saying is used for an adult, it refers to a gay person. *Mzee baba* is a compound of two standard words, *mzee* 'old man' and *baba* 'father'. The amalgamation refers to a male friend,

commonly used by youths. When fresh students arrive in college for a new academic year, they are normally given names. *Kontena* 'container' *jipya* 'new' [new container] is a commonly used phrase that reflects the arrival of new female students. The expression is equated to the arrival of new containers from abroad. The slang expressions in this category reflect the behaviour of the individuals or the perceptions that other individuals have towards them.

Slang Expressions for Studying Areas

This category reflects various locations around the college and their names. The category includes slang expressions for names of lecture venues, studying areas and weather. Each area was given a name on the basis of its features/experience. Observe the following slang expressions in Table 6 below.

Table 6: Slang Expressions for Studying Areas

S/N	Slang Expression	Literal Meaning	Interpretation
1.	Uwanja wa Taifa	The national stadium	New lecture theatre 'C'
2.	Mortuary	A place where dead bodies are kept before burial.	A lecture venue (MTR)
3.	Coco beach	Name of a beach in Dar es Salaam	A studying area
4.	Peasant	Farmers	A studying area
5.	Makaburini	Cemetery/graveyard	A studying area
6.	Wi-Fi	Wireless internet	Windy area

In Table 6 above, each location/venue has been named to reflect its features. *Uwanja wa Taifa* 'the national stadium' is the name for the biggest lecture theatre in the college. It is assumed that the venue, given its size, was named so because the college is next to the national stadium, the biggest and the modern stadium in the country. *Mortuary* is the name of a smaller lecture venue in the college. It is often used for smaller classes and for tutorials. It is named so because of its quietness which is resembles mortuaries in hospitals. *Coco beach* is a studying area in the college. The area is very windy, it's under the trees and there are designated seats for students. It was named *Coco beach* due to the wind that blows in the location, similarly to the wind that blows at Coco beach – a popular beach in Dar es Salaam. 'Peasant' is another studying area, mostly

used by aged and in-service college students. *Makaburini* 'graveyard' was named so because of the presence of two old graves closer to the studying area. Apart from free Wi-Fi internet in the college, strong wind that blows anywhere in the college is also called Wi-Fi.

Discussion

Giles and Ogay (2007:294) assert that "social interaction is a subtle balance between needs for social inclusiveness (convergence) on the one hand, and differentiation (divergence) on the other." In the current study, the findings illustrate the convergence of students in language application, slang expressions in particular. It is apparent that the college students share the same slang expressions in respect to their academic endeavors. In the academic setting, for instance, the study has observed slang expression that cut across names of people such as *kipanga* 'an intelligent student' and *kilaza* 'an incompetent student'. Others include examination results such as *banda* 'A grade and *karai* 'C grade'. Academic settings are also reflected in activities such as *kupiga msuli* 'to study' and *kubeti* 'to attempt a test/examination without prior preparations'. Such an application of academic slang expressions could be observed in Arua and Alimi (2009). The two found out slang expressions such as 'toolbars', 'witches', and 'prophets' for students with good academic performance and, 'learning disabled', 'puppets' and, 'corresponding students' for students with poor academic performance. Apparently, the students converge when using specific choices of slang expressions to reflect their academic relationships and demonstrate a sign of belongingness.

Apart from academic setting, students' communication bond has been observed in the application of slang expressions that relate to people. It was noted that people are named with regard to their behaviour or the perceptions of others who name them. For instance, in the current study, the students make use of words such as 'sponsor – a male person who is financially used by female students', *mwanaume suruali* 'a male who is poor financially', *maharage ya Mbeya* 'a slut' and *mtoto si riziki* 'gay'. The findings are similar to El Falaky's (2016); he found out names such as 'sheep' which refers to a person who follows Muslim Brotherhood ideologies and 'chick' for a beautiful woman. In Agha (2015) names such as 'killer' for excellent, 'wanker' – an undesired person', and 'doper' for a person who smokes marijuana were observed. In Eble (2009), there are expressions such as 'asshole', 'douche bag', and 'shithead' which reflect negative connotation of individuals. The students manipulate the meanings of

standard words and coin new words to satisfy their communicative needs and improve their social bond.

Other students' slang expressions reflect their association with names of body parts and shapes. Such names of body parts exemplify the features of individuals. The students converge through their choices of slang expressions. For instance, in the current study, it has been seen that students coin slang expressions, and from time to time, manipulate the meaning of standard words. Expressions such as *kimbweta, chura* and *msambwanda* reflect females' big bums, *papuchi* and *kibamia* are for females' and males' private parts respectively. The findings are similar to Eble's (2009). In the study, the author found out an expression *badonkadonk* 'bums' and 'butterface' for a woman with an attractive body but ugly face. It appears that most slang expressions are male-made, and they refer to women's body parts, although, there are also slang expressions that reflect men's private parts.

The findings of the current study further illustrate students' socio-academic relationship on the choice of slang expressions which reflect food and drinks. It is undeniable fact that humans need food and drinks in order to survive. Such food and drinks have different standard names, however, language users tend to sometimes manipulate the names or come up with new expressions which reflect the types of food and drinks. The application of such expressions would normally bring a group of users together as they share a common background. The current study has observed slang expressions for varieties of meals such as RB 'rice and beans', *misumari* 'sardines', *soda kubwa* 'alcohol' and other activities associated with eating and drinking including *kupiga deshi* and *pasi ndefu* which all together refer to skipping meals due to lack of money. Similarly, Dozie and Madu (2012) have observed expressions such as *wack* 'eat', *embibing* 'drinking palm wine', *shack* 'an alcoholic drink' and, *bottling* 'drinking beer'. In Mutonya (2007), there is *kabier* 'small beer'. In Eble (2009), the author observed expressions including *grub* 'food' and *crunk* for 'crazy and drunk person'. Such slang expressions are shared by groups of individuals who share mutual knowledge and they converge on social background through the choices of slang expressions.

Students require financial support for their survival at the college. In Tanzania, as it was explained earlier, some college/University students receive loans from HESLB. Therefore, they seem to

converge in creating slang expressions which reflect the stipend they receive for each semester. Such a convergence is manifested in names and activities related to the loan. For instance, in the current study, expressions such as *boom and madini* refer to the stipend while activities such as *shimo limetema*, *boom limehit* and, *kutia kidole* are associated with the stipend being deposited in students' bank accounts and to sign for the stipend to be deposited. In other studies such as Kairuki, Kanana and Kebeya (2015) from Kenya, slang expressions for money include *chapaa, doh, dollare, ganji* and *mkwanja*. In Nigeria, Dozie and Madu (2012) report a slang expression *pepper* for money. Such similarities of expressions from individuals who share common knowledge of their language clearly illustrate how societies converge in their day-to-day communicative needs.

Further, the current study observed other kinds of slang expressions for places within the college such as the names for lecture rooms including *uwanja wa taifa* and *mortuary*, studying areas such as *cemetery* and *beach*. In Kenya, there is a slang word *hao* for house (Kairuki, Kanana and Kebeya, 2015). Other slang expressions were observed in Ainiala (2012) for Helsinki. The slang expressions used to refer to the city include *Stadi* and *Hesa*. Such slang expressions for different places/areas shared by the individuals of similar social background bring the interlocutors closer and strengthen their social and communicative bond, and hence satisfy their communicative needs.

Conclusion

The findings of the current study show that DUCE students have their own choices of slang expressions which they apply in the day-to-day communication requirements. Such slang expressions include the manipulation of standard words to come up with different interpretations or coining new expressions. The slang expressions collected cut across academic and social aspects. The expressions fell into different categories including academic, food and drinks, human body shapes and parts, and expressions for money. Other slang expressions reflected kinds of people, lecture venues and studying areas, and other activities. The application of the slang expressions indicates their social and academic bond. It strengthens their relationships as some of the expressions illustrate the students' belongingness – that they are college students.

References

Adrianto, A. S. (2015). Study of Slang Word in "Ride Along" Movie. Unpublished Master's Dissertation, the State Islamic University Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang.

Agha, A. (1999). Register. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 9(2). 216–219.

Ainiala, T. (2012). Place Names and Identities: The Uses of Names of Helsinki. In B. Helleland, C. E. Ore & S. Wikstrøm (eds.). *Names and Identities*: Oslo Studies in Language 4(2): 7–15.

Agha, A. (2015). Tropes of Slang. *Signs and Society*, 3(2): 306–330.

Al-Kharabasheh, A. & Yassin, O. (2017). Translation of Colloquialisms in the Arabic-into-English Subtitled Film, The Dupes. *International Journal of Comparative Literature & Translation Studies*, 5(3): 18–27.

Arua, E. & Alimi, M. M. (2009). The Creation of Students' Academic Slang Expressions in the University of Botswana. *Linguistic Online,* 40(4): 15–28.

Dozie, C. P. & Madu, L. I. (2012). Language of Communication among University Students in Nigeria: A Study on Slangy Expressions in Federal University of Technology Owerri, Nigeria. *Journal of Communication*, 3(2): 99–103.

Eble, C. (2009). Slang and the Internet. New Challenges in Language and Literature. *FALE/UFMG*: 81–95.

El Falaky, M. S. (2016). Yes We Are: A Sociolinguistic Study of Egyptian Slang. *International Journal of Language and Literature*, 4(2): 75–84.

Fisher, D. & Lapp, D. (2013). Learning to Talk like the Test: Guiding Speakers of African American Vernacular English. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(8): 634–648.

Forsskåhl, M. (2001). Girls' Slang and Boys' Slang: Two Towns in Finland Visited. Nora: *Nordic Journal of Women's Studies,* 9(2): 98–106.

Giles, H. & Ogay, T. (2007). Communication Accommodation Theory. In B. B. Whaley & W. Samter (eds.). *Explaining communication: Contemporary Theories and Exemplars.* Mahwah, NJ, US: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers: 293–310.

Gomaa, Y. A. (2015). Saudi Youth Slang Innovations: A Sociolinguistic Approach. *International Journal of Linguistics and Communication*, 3(2): 98–112.

Kariuki, A. Kanana, F. E. & Kebeya, H. (2015). The Growth and Use of Sheng in Advertisements in Selected Businesses in Kenya. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 27(2): 229–246.

Kothari, C. R. (2004). *Research Methodologies: Methods and Techniques*. New Delhi: New International Age (P) Ltd.

Lewadowski, M. (2010). Sociolects and Registers: A Contrastive Analysis of two Kinds of Linguistic Variation. *Linguistics Research*, 20: 60–79.

Liaw, J. O. Dani, N. A. & Johari, A. Z. (2013). Language Usage of Jargon and Slang in Strategic Studies. *Australian Journal of Basic and Applied Sciences*, 7(4): 661–666.

Mazer, J. P. & Hunt, S. K. (2008). The Effects of Instructor Use of Positive and Negative Slang on Student Motivation, Affective Learning, and Classroom Climate. *Communication Research Reports*, 25(1): 44–55.

Mutonya, M. (2008). Swahili Advertising in Nairobi: Innovation and Language Shift. *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, 20(1): 3–14.

Pedersen, T. (2009). The Use of Slang in British English?: A Study of the Slang Used in Football Factory and Little Britain. Unpublished Master's Dissertation, The University of Kalmar.

Saal, E. O. (2010). The Persuasive Effect of Teenager Slang in Print-based HIV Messages. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Radboud University.

Wijaya, B. S. (2013). The Use of English Slang Words in Informal Communication among 8th Semester Students of English Department in Binus University. *Humaniora*, 5(1): 197–209.

Yaghan, M. A. (2008). "Arabizi": A Contemporary Style of Arabic Slang. *Design Issues*, 24(2): 39–52.

Yule, G. (2010). *The Study of Language* (3rd Edition). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Zhou, Y. & Fan, Y. (2013). A Sociolinguistic Study of American Slang. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(12): 2209–2213.