

## A MORPHO-SEMANTIC ANALYSIS OF SOME NIGERIAN INTERNET-BASED SLANGS

Richard Oliseyenum Maledo<sup>1</sup>

Helen Oghenetega Edobor<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Delta State University, Abraka, Nigeria

\*Corresponding Email: richard@delsu.edu.ng

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### ABSTRACT

One of the distinguishing features of the Internet language is slang formation and usage among youths in some Internet domains. Such slangs are formed following morphological processes and they are used to convey in-group identity and meaning. In the light of the above, this paper undertakes a morphological analysis of some Internet-based slangs with a view to uncover the morphological processes of slang formation on the Internet and the semantic implication of such slangs. Twenty slangs were sourced from some Internet domains for this study, and it adopts Bauer's (2004) Morphological Productivity with insights from Booij's (2010) Construction Morphology as its theoretical framework. The findings reveal that Internet slangs as a means of forming in-group identity follow varied morphological processes with varied semantic implications which reflect the social context and the topic of interaction within the group.

**Keywords:** Slang, Internet, morpho-semantics, morphological productivity, youths, in-group identity,

### INTRODUCTION

One of the most remarkable progress human beings have ever made is the Internet (Noughton, 1999, cited in Crystal, 2006). "The Internet is an association of computer networks with common standards which enable messages to be sent from any registered computer (or host) on one network to any host on any other" (Crystal, 2006, p. 3). Since its invention, the Internet has not only revolutionised the communication system but also led to the expansion of the vocabulary of the English language through neologisms, coinages, borrowing and through other morphological processes. According to Idehen and Taiwo (2016), it has come to dominate the lives of a number of people all over the world. It is rapidly replacing the conventional forms of social interaction. Crystal (2006) points out that the Internet has encouraged a dramatic expansion in the variety and creativity of language and that it is radically changing the way language is

used. The use of language on the Internet is fast becoming a world of its own because it is now possible to be here, there and everywhere with these electronic and Internet-based technologies such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Telegram, LinkedIn, WeChat, Skype, and so on. This is perhaps what is meant in McLuhan's (1967) view of the electronic technologies when he posits that the world has become a small space in which people can communicate quickly and know of every event that takes place (Global Village) (as cited in Taiwo, 2013, p.58). The idea of "global village" has gained prominence again amidst the emergence of the Internet and digital telecommunication Taiwo (2012, p.2). There is no human society that exists without language. The use of language, however, varies from people to people and from place to place. The Internet itself is a place that has its own people with their peculiar language practices, styles and idiosyncrasies. As long as the use of the Internet in this century is almost unavoidable, its language resourcefulness will not cease. Noting the importance of the Internet, Hoffman et al (2004) assert that the Internet has become indispensable to individuals, families and social groups and a major influence on people's everyday lives. This is because the users of the Internet now network and form virtual communities as a platform for information exchange and coordinated group actions (Chiluwa, 2004, p. 82).

Interestingly, the language of the Internet constitutes a different register or variety of language use. To understand the language of the Internet in online communication, to some extent, certain linguistic as well as extra-linguistic skills may be required especially to those who are new comers in the online social networks. In fact, the users of the Internet are often referred as citizens of the Internet. Such citizenship has given rise to the neologism "netizens" (Crystal, 2006, p. 4), which is a morphological clipping and blending of the two terms "Internet" and "Citizens", as in (net-) from "Internet" and (-itizens) from "Citizens". The language being used by netizens may vary in spellings but are mutually intelligible to the users but may be somewhat intricate to neophytes on the Internet.

Among the social media platforms, according to the Most Used Social Media Platforms in Nigeria ranking conducted by *Statista*, WhatsApp is the most used social media platform in Nigeria. WhatsApp Messenger, or simply WhatsApp, is an American freeware, cross-platform centralised instant messaging (IM) and voice-over-IP (VoIP) owned by Meta Platforms. It allows users to send text messages and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share videos, images, documents, user locations, and other contents. WhatsApp was officially launched in Nigeria in January 2010 and since then, it has been a major companion and addiction to most Nigerians especially the

youths. WhatsApp has now become the most used social media interactive platforms with estimated 30.69 million users (see <https://www.statista.com>). This is one of the major reasons for it being chosen as platform from which our data is generated.

Furthermore, NaijaRoom of Gossip is a WhatsApp Interactive Group with numerous participants, created in the year 2022 as a gossip platform for trending news on politics, entertainment, religion, and other humorous activities within Nigeria. One of the most interesting features of this group is the constant use of slangy expressions almost always at the end of each gossip-post. There is always the first discussant who initiates a post and follow-ups who are the responders to the post. This group has apparently become the most appropriate site to extract our data for this study because of the structured discussions of the interlocutors. Most importantly, discussants and participants in these social media platforms engage much in morphological and semantic innovative use of words in slangy manner. Such usages warrant a scholarly attention as a contribution to the interface between language and the social media.

### Morpho-Semantics

Morpho-semantics is a sub-branch of theoretical linguistics that blends the fields of morphology and semantics. In linguistics, morphology refers to the mental system involved in word formation or to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed (see Aronoff & Fudeman, 2010, pp. 1-2). It has been appropriately defined as the study of the internal structure of words or word-forms (see Lyons, 1981: 118; Katamba & Stonham, 2006, p. 3). Lieber, (2009, p. 2) defines morphology as “the study of word formation, including the ways new words are coined in the language of the world, and the way forms of words are varied depending on how they are used in sentences”. In the words of Akmajian et al (2001, p. 12; 2010, p. 14), morphology is a subfield of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words and the relationships among words. Semantics on the other hand is of older origin. Lyons (1981) and Palmer (1996) define semantics simply as the study of meaning while Saeed (2003, p. 3) defines semantics as “the study of meaning communicated through language”.

In this present research, morpho-semantics is the linguistic description of morphological processes combined with semantic analysis. The concatenation of these two concepts of morphology and semantics as a tool for the analysis of a linguistic data has now become a veritable enterprise. This is because morphology studies word formation process or the scientific ways of creating new words to expand the vocabulary of a language while semantics deals with meaning because words formed cannot be devoid of meaning. In

other words, the function of every word is anchored on its meaning in actual communication.

New words are being formed into the vocabulary of English ubiquitously over the centuries through several platforms but especially via the Internet or social media. The formation of these newly formed words can still however be tagged to any of the existing word-formation process and the meaning of such words is always in tandem with their formation. For instance, these social media words, “retweet,” “selfie,” “webinar,” “sexting,” “chatiquette” and “blog” can be analysed morpho-semantically. *Retweet* is morphologically formed through the process of affixation with the fixing of the “re-” prefix to the verb “tweet”). It means “to forward a message posted by another user on the social networking site, Twitter. *Selfie* is morphologically formed through coinage, and it means “a picture of someone taken by the person himself of herself” while *Webinar* is formed through the morphological process of blending from the words “web” and “seminar” which means “meeting, training or seminar presentation conducted live through the internet”. Like *Webinar*, *Sexting* is also formed through the blending of “sex” and “texting” to mean the sending of sexual arousing photos or messages through a mobile phone. Chatiquette is formed from “chat” and “etiquette” to refer to a body of rule and regulation guiding the use of language in some chat rooms on the social media while Blog is a blend from “web” and “log” to mean a kind of Internet website where regular information, gossip, satire and criticism are posted.

From the above, it is apparent that there is a need for the merger of morphology and semantics which concomitantly brings about the concept of morpho-semantics as an apt tool for the description and analysis of new words to which slang (our data for the current research) are no exemptions.

### The Concept of Slang

Slang is a specialised form of language variation that is unique to a particular social group. Slang users often make use of what can be stylistically unintelligible to non-members of their group. Since slang is a language used outside of conventional usage, it is not everyone that uses it. Yule (2010) states that slangs are more likely to be found in the speech of some individuals in society and not in others. What this implies is that the use of slang is based on individual’s choice. Thus, Odebunmi (2016) describes slang as vocabulary choices which are casual and informal in nature, and which are meant strictly for communication among a social group.

Another interesting aspect of slang has to do with its domain of usage. Researchers on

slang seem to agree in the literature that slang is most used by younger speakers within a speech community. For example, Yule (2010, p.259) describes slang as words or phrases that are used instead of everyday terms among younger speakers and other groups with special interests. Another view on slang is that it “refers only to words - either words new to the language, or old words or phrases with new meanings [...] usually associated with younger speakers” (see O’Grady, Archibald and Katamba, 2011, p. 479). Similarly, Daramola (2016) affirms that “slangs are often associated with younger people, gangsters, streetism and hooliganism”. These views of slang simply share singular conclusion that slang is a coded variety of language that commonly manifests in the speech repertoire of younger people with common bonds or shared knowledge. Although, slang may be said to the communicative practice of younger people, other people too who are not necessarily young still use slangs notwithstanding. For instance, slangs are used in offices, by military personnel, in motor parks, and so on. Odebunmi (2016, p.8) while noting the changing nature of slang domain, categorises slangs into four types: Teenagers’ Slang, Criminals’ Slang, Students’ Slang and Internet Users’ Slang.

For decades now slang as a unique variety of language use has attracted the attention of critics, reviewers, readers and researchers. Putri (2020) undertakes a sociolinguistic analysis of slang used by Cher Horowitz in the movie *Clueless*. In the study, Putri emphasises on two key areas: determining the contextual meaning of the slang word uttered by the main character Cher Horowitz and identifying the function of the slang found in the movie. The result of Putri’s analysis reveals that the social factors affecting the different contextual meaning of slangs words are based on the social relation of participants, setting (social context of interaction), and the topic of discussion. In a similar study, Panjaitan (2017) is an analysis of slang language in *Zootopia* movie, using Eble’s and Partridge’s theories to analyse the type of slangs uttered by the characters in the movie. The research finding concomitantly formulates ten functions of slang words as uttered by the participants.

While focusing on time series topics, Matsumoto et al (2015) analyse slang based on variant information extraction. In what they call “validation experiment”, they carry out a chronological analysis of topics related to slangs on Twitter. To them, it is the change in topic that necessitates a slang type. This research, no doubt, has a close affinity with the present study, but the fact that their data were extracted from the microblog Twitter establishes a disparity between the two works. Zainuddin (2017) focuses on slang usage on students’ daily communication in Indonesia. This research is intended to find out the kinds of slangs used by students, the reasons why the student use the slang words, and the frequency of students’ slang usage. The findings indicate that the students’ slang

words often feature acronym, blend, aphaeresis, and the remaining are pre-existing English slangs.

Furthermore, Odebunmi (2010) analyses some Nigerian university students' sexual organ slangs from the theoretical standpoint of conceptual metaphor and itemises fourteen sexual organ metaphors, which relate to two major ideological issues: the institutionalisation of gender issues and religious, social and cultural allegiances. Also, Yusuf and Ismai'l (2017) investigate into the sociolinguistic perspective of slang usage in political discourse. Specifically, the research is based on Hausa slangs being used among politicians in Kano and its environs. The result shows that unlike in many languages in the world, Hausa slang words used by politicians do not involve any secretive or vulgar terms. Instead, they are drawn from everyday Hausa words and expressions.

However, the present study is distinct from the above studies. While they analyse slangs from the sociolinguistic perspectives using different theories, the present study takes a morpho-semantic dimension to the analysis of slangs. Again, the present study is cyberspace research because the data (slangs) for the research are culled from a social media platform (WhatsApp Group Chats), while the other studies extract their slang-data through interview, apart from Matsumoto that extracted his data from Twitter.

### Theoretical Framework

This study adopts Bauer's (2004) Morphological Productivity and Booij's (2010) Construction Morphology as linguistic approaches. The idea of deploying these two theories in our data analysis is because the former theory dwells on the productiveness of a process that allows new words to be formed in a language while the notion "construction", in the later implies a pairing of form and meaning as developed in the theory of Construction Grammar (see Booij, 2010). In fact, the use of slangs which often permits new terms to be coined or even according to connotative meaning to existing words can, however, bring about slang polysemy. It is this process of creating novel words or expressions into a language that is called morphological productivity. In what Bauer (2004, p. 97) puts forward as a working definition of productivity, he posits that "productivity is a feature of morphological innovation... it is a feature of morphological processes which allow for new coinages". In other words, if a process is morphologically rich in terms of word-formation, such a process is said to be productive. To this end, since the use of slang involves coining new colloquial terms, slang could be said to be a productive word formation process. This morphological productivity is sometimes referred to as creativity (see Katamba, 1993, p.72). In the latter theory, which is Booij's

Construction Morphology (CM), words or newly formed words are seen as constructions on the word level, and it provides the recipes for coining new (forms of) words. In this case the notion of construction is defined as a pairing of form and meaning (Boij, 2010). CM proposes what is called constructional schemas that are employed to account for the holistic properties of complex words and phrasal lexical units with word-like functions. CM aims at a better understanding of the relationship between syntax, morphology, and the lexicon, and of the semantic properties of complex words (see Boij, 2010, p. 1). In CM, the following constructions can be analysed thus:

book shelf ----- N + N  
drawbridge ----- V + N  
blackbird ----- ADJ + N  
afterthought ----- PREP + N  
the blackbird ----- ART + ADJ + N

## METHODOLOGY

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The data for the study are slang words and expressions extracted from NaijaRoom of Gossip WhatsApp Group (<https://chat.whatsapp.com/LLmnHd6XnvQDnNBU0jSHFO>). A total of twenty (20) slangs are purposively imported from the chat room for analysis. The selection of these slangs is based on their frequency of occurrence and usage and their being recent in conversations among participants on the group. For ease of analysis and comprehension, these slangs are isolated and numbered for Roman numeral i - xx. The analysis is guided by Laurie Bauer's model of Morphological Productivity (2004) with insights from Geert Boij's Construction Morphology (2010). In the analysis, the data is first identified. This is followed by the interpretative meaning and the type of morphological construction involved. Next is the grammatical category the slang belongs to and a commentary on its semantic implication in the context of use.

## DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

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### i: ASAP

- Interpretive Meaning: As Soon As Possible
- Morphological Construction: Acronymy
- Grammatical Name: Adverbial Phrase (of time)
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Commentary: ASAP is an acronymic abbreviation peculiar to internet users, especially WhatsApp users to mean "at one's earliest convenience or possible time to do something". It is created by combining the first letters of the adverbial phrase "as soon

as possible” as in *A-as*, *S-soon*, *A-as* and *P-possible*. It foregrounds the urgency and the seriousness of the matter at hand in the contest of use.

## **ii. Aza**

- Interpretive Meaning: Bank Account Details
- Morphological Construction: lexical borrowing / Semantic Extension
- Grammatical Name: Noun

Commentary: Aza is of Arabic origin. In the Arabic lexicon, it is both a male and female given name which means “comfort”, “joy”, “strength”, “powerful”. Of course, it is often said that the fastest message a person can send to another person upon request is bank account number. This is because the sending of account number presupposes the sending of money which could eventually bring *comfort*, *joy*, *strength* or *power* to the receiver. So, when a Nigerian says, “send me your aza”, it simply means “send me your bank account number or details”.

## **iii: Ment**

- Interpretive Meaning: To be insane
- Morphological Construction: Clipping
- Grammatical Name: Adjective

Commentary: Ment is clipped from the original parent word “mental”. As a slang, it is sarcastically used to query someone’s sanity when h/she behaves or acts in a particular manner that seems inappropriate. So, “That boy dey ment?” in NP means “Is that boy mad?”

## **iv: Ghana Burger**

- Interpretive Meaning: A Ritualistic Internet Fraudster
- Morphological Construction: Compounding
- Grammatical Name: Noun (open compound word)

Commentary: Ghana burger is a noun phrase or what Booij (2010, p. 8) describes as *word-like phrasal expression* used to describe a lexical unit. As a slang, it is used to refer to a group of young men in Nigeria who are Internet fraudsters. They are often believed to have travelled to Nigeria’s neighbouring West African country, Ghana, and have now returned to Nigeria with sudden riches. They are often associated with growing bushy long beard, drawing tattoos on their body, taking contraband drugs, spending stupendously in parties, and smoking, drinking, clubbing, and driving expensive cars.

They are also referred to as “burger” for a short. At the Ghana burgers are associated with charms and fetishisms through which they hypnotise their victims through the Internet to release money. Another school of thought see them as pure money ritualists. The story goes that there are places in Ghana where their men and women specialize in money rituals.

#### **v: In Addy**

- Interpretive Meaning: Happy birthday in advance
- Morphological Construction: Compounding
- Grammatical Name: Prepositional Phrase

Commentary: Lexically, “in addy” is an open compound. As a slangy expression, it is commonly used in pre-birthday wishes among friends on social media in Nigeria. It is an economic use of words. In other words, when we overtly say, “in addy” to a friend, we are covertly saying “happy birthday to you in advance”. It is very frequently used in different social media platforms to express birthday wishes.

#### **vi: Collabo**

- Interpretive Meaning: Sexual intercourse
- Morphological Construction: Clipping
- Grammatical Name: Verb/Noun

Commentary: The term *Collabo* is a fragment from the “collaboration” which is the act of working together with another person or a group of people to produce something. As a slang, Collabo connotes sexual intercourse. It is a slang metaphor that likens the act of having sex to a kind of mutual cooperation and agreement between a man and a woman. Such cooperation and agreement are therefore a sort of collaboration. Collabo can be used in clauses as either a noun or a verb. As a verb, “Let’s go and *collabo* tonight” means “Let’s go and mate/have sex tonight”; and as a noun “The *collabo* between Jack and Jill has led to an unwanted pregnancy” meaning “The sexual intercourse between Jack and Jill has led to an unwanted pregnancy”.

#### **viii: Japa**

- Interpretive Meaning: To run swiftly; to escape from an unsafe scene or situation
- Morphological Construction: Blending/ Borrowing
- Grammatical Name: Verb

Commentary: Japa has a Yoruba etymology. It is a blend of two Yoruba words *Ja* which means *to run* and *pa* which is an adverb of degree that is used to intensify any verb in Yoruba language. As a slang, it means to retreat or scamper for safety especially when one feels insecure at a particular place in a given situation. In the current state of economic hardship and insecurity in Nigerian, everybody wants to “Japa”, meaning to travel abroad. It is also used in the context of the herdsmen invasion of farmlands in Nigeria, as in, “Whenever you see herdsmen on your farmland, the best thing to do is to “japa”, which is the same as “Whenever you see herdsmen on your farmland, the best thing to do is to run for your dear life”.

### **vix: Dorime**

- Interpretive Meaning: Extravagant spending; stupendous display of wealth
- Morphological Construction: lexical borrowing, Semantic Extension
- Grammatical Name: Noun

Commentary: Dorime (Ameno) is a popular club song in Nigeria. It originated from the French new age musical project titled *Era*, written by Eric Levi and it is the most played song in Nigerian night clubs to signify that an expensive champagne (drink) has just been bought. Clubbers have acclaimed that there is something unusual about the Dorime song coercing them into spending more of their money uncontrollably whenever it is played usually during a celebratory spree when any of the most expensive drinks available at the club is purchased. Hence, it is often used as a slang thus: “Dorime is not for civil servants”. In other words, civil servants who are salary earners will not be able spend money lavishly to the point of the song “Dorime” being played for them.

### **x: Baddo**

- Interpretive Meaning: A person who is extremely skilful at doing good/bad things; womaniser; A person who is to be greatly feared or respected
- Morphological Construction: Coinage
- Grammatical Name: Noun

Commentary: The slang *Baddo* is perhaps a metaplasism from another word “badoo”. Badoo is an electronic application that is designed as a dating-focused social media network that was founded by the Russian entrepreneur, Andrey Andreev in 2006. As a dating site, it allows its users to meet new friends especially of the opposite gender to engage in relationships, sensuous chi-chat, flirtations, and other sex-related escapades. So, *Baddo* is a metaplasmic word formed from “badoo”. Metaplasism, in linguistics, is the deliberate misspelling of a word by changing its letters or sounds, usually for stylistic

purposes or literary aesthetics. For instance, the second letter “o” in “badoo” is elided and replaced with the letter “d” to alter the word orthographically and phonetically. The *Baddo* slang is often associated and in fact, being popularised by the Nigerian rap superstar musician, Olamide who also goes by the “Baddo”, a moniker he coined to portray himself as a “bad boy” in his 2014 album, *Goon Mi*. Since then, *Baddo* has come to be a commonly used slang to mean “bad boy”. But when social media users or young Nigerians talk about “bad boy” or *Baddo*, it does not have a negative connotation as would be contained in the dictionary. In context, *Baddo* is used by Nigerians to refer to someone who is exposed; someone who smokes or drinks much; a womaniser; a young rich boy; or a personality they admire; or someone they cherish.

#### **xi: Selena**

- Interpretive Meaning: A fetish object or charm often used for protection or fortification against weapons like gun, battle axe, dagger, arrow, etc.
- Morphological Construction: borrowing.
- Grammatical Name: Noun

Commentary: Selena is originally a female given name of Latin origin meaning “moon goddess”. It also means *smooth*, *shiny* and *sensual*. A moon goddess that is celebrated at new and full moons from dusk until dawn believed to have a supernatural or magical power of defence and protection over her worshippers. As slang used among some chart platforms, it has undergone semantic extension. In the current context, it refers to amulets and charms with protective powers. To this end, if Mr A asks Mr B as in the expression, “Has your selena been tested”? Mr A is actually inquiring if the efficacy of Mr B’s amulet has been validated.

#### **xii: Legit**

- Interpretive Meaning: To be real; Genuine
- Morphological Construction: Clipping
- Grammatical Name: Adjective

Commentary: The slangy word *legit* is a clipping from the word *legitimate*. Clipping, according to Lieber (2009, p.53), “is a means of creating new words by shortening already existing words. For example, we have info from information”. One interesting thing about clipping is that the newly formed word always maintains the same word-class and meaning with the original parent-word where it is fragmented from. Similarly, the slang *legit*, as clipped from *legitimate* still means the same as in “legal,

valid, honest” (e.g. ‘The online business I’m doing is a *legit* one” is the same as “The online business I’m doing is a legitimate one”).

#### **xiii: Maga**

- Interpretive Meaning: The victim of a fraud; An easily fooled person
- Morphological Construction: Borrowing
- Grammatical Name: Noun

Commentary: A “maga’ is a slang word that originated from Nigerian Pidgin to mean a pawn from a scheme or the victim of a scam. Its usage in social interaction was first started in Nigeria by Internet fraudsters and later being popularised in the year 2008 by the Nigerian hip-hop artiste, Kelly Handsome, through his hit track titled, *Maga Don Pay*. Since then, the word has found its way into the vocabulary of young Nigerians and its meaning is now being extended to mean “anybody that is taken advantage of” or “a wealthy man or woman being used by a gold-digger to exploit his/her money”. For example, “If my *maga* pays today, I will buy a new car”. Maga has a synonym in the word *mugu*, which is a Yoruba word for a a fool or a gullible person that can often be manipulated to pay money continually in a lavish manner to a person who is believed to be a lover or partner in business.

#### **xiv: Old Taker**

- Interpretive Meaning: A person who was once rich but financially bankrupt
- Morphological Construction: Compounding
- Grammatical Name: Noun Phrase

Commentary: This is a 2022 humorous slang that is trending on Whatsapp and Twitter. It became popular with the Warri-based singer, Erhiga Agarivbie (professionally known as Erigga), who helped in clarifying the actual meaning of the *Old Taker* phrase through his explanation. According to him, the term old “old taker” simply means a former “big boy”. As a slang, it is an expression commonly associated with Yahoo boys. In this context, an old taker as a yahoo boy who got paid heavily from a yahoo scheme in the past but who is presently broke. The term *Old Taker* is in binary opposite with the term *New Taker* which refers to a yahoo boy who is currently making money from online yahoo scheme.

#### **xv: Slang: CEO**

- Interpretive Meaning: Best at doing something; Someone that does something excessively.
- Morphological Construction: Initialism/ Alphabetism
- Grammatical Name: Noun

Commentary: tomorrow: The slang *CEO* is an initially from Chief Executive Officer which literally means the owner of a company or a business venture. In slang term, *CEO* used to say that someone often does something excessively or that someone is the best at doing something at a particular time. Although, its use in cyberspace interaction has taken a little bit of shift in meaning because it is almost always used as an innuendo, that is, to make a derogatory remark or reference to a person or thing. For example, “Angela is the *CEO* dance on TikTok” means “Angela is famous by her excessive dances on the TikTok app”. Also, “He is the *CEO* of porn on WhatsApp Status” means “He is fond of posting pornographic pictures or videos on WhatsApp Status”.

#### **xvii: We We**

- Interpretive Meaning: Self-centredness; Nepotism
- Morphological Construction: Reduplication
- Grammatical Name: Adjective

Commentary: *We We* is a reduplication of the plural personal pronoun, *we*. It is reduplicated in slang usage for emphatic purpose to foreground the extent of someone’s selfishness. It simply means to be concerned with only oneself and one’s relatives or tribe. For example, some people are arguing on social media that Nigerians should not vote for Bola Ahmed Tinubu because they claim in this expression thus: “Tinubu will run a *we we* government in Nigeria if he becomes Nigeria’s president in 2023”. The above expression implies that “Tinubu will run a nepotistic government...”, that is, favouring only his Yoruba ethnic nationals.

#### **xviii: Slang: Para**

- Interpretive Meaning: To yell; Extremely angry
- Morphological Construction: Coinage
- Grammatical Name: Verb

Commentary: The slang *Para* is a word that literally means paralytic or very drunk. But on the Internet means to shout at person or a group of persons in an extremely provocative manner. Factory workers who are sleeping on duty could have their boss *para* at them. Also, a housewife who has refused to cook after which the husband has

given her money to cook may have the husband *para* at her having returned home hungry noticing that there is no food at home. For example, “The shop owner will *para* at me if she comes and meets a visitor here; you may start going now before her arrival” means “The shop owner will yell at me if she comes and meets a visitor here; you may start going now before her arrival”.

#### **xvix: Kayanmata**

- Interpretive Meaning: Magical spell; Bewitchment
- Morphological Construction: Borrowing
- Grammatical Name: Noun

Commentary: *Kayanmata* is originally a practice in the Hausa culture in Northern Nigeria, which is a series of folk unguents of beads, cream, balm and oil that are worn or applied by newly married women. The beads are worn around the waist but removed when menstruating, while the oil, balm or cream is to be rubbed on the forehead and cleavage especially when the woman’s husband is around. The idea is to prepare the woman for a healthy sexual experience and for fertility in procreation. It was an acceptable tradition. However, in recent years the concept of *Kayanmata* has taken a different dimension. Its primordial function and meaning have been shifted or extended to be a taboo term or practice. It is now being used to mean an evil practice of “enchantment” or “a kind of potion, charm, or drug, especially love potion from a woman intended to make the targeted man fall in love with her”. For example, “Man divorced wife upon discovering that the woman had been using *kayanmata* for him for eight years” as in “Man divorced wife upon discovering that he had been bewitched for eight years”.

#### **xx: Jaga Jaga**

- Interpretive Meaning: Disorderliness; Awkward
- Morphological Construction: Reduplication
- Grammatical Name: Adjective

Commentary: *Jaga Jaga* is reduplicative word that was popularised the by Nigerian hip-hop star, Eedris Abdulkareem in his “Jaga Jaga” song that was released in the year 2004, which eventually landed him in trouble with the Nigerian president, Olusegun Obasanjo. This slang has been popularised by its usage in Internet based communication. *Jaga Jaga* as a slang, is used in making disparaging remark about someone or something. It is an adjective that can be used predicatively or attributively. When the adjective occurs after the verb in a sentence, it is called *predicate* adjective, but when the

adjective occurs before the noun, it is called *attribute* adjective (see Babajide, 1998, p.9). For instance, in “Nigeria is *jaga jaga*”, *jaga jaga* is used predicatively while “Helen has a *jaga jaga* handwriting”, is the attributive use of the term.

## CONCLUSION

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This study has shown the extent to which slangs are morphological formed. It observes morphological creativity as a means through which slangs are created to extend the language system in a motivated but unpredictable way in contrast with productivity which is ruled governed (Maledo, 2021). The most frequent morphological process of slang formation from our data is borrowing with its attendant semantic extension. In this case, an existing word from a donor language is borrowed and its semantic frame extended or completely changed from what it used to mean from the original language. Existing words in English are also borrowed with some morphological modifications with completely different meaning as slangs. There are also instances of compound slangs completely different from the meaning of the words making up the compound word. The study has also shown that slangs or are parts youth in-group identity on the internet. As the analysis has shown, some of the slangs may not have been formed through the Internet medium, they are made much more popular through Internet users. It is safe to state that such slangs are products of nonce formations which have the potentials of increasing the lexicon of the English Language.

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