The Use of Ict-Rooted Communication Codes and Slangs among Nigerian Students

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Abstract

Scholars categorize slang as a language of the deviatory type that ranks below a formal speech and contains words that are used in special ways. Since its advent in the 18th century with its negative connotation and use by persons of low and disreputable character, including thieves, it has since been undergoing a dramatic transformation over time. Lately, slangs have found their ways into formal language codes in Nigeria especially among the youth. This study is an exploratory investigation of the patterns and meanings of slangs used by students of tertiary institutions in the country. This is a step toward the codification of these language deviances so that they can be better understood as communication tools and be an example to be imitated by other climes. The study found that many of the slangs and other coded words being used by the respondents were ICT-inspired. The research presents analysis of meanings, usage patterns and nature of such slangs.

Keywords: Slangs; ICT; Communication codes; Students; Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Slang is language of a highly colloquial type considered as below the level of educated speech, and consisting either of new words or current words employed in some special sense. (Beale, 1999). The term ‘slang’ made its appearance in the 18th century and it has since been undergoing a dramatic transformation (Oni and Oke, 2010). Early origin of the use of slang had negative connotations. (Partridge, 1937) a lexicographer, asserts that the original use of the word was a verb for abuse. William (1992) supports this assertion, saying the word translated as an offensive language as it described words used by people of low and disreputable character, including thieves.

However, by the 19th century, the meaning of slang has changed dramatically. It now meant a sub-standard language of highly colloquial type consisting of new words or current words employed in some new, special sense. Though it still shares the attributes of gang-language associated with crime, violence, and secrecy, the use of slang has been very popular among adolescents just as ‘secret language’ for socialization (Odiboh et al., 2018a; Odiboh et al., 2018b; Oni and Oke, 2010; Rashid, 2017).

Despite the general notion that slangs are unpopular and offensive, they are still commonly in use especially among youths. Much slangs have found their ways into formal language codes in Nigeria. A typical example is the use of “Naija” for “Nigeria” which is widely used even by people of the high social class. Slangs in use on campuses of tertiary institutions today are both positive and negative. Examples of positives are Efico (a brilliant person), Acada (academic matters), Popsy (father), O-Y-O (On Your Own), I’m cool (I’m alright). Examples of negatives include: Cockroach (one who studies at night), Boob (a woman’s breast), fashy (forget) orobo (fat person), aristo babe. (prostitute), DBA (Don’t Bother Asking), TDB (Till Day Break, usually of sex), and flash (fake phone call).

1.1. Statement of the Problem and Significance of the Study

If slangs are moving from the pejorative or negative to the positive, there should be a way of formally integrating them into the mainstream language codes. Since language (formal and informal) are key instruments in
studying culture and norms, it is arguable then that studying slangs among students would help in understanding the culture and norms of students. A language code assigns letters or numbers as identifiers or classifiers for languages. These codes may be used to organize library collections or presentations of data, to choose the correct localizations and translations in computing, and as a shorthand designation for longer forms of language-name. On the other hand, a communications code is a system of rules to convert information—such as a letter, word, sound, image, or gesture—into another form or representation, sometimes shortened or secret, for communication through a communication channel or storage in a storage medium (Vladutescu and Smarandache, 2018).

Many slangs and communication codes have roots in the new media. Examples are: Yahooze (rich fraudulent person), Yahoo-Yahoo (Internet fraud), and delete (to kill). But the usage patterns have not been properly researched. This study is an exploratory investigation on the patterns and meanings of ICT-rooted communication codes and slangs used by students of tertiary institutions in Nigeria. This study is expedient because ICT-inspired slangs and communication codes have not been adequately studied in Nigeria. Moreover, there are not enough recent studies on slangs and going by the ephemeral nature of slangs, they may fizzle out without proper scientific analysis.

1.2. Objectives
The researcher set out to achieve the following:

- To find out the popular communication codes and slangs used by students of tertiary institutions (We used polytechnic students as respondents.)
- To investigate which communication codes and slangs have origins in the Information Communication Technology (ICT)
- To establish similarities and differences in communication codes and slangs being used in the different campuses under study
- To determine out the relationship between social background of students and the slangs they use?
- To determine out why students use communication codes and slangs?

1.3. Research Questions
Two principal questions and three subsidiary questions were asked in the investigation:

- What are the popular communication codes and slangs used by polytechnic students?
- What are the Information Communication Technology (ICT) related communication codes and slangs in the study locations?
- What are the similarities and differences in communication codes and slangs being used in the different campuses under study?
- What is the relationship between social background of students and those who frequently use ICT-related communication codes and slangs?
- Why do students use communication codes and slangs?

1.4. A Review of Related Literature
1.4.1. Language as Communication
According to McQuail (2005), language is a form of communication code. Although all languages are verbal, most, if not all languages have on-verbal components that aid this use of the language for communication purpose. He identifies five characteristics of language code: (a) Linear character or sequential (linear succession of symbols); (b) Systematic Character (lexical rules and grammar); (c) Systemic character (a system that keeps differences and contrasts); (d) Arbitrary character (does not exist a compulsory relation word and appointed object); and (e) Conventional character (implicit on convention of users). ICT codes and slangs share c, d and e characteristics.

1.4.2. ICT and Social Media Networks
The new media combine computer and telecommunication technologies which are used as channels of information dissemination to heterogeneous audiences without the constraints of time, space or distance. This view agrees with that of McQuail who had described the new media as disparate set of communication technologies that share certain features apart from being new, made possible by digitalization and being widely available for personal use as communication device. It is important that people should be educated on this fact as Abioye et al. (2017) maintained that education constitutes the core of human development. From McQuail’s point of view one can deduce that the new media are developments of the old media through digitalization and the merging together of both old and new media (Elmahdi and Shareef, 2016; McQuail, 2005).

1.4.3. The United Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)
The ground theory for this investigation is the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). According to UTAUT (Venkatesh and Speier, 2000), performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence were found to influence behavioral intention to use a technology, while behavioral intention and facilitating conditions determine technology use. Recently, (Venkatesh et al., 2013) proposed and tested UTAUT2, which incorporates new constructs (i.e., hedonic motivation, price value, and habit) that focus on new theoretical mechanisms in a consumer context. UTAUT2 explained 74 percent of the variance in consumers’ behavioral intention to use a technology and 52 percent of the variance in consumers’ technology use. The theoretical value of
the UTAUT theory in this study is in that it suggests undercurrents that explain why people use language codes and adopt slangs related to information technology.

1.4.4. Related Studies

Van (2009) has explored the application UTAUT to websites used by students in higher education. Both prescribed websites and user-selected sites were studied using a non-experimental research design and questionnaire-based measures. The results supported direct and moderated effects of technology-acceptance variables on acceptance outcomes in the research model, supporting UTAUT. The research model-based on UTAUT was more successful in explaining the acceptance of a prescribed library site than that of a prescribed virtual learning environment. User-selected sites were especially intrinsically motivating.

A study by Njoroge (2013) on the impact of social media among the youth on behaviour change in Kenya found out that the youths in that country use social media a lot and they spend more time on the computer and that 60.3% of the youth spend 2-5 hours a day on the computers. According to the findings, the most common activity they are usually doing is surfing the internet and a majority of 39.7% agreed to doing so. The study further found out that most of the youth were on social media with Facebook, Whatsapp and Twitter topping the list. Majority of the respondents used their mobile phones to access the internet especially on Whatsapp (Chahal et al., 2015; Omojola, 2012). The most common activity is chatting or texting on their mobile phones. Two other studies by (Chan and Fang, 2007) and Ajibade et al. (2018) corroborates this.

2. Methodology

Qualitative and quantitative designs was adopted for this study. (Creswell, 2002) recommends this composite approach for inquiring into a social issue when the researcher intends to build a complex, holistic picture, derived from a natural setting and reporting detailed views of informants. According to Garba (2018), “in the quantitative paradigm, scholars work with the assumption that there is a social reality out there which can be apprehended and interrogated in their bid to understand its nature and discover the cause and effect of relationships behind this reality… the belief is that the researcher can investigate an object without necessarily influencing or affecting it.” (p. 175).

Four polytechnics in South West Nigeria were purposively for the study. South West Nigeria was selected because that region is highly cosmopolitan and this cosmopolitanism is reflected in nearly every aspect of life including tertiary education. The Yoruba language and English are the most popular languages in the region. Polytechnics were selected to avoid the hackneyed selection of universities for scholarly investigation. The following four polytechnics emerged from a purposive selection based on the criteria of age, ICT use, student population and government-ownership:

- **The Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro.** It is federal government-owned with 10,450 students most of whom are between 19 and 40 years of age.
- **Yaba College of Technology, Lagos.** It is also federal government-owned with 13,234 students. This college is the first tertiary institution in Nigeria.
- **Lagos State Polytechnic, Ikorodu.** State government-owned; with 15,900 students.
- **Adegbenro ICT Polytechnic, Itori.** State-government owned with 3,000 students. The figures do include part-time students.

Using the quota sampling method, a total of 390 students were selected. Ilaro had 100 respondents, Yaba (Lagos) 120, Ikorodu 120 and Itori 50. Respondents in each institution cut across age groups, and the four levels (100, 200, 300 and 400). Copies of the questionnaire that captured all variables in the research questions were distributed with 100 per cent return rate. This rate could be achieved because research assistants waited and collected the questionnaire after each respondent had completed it.

The second data collection instrument used was the **focus group discussion (FGD)**. Four FGDs were conducted – one in each institution- across the study location. Seven discussions discussed the items which related to the research questions while the principal investigator (lead author) moderated the discussion. The seven persons were bona fide students of each institution and gender-balanced. Besides these, they had substantial knowledge of the themes of research. While the questionnaire was used to source data on the particular communication codes and slangs being used on the campuses, the FGDs focused on why and how they used the codes and slangs.

3. Findings

3.1. Bio-data of Respondents

Most of the respondents are very young as a little over 70 per cent were aged below 25 years. In In terms of the level of education, 55.1 per cent of the respondents were National Diploma students (100 and 200 levels) while the rest were pursuing Higher National Diploma certificates (300 and 400 levels). More than two-thirds of the respondents (67.9 per cent) were female.

3.2. Frequently-Used Slangs

A total of 145 slangs was listed by the respondents as most common slangs on their campuses; either used by the respondent or heard from other students. Among these, the researchers took out slangs with a minimum of 10 (ten) mentions in a week from the 390 respondents and generated 50 slangs as presented in Table 1. Sabalistica (You are telling a lie) and Fun mi je (Gist me) were least popular while the two commonest slangs are Yahooze (Internet
Table 1. Top-50 Most Frequently-Used Slangs among students

| Sn | Slang | Source/Root | Meaning | Frequency of Mention |
|----|-------|-------------|---------|---------------------|
| 1  | Japa  | Yoruba Language | Go away; also ‘be wise’ | 231 | 4.25 |
| 2  | Sabalistica | English Language | You are telling a lie | 10 | 0.18 |
| 3  | Cool  | English Language | Alright or Ok | 170 | 3.16 |
| 4  | Jayelo | Yoruba Language | Enjoy yourself | 15 | 0.27 |
| 5  | Oshaprapra | Pidgin | It’s new/fascinating | 103 | 1.91 |
| 6  | Shakushaku | Pidgin | Flirts/promiscuous persons | 41 | 0.76 |
| 7  | Well done sir | English Language | I know you are lying | 23 | 0.42 |
| 8  | Paraporo | Yoruba Language | Rich/Person of high status | 65 | 1.20 |
| 9  | O.T.  | English Language | Orientation | 120 | 2.23 |
| 10 | Ji-Ma-sun/Soji | Yoruba Language | Be alert/ be smart | 125 | 2.32 |
| 11 | Epo   | Yoruba Language | Girl in menstruation period | 73 | 1.35 |
| 12 | Dub   | English Language | Copying another’s work (illegally) | 226 | 4.70 |
| 13 | Chips | English Language | Pieces of paper containing answers smuggled into exam room | 97 | 1.80 |
| 14 | K-more | English Language | Drugs | 56 | 1.04 |
| 15 | Epa or Ref | Yoruba Language | Drugs (esp. rephynol) | 170 | 3.16 |
| 16 | Block | English Language | Talking to a lover outside restricted area | 23 | 0.42 |
| 17 | Yahooze | ICT | Internet fraud/fraudsters | 293 | 5.45 |
| 18 | Yahoo-plus | ICT | Internet fraud with cultism and vices such as kidnapping | 293 | 5.45 |
| 19 | Zobo | Pidgin | Lying; lie | 194 | 3.60 |
| 20 | Delete | ICT | To die | 68 | 1.26 |
| 21 | Aristo | English Language | Man friend, often married; also promiscuous lady | 184 | 3.42 |
| 22 | Bee-eff (bf) | ICT | Boyfriend | 181 | 3.36 |
| 23 | Starlite | English Language | Old or returning student | 53 | 0.98 |
| 24 | Jambite | English Language | New or fresh student | 53 | 0.98 |
| 25 | Beef (someone) | English Language | Annoy or taunt (someone) | 106 | 1.97 |
| 26 | Boo   | ICT | Boyfriend | 201 | 3.73 |
| 27 | Bae   | ICT | Girlfriend | 201 | 3.73 |
| 28 | Stab (lecture) | English Language | Deliberate absence | 63 | 1.17 |
| 29 | Legbegbe | Yoruba Language | Filfering/deceptive | 45 | 0.83 |
| 30 | 420   | ICT | Marijuana/Indian hemp | 63 | 1.17 |
| 31 | Enuwa | Yoruba Language | Boastful person | 61 | 1.13 |
| 32 | Big boys/big girls | English Language | Rich/comfortable students | 206 | 3.83 |
| 33 | Ganja | Pidgin | Indian hemp/marijuana | 93 | 1.73 |
| 34 | Flasher/flash | English Language | Person who makes fake phone call/fake phone call | 217 | 4.03 |
| 35 | Popsy/Momsy | English Language | Daddy/Mummy | 46 | 0.85 |
| 36 | Oldman/Oldwoman | English Language | Father/Mother | 48 | 0.89 |
| 37 | Affairs | English Language | Love relationship/dating | 73 | 1.35 |
| 38 | Ef-bee | ICT | Facebook | 86 | 1.60 |
| 39 | Chilanka | Pidgin | Girlfriend | 43 | 0.80 |
| 40 | Coded | ICT | Secret | 43 | 0.80 |
| 41 | Bucks | English Language | Money | 91 | 1.73 |
| 42 | Naija | Pidgin | Nigeria | 93 | 1.73 |
| 43 | Chemicals | English Language | Illicit drugs | 94 | 1.74 |
| 44 | Science Students | English Language | Illicit Drug users | 126 | 2.34 |
| 45 | Orobo | Pidgin | Fat person or thing | 194 | 3.60 |
| 46 | Oja | Yoruba Language | Illicit drugs | 83 | 1.48 |
| 47 | Nigga/Alaye | Yoruba Language | Gang members | 80 | 1.48 |
| 48 | Maga | ICT | Fraud | 83 | 1.48 |
| 49 | Fun mi je | Yoruba | Gist me | 10 | 0.18 |
| 50 | Expo | English Language | Leaked exam papers | 52 | 0.96 |
| **TOTAL** | | | | **5,375** | **100%** |
3.3. Sources of Slangs

Two of every five slangs used by the students were derived from the English Language. Table 2 shows further that slangs traceable to ICT and the Internet make up about one-third of total slang mentions. Yoruba and other local dialects account for the least sources.

Across campuses, Yaba College of Technology recorded the highest number of slangs sourced from the English Language (803) and this was followed by The Federal Polytechnic Ilaro (712), Lagos State Polytechnic (558) and ICT Polytechnic Itori (79). Both Federal Polytechnic, Ilaro and Lagos State Polytechnic however recorded more Yoruba Language-rooted slangs (328 and 311 respectively). The differences in use of ICT-rooted slangs were not remarkably different amongst Yaba, Lagos and Ilaro as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Sources of Slangs across campuses

| Sources of slangs               | Yaba Tech | Lagos Poly | Federal Poly Ilaro | ICT Polytechnic | Total |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------|-----------------|-------|
| Yoruba/local language(s)       | 200       | 311        | 328                | 79              | 918   |
| Pidgin                         | 306       | 259        | 108                | 88              | 761   |
| English Language               | 803       | 558        | 712                | 111             | 2,184 |
| ICT/Internet                   | 422       | 533        | 470                | 87              | 1,512 |
| Total                          | 1,731     | 1,661      | 1,618              | 365             | 5,375 |

3.4. Major Reason for Use of Slangs

This investigation shows that students in Nigerian Polytechnics use slangs for at least three major reasons: as part of the socialization process (that is, through subconscious interactive learning), to belong to peer groups and to communicate effectively. Other less dominant reasons include “fun”, “conscious imitation” and “other reasons” that the respondents could not explain. As presented in Table 3, over one-third of the students use slangs derived from culture. (n=138; 35.9%). Those who do not use slangs are seen as archaic. Ironically, more than a quarter of the students claim to use slangs in order to communicate effective (n=107; 27.4%). Slangs are often difficult to understand (except one is in the peer group or social frame of users. How then would many students claim it is to aid their effective communication? The answer to this may be found in the fact that a major purpose of using slangs generally is to hide intended meanings from other people who may be listening to the conversation. Thus, to communicate effectively without letting others understand, slangs and codes become essential. Examples include; japa (“go away” or “be smart”) and chips (“pieces of paper containing answers smuggled into examination halls”). Some of the slangs (e.g. “science students” (drug users), epo (menstruation), chemicals (illicit drugs), Maga (fraud) and “nigga”/“alaye” (gangsters) have hidden, often negative denotations.

Table 3. Major reason for use of Slangs

| Major Reason for using slangs     | Frequency | %   |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|-----|
| I was socialized into it          | 95        | 24.3|
| Peer culture/I want to belong     | 138       | 35.9|
| To communicate better/effectively | 107       | 27.4|
| I can’t say/I don’t know          | 50        | 12.0|
| Total                             | 390       | 100 |

3.5. The most Popular Slangs

Slangs tend to vary in popularity across campuses. While some are very popular in particular institutions, they may not be so popular in other campuses. The researchers sought to know the top-12 slangs across the four polytechnic campuses studied. As Table 4 shows, the most popular slangs in all the four study locations are Yahooze, Yahooze-Plus, Dub, Japa, Flasher/Flash, Boo, Bae, Orobo, Aristo, Bee-eff and Cool. It is noteworthy half of these slangs that cut across all campuses have roots in ICT (See Table 4). This suggests pervasive nature and increasing incursion of ICT in human activity.
The top-50 commonly-used communication codes by students in the study locations are presented in Table 6. More than 90 per cent of these codes are ICT or Internet-related. CYT (See You Tomorrow) and E123 (Easy as 123) are the least in the top-50 scale while UAW, TNX and LOL are on top of the pack. (Tables 6 and 7).

Expectedly, the codes are technical (have specific specialized meaning and difficult to interpret) –as codes are generally are. More than two-thirds of the codes recorded less than 100 mentions, suggesting that not many students were familiar with them yet. This could be attributed, perhaps, to the level of computer literacy by the students which is just above average. Although computer skills are not necessary to use these codes, since they were mostly derived from ICT, it should be expected that computer literacy and access should aid understanding and usage of the communication codes.

### Table 4. Most popular Slangs

| Sn | Slang        | Source/Root | Meaning                                                                 | Frequency of Mention | %  |
|----|--------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|----|
| 1  | Yahooze     | ICT         | Internet fraud/fraudsters                                               | 293                  | 5.45|
| 2  | Yahoo-plus  | ICT         | Internet fraud with cultism and vices such as kidnapping                | 293                  | 5.45|
| 3  | Dub         | English Language | Copying another’s work (illegally)                                 | 226                  | 4.70|
| 4  | Japa        | Yoruba Language | Go away; also ‘be wise’                                           | 231                  | 4.25|
| 5  | Flasher/flash| ICT         | Person who makes fake phone call/fake phone call                        | 217                  | 4.03|
| 6  | Big boys/big girls | English Language | Rich/comfortable students                                    | 206                  | 3.83|
| 7  | Boo         | ICT         | Boyfriend                                                              | 201                  | 3.73|
| 8  | Bae         | ICT         | Girlfriend                                                             | 201                  | 3.73|
| 9  | Orobo       | Pidgin      | Fat person or thing                                                    | 194                  | 3.60|
| 10 | Aristo      | English Language | Man friend, often married; also promiscuous lady                       | 184                  | 3.42|
| 11 | Bee-eff (bf)| ICT         | Boyfriend                                                              | 181                  | 3.36|
| 12 | Cool        | English Language | Alright or Ok                                                           | 170                  | 3.16|

### Table 6. The Top-50 Most Frequently-Used Communication Codes

| Sn | Communication codes | Source/Root | Meaning                                                                 | Frequency of Mention | Relative Percentage |
|----|---------------------|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| 1  | LMAO                | ICT         | Laugh My Ass Out                                                      | 17                   | 0.32               |
| 2  | LOL                 | ICT         | Laugh Out Loud/Lots of Laughs                                         | 303                  | 5.81               |
| 3  | Bf                  | ICT         | Boyfriend                                                             | 71                   | 1.36               |
| 4  | 9 (or PIR)          | ICT         | Parent watching/Parent in Room                                       | 42                   | 0.80               |
| 5  | 420                 | ICT         | Marijuana                                                             | 17                   | 0.32               |
| 6  | TMR                 | English Language | Tomorrow                                                             | 143                  | 2.74               |
| 7  | Ack                 | English Language | Acknowledge                                                         | 86                   | 1.64               |
| 8  | Btwn                | English Language | Between                                                              | 50                   | 0.95               |
| 9  | Bc                  | ICT         | Because                                                               | 122                  | 2.33               |
| 10 | EOD                 | ICT         | End of Discussion                                                     | 63                   | 1.20               |
| 11 | OYO                 | ICT         | On Your Own                                                           | 43                   | 0.82               |
| 12 | IJN                 | ICT         | In Jesus Name                                                         | 192                  | 3.68               |
| 13 | TDB                 | ICT         | Till Day Break                                                        | 63                   | 1.20               |
| 14 | TBC                 | ICT         | To Be Continued                                                       | 36                   | 0.69               |
| 15 | THX, TX, TNX        | ICT         | Thanks                                                                | 304                  | 5.83               |
| 16 | K (or KK)           | ICT         | Ok (or very Ok)                                                       | 352                  | 6.75               |
| 17 | MBD                 | ICT         | My Birthday                                                           | 49                   | 0.93               |
| 18 | BTT                 | ICT         | Back To The Topic                                                     | 43                   | 0.82               |
| 19 | HBD                 | ICT         | Happy Birth Day                                                       | 174                  | 3.33               |
| 20 | UAW                 | ICT         | You are welcome                                                       | 333                  | 6.38               |
| 21 | OT                  | ICT         | Off Topic                                                             | 43                   | 0.82               |
| 22 | FB                  | ICT         | Facebook                                                              | 165                  | 3.16               |
| 23 | OTP                 | ICT         | On the Phone                                                          | 24                   | 0.46               |
| 24 | SUB                 | ICT         | Subscription (phone data)                                             | 204                  | 3.91               |
| 25 | NC                  | ICT         | No Comment                                                            | 21                   | 0.40               |
| 26 | OMG                 | ICT         | Oh My God                                                             | 198                  | 3.79               |
| 27 | 419                 | Pidgin      | Fraud/Fraudulent                                                      | 211                  | 4.06               |
3.7. Most Popular Communication Codes
As stated earlier in this report, ICT-rooted slangs dominate the communication codes by students. Only three could be attributed to other sources – dominantly pidgin (Table 7). The reasons students use communication codes are: to save time, to save cost, to hide meanings from others and “unknown reasons”. Unlike use of slangs which were used mainly as a show of peer culture and socialization, communication codes were mainly deployed to reduce time spent sending text messages or constructing sentences online or through social media and to reduce the amount of space used thereby saving cost. A third reason major reason for using communication codes was, however, to “hide meanings from others” similar to why slangs are also used. It is worthy of note that the students represent many negative things via codes. Examples include: 9 (Parents watching), 420 (Marijuana/Indian hemp); 6x (sex), In comparison to slangs, communication codes used by the students generally do not change in terms of what they connote (ordinary meaning) and denote (understood meaning). In the case of slangs, the denotative meanings are often different from the connotative.

3.8. Focus Group Discussions
All these findings were corroborated by the Focus Group Discussions conducted across the four campuses. Formal and informal leaders who took part in the FGDs provided insights into why students use codes and slangs (Omojola, 2016; Omojola et al., 2018) The following excerpt by a peer group leader typically explains this: On the campus, you want to show you belong. You do as they do in Rome to be a Roman. We students like to do everything differently – that includes our language. More important is that we like to speak in codes and slangs so people will...
not get (understand) what we mean. Sometimes we can say it openly – for example how can someone say he or she is going to buy illicit drugs? Of course we use data (ICT) a lot …for phone, computer, social apps… and that explains why we use those ICT terms.

3.9. Other Findings

This investigation also reveals the following findings:

- There is no significant difference in the use of slangs and codes along gender, socio-economic class, religion and educational status factors.
- Most students do not have difficulty in interpreting the meaning of slangs and communication codes (compared to non-students)
- Most respondents started using communication codes frequently after their admission to the respective schools. This suggests that many of the slangs are actually “campus slangs”.

4. Conclusion

This study discovered at least 50 slangs and 50 communication codes used by students of Nigerian polytechnics. It further explains the origins of the codes and found that nearly all the communication codes were ICT-related while about a third of the slangs were ICT-related. The study thus proves that ICT has become very dominant in the communication habits of undergraduates.

Across campuses, there are no substantial differences in communication codes but slangs across campuses are more dissimilar. However, over three of dozens of slangs have same meanings across the campuses. The institutions in the cities tend to derive more of their slangs from the English Language, Yoruba and ICT in that order volume while those in sub-urban areas derived more of their slangs from Yoruba and local languages. This in some way support the assertion that indigenous communication is an essential element of socio-cultural tradition (Oyesomi et al., 2017) and it can be strategic (Oyero et al., 2018). While students use slangs as peer and socialization habits, they used communication codes more for cost management (time and money) reasons. Both slangs and codes were used effectively to manipulate denotative meanings of their communication (hide meanings from others).

There is no significant difference in the use of slangs and codes along gender, socio-economic class, religion and educational status factors.

5. Recommendations and Contributions to Knowledge

The study has contributed to communication and social linguistics scholarship in Nigeria in the following ways:

1. This study has provided evidence-based contribution to the debate as to whether slangs is good or bad way of communication.
2. It has provided primary data on patterns of ICT-related communication codes and slangs in tertiary institutional setting in Nigeria. Although some of the codes and slangs documented in this investigation cut across countries, many of them are home-grown (Nigerian) codes and slangs.
3. The study has provided a lexicon for students and varsity administrators in Nigeria in understanding how students communicate thereby potentially enhancing the efficacy of communication with students.
4. Since slang users deploy them partly as secret codes, this study is valuable in unlocking the language codes of students (for instance, parents and educational administrators can use this study to unlock information hidden by these students).
5. The study has unraveled the relevance of ICT in communication codes and slangs development thereby opening up further research in this area.

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