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## SLANG AND CATCHY TERMS IN IGALA HIP-HOP SONGS: A LINGUISTIC ANALYSIS

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### Abstract

*This study undertakes a linguistic analysis of slang and catchy terms employed in Igala Hip- Hop songs. To obtain needed data, the researchers interviewed the artists with the following traditional music names: ‘Jameni Music’ (Alh. Tijay Bala), ‘Ugworo Music’ (Alh. M.M. Danlami, Alias Ayofa) and ‘Christian Music’ (Evangelist Abigail Omonu). The corpus of the songs was recorded and transcribed from the albums of the music makers. Descriptive and interpretative methods were used in the analysis of data. The study is premised on Freud and Lacan’s Psychoanalysis theory which upholds that “human mind is a storehouse for desires, sexual instincts, fears, wounds, unresolved conflicts, and pain--- Man is faced with pleasure principles and reality principles. They believe that man is inherently a fun-seeking creature who indulges in just anything that gives him pleasure---“ These account for why human mind necessarily needs songs and music to allay the contents of the storehouse. The catchy terms are used to correct the unhealthy practices prevalent in the society. These are used to enthrone love and peace, respect for elders and constituted authorities, hard work and contentment, etc.; these are values that have since been eroded by modern games. It further revealed that Igala songs and music serve as antidote to pain as well as means of revitalizing Igala language and culture among upcoming generations.*

***Keywords:*** *Slang, Catchy Terms, Igala Hip-Hop Songs, Igala Culture and Transmission.*

### Introduction

It is believed that people from various ethnic groups portray their identities through different cultural outfits. Some important aspects of Igala language are the songs and music. These channels, uniquely identify the Igala kingdom (people) on the globe but the unfortunate situation is that the Igala youths have relegated these vital aspects of their culture to the background in exchange for western music. The bitter repercussion, therefore, is that, culturally, they have nothing in stock to bequeath to the next generation. This is a challenge facing the Igala as a people both at home and in Diaspora.The Igala songs transmit motives and intentions of elders with ease; they are strong weapons of conviction and are also used in shaping the characters of upcoming youths who shall take over the yoke of administration in future.

It is noteworthy that the music makers use slang and catchy terms to promote and sustain the acceptable norms and practices in Igala land. Slang is a type of popular language comprised of words and phrases of a vigorous, colourful, or facetious nature, which are invented or derived from uncommon use of the standard vocabulary. It is the special vocabulary of a certain class,

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group, profession, etc. the term means something interesting, puzzling, or fitful. Slang is a code used in an informal style of speech and it could be a single or group of words and sentences. Chen (2006) is of the opinion that slangs are part of a language that is usually informal and out of standard usage and may consist of newly coined words and phrases and of new or extended meanings attached to established terms. It is mostly used for “in-group” communication that debars understanding by other people in the same speech community. Slangs may be sub-standard but are widely used by interest groups.

The Igala artists use these linguistic elements (Slang and catchy terms) to correct unhealthy practices prevalent particularly among youths. These ethical problems include political thuggery, youth unrest, corruption, laziness, to mention a few.These linguistic elements are tools for revitalization of Igala culture and language as well as antidote to pain, particularly at pain-related ceremonies such as burials and funerals. The slang and catchy terms have didactic tone (intended to teach people moral lessons).

### The Concept of Hip-hop

Hip-hop as a genre of music, has had a significant impact on society, but more so, the Black community. Hip-hop is often viewed as more than music – it is a culture, or a culture definer. For close to three decades that this type of music has been in existence, it has, without a doubt, uplifted certain communities, provided a voice to a group of artists attempting to deliver a message, and spoken up for generations.

However, the critics argue that this type of music conveys messages that are aggressive. Additionally, they maintain that the music is violent in nature and appears to promote social insurgence. All these criticisms, nonetheless, do not negate the fact that hip-hop has created a strong platform for rappers and MCs to express their opinions, most of which are often issues that adversely affect society. The outlet is crucial for uplifting minority communities, especially those that appear marginalized. This genre of music does not only provide a platform for people to express their views but also act as a source of entertain, enhancing identities, artistic fulfillment, and sense of relating (Frank Kouadio, 2017).

### The Origin and Development of Hip-Hop

Hip-hop originally began as a cultural movement and not music. The movement grew to noticeable heights in the 1980s and 1990s through hip-hop as a kind of music (Tate & Light, 2017). The music was used by members of the movement to express their views and entertain their fans. The music became the movement’s major influential tool for expressing their views and exciting their audience.

As a culture complex, hip-hop comprises four main elements: deejaying, rapping, B-boying, and graffiti painting. Deejaying is about turn-tabling (Tate and Light, 2017). B-boying comprises hip-hop dance, attitude, style, and virile body language. Rapping involves mostly uttering of rhyming words in a certain style and Mcing (Hess, 2009). Graffiti painting entails writing and graffiti. Painting entails writing and graffing. Of the four components of hip-hop, only graffiti painting failed to create a long-lasting effect. The other three, dancing, deejaying, rapping has had an impact that appears to last forever (Tate & Light, 2017).

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### Hip-Hop Reshaping Cultural Norms and Civil Rights

The Civil Right Movement did a great job in fighting for the rights of African Americans. Unfortunately, when the movement ceased to being in operation, members of this community were left in a quagmire on how to continue fighting for their rights (Romano, 2016).

Additionally, African Americans did not know how far they could push political dissent and determine the more subtle forms of discrimination and racism (Rabaka, 2011). They needed a platform they could use to express their views and fight for their rights as was the case with the Civil Rights Movement. Hip-hop created that platform African – Americans needed to continue fighting for their rights as they condemn racism and discrimination. Tupac and other hip-hop artists have been able to promote black rights through their music (Romano, 2016).

### Hip-Hop Creating Platform for Expression as a Source of Entertainment and Sense of Relating

Besides being used to provide platform for expression and to promote cultural norms, hip-hop music and hip-hop text are a great source of entertainment (Hawkins, 2015). There are so many people who listen to these songs for excitement, without really caring to get the message they are trying to pass across. Outside the United States, where hip-hop is mostly used to fight for rights, the genre is mostly used for entertainment. A good number of people dance to hip- hop tunes and flood in clubs where these songs are played.

In the same vein, the Igala hip-hop songs/music as a genre, presented by various artistes perform different functions in the lives of individuals and the society. They serve as a corrective measure to both the young and the old in the communities. The artistes use the music in some circumstances to warn the society about any impending danger that may affect even the yet unborn children.

Additionally, the Igala hip-hop songs/music serve as psychological anti-dote to pain, especially when there are pain-related events such as burial/ funeral of beloved ones when the loose of rare opportunities are being marked, etc. Besides, they serve as a platform for entertainment and pleasure for the mourners.

The hip-hop songs and music by Tijay Bala and his “Jameni” music group endeavoured to reshape the Igala cultural norms and the rights of the people, especially the vulnerable in the society. He uses his song titled:

Igareji Anyigba – e (2x) Ọnẹkẹlẹ ad’Ọjọmimimi Onobulẹ ad’Ọjọmimimi Abokẹlẹ ewo yi ẹwñ lẹ - ooo? Abobulẹ ewo yi ẹwñ lẹ - ooo?

He uses this music/song to indict men and women in Anyigba town where all manner of vices are committed in broad day light. Young women that come to the market do not leave for their houses without being raped; Young men also gang up to rob passers-by even in the day time; and many other atrocities been carried out in the society. Tijay Bala directly indicts parents by saying:

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“Ẹwñ k’aluchẹ gbẹ owñ ya ja”.

This literally means that “what a farmer sows are what he reaps”. The indictment on the parents is indicative of the fact that young men perpetrating all sorts of crimes were not properly brought up/trained. This shows that “if you train a child the way he should go, when he grows up, he will not depart from it” (Proverb 22:6).

On a similar note, M.M. Danlami uses some Igala slang and catchy terms to fore-warn people with criminal tendency to desist from such misbehaviour if not, ----. Hence, he alerts the society with the term “Ọjọmuñwa”.

“Ọjọmuñwa” A clarion call on the perpetrators of evil to desist henceforth.

“Ugbaikolo abọla bọbọlọ”. A fig tree that does not produce flower but produces “Oli kima buno kiaro t’ulaka” fruits.

“Adagba t’okwule” “Adagba” (elephant cannot be caught with trap).

The artist uses these slang and catchy terms rendered in Igala to show the quality of the new paramount traditional ruler that has been newly enthroned. The above slang and catchy terms used to shower encomiums on the paramount ruler also serve as caution to those who may be tempted to indulge in criminal activities.

Evangelist Abigail Omonu, in her Christian music, ushered in some slang and catchy terms from the Biblical perspective:

Ọya alifia” A precious wife.

“Ef’ọla gworinyọ” To purify oneself from contamination. “Ra b’adure tẹ” Run or flee from sin.

“Ef’ọla daji”. Involvement in self-defilement. On the whole, this is an injunction to stare clear of wrongdoing.

The thrust of this paper is to reinstate and sustain the use of Igala linguistic elements among the upcoming generations. The specific objectives include.

1. To identify the significance of slang and catchy terms in promoting Igala acceptable norms and practices.
2. To examine the use of Igala linguistic elements as instrumentality to correct the ethical problems that are prevalent in the society especially among the youths.
3. To identify the significance of Igala hip-hop songs and music as an antidote to pain in given situations.

### Psychoanalysis Theory

Freud and Lacan (in Shija, 2021) developed psychoanalysis theory which upholds that “the unconscious process of the human mind was a storehouse for desires, sexual instincts, fears, wounds, unresolved conflicts, and pains that were considered unacceptable to the conscious mind and the civilized society. These materials are repressed in the unconscious in spite of their persistent strive to find expression in the open. For that reason, every individual is engaged in one psychological issue or the other in their daily lives--- They believe that there are two fundamental ideas at work when individuals relate to the society, they live in. These

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are the pleasure principles versus the reality principles. They also believe that man is inherently a fun-seeking creature who indulges in just anything that gives him pleasure---”.

The songs and music rendered by music makers in Igala vary from one occasion to another. For instance, when there are pain-related ceremonies such as burial funeral, when a huge loose of opportunities are being marked, when there are attempts to permanently resolve communal clash/war, etc., relevant songs and music that serve as anti-dote to pain are rendered to pacify the mourners. Events such as death “injures” the heart thereby creating psychological wounds which takes time to heal. These media (Songs and music) help the victims to alloy the repressed fear of the vacuum created by the departed soul, besides, it creates fun or pleasure for the mourners.

### Method

The hip-hop songs selected are from the three old Igala Divisional Headquarters namely Idah, Dekina and Ankpa, to ensure equity, that is, no part of Igala land is left out. The choice of these environs was also meant to ensure variety of sources of wisdom in Igala kingdom that is deployed in the songs and music.

The researchers adopted a qualitative research method. The manner of data collection was naturalistic using controlled observation and the method of analysis employed for the work is interpretative.

### Result

**Igala Hip-Hop Songs: An Overview**

Igala songs and music types produced by music makers are listed according to the native names of those songs. They include: ‘Ugworo’, ‘Agale’, ‘Olele’, ‘Ichabada’, ‘Christian music’, ‘Jameni music’ and ‘Agwom’. The underlisted Igala artistes have their specialties in the following music types:

### Group A Artiste Specialty

Alh. Tijay Bala  “Jameni” Music

### Group B Artistes



Alh. M.M. Danlami (Alias Ayofa) Alh. Yahaya Ogbogodo

Ogbo “Small boy” Alh. Shehu Ebiloma Abdul Ayoki Omeji Alhassan Ato

Alh. Tanimu Saidu Yahaya Usman Umawonu

“Ugworo” Music

**Group C Artistes** Alh. Paul Odi Ikani Ajabiti

“Agale” Music

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Abu Aja

### Group D Artistes

Evang. Abigail Omonu Christian Music Egwuye Audu

### Group E Artistes

Hajiya Ike “Olele & Ichabada” Music

#### TRACK 1: ‘IGAREJI ANYIGBA’ - BY TIJAY BALA (JAMENI MUSIC)

Igareji Anyigba - ee Igareji Anyigba - ee Ọnẹkẹlẹ ad’Ọjọmimimi Onobulẹ ad’Ọjọmimimi Abokẹlẹ ewo-I ẹñw lẹ - o? Abobulẹ ewo-I ẹñw lẹ - o?

Ẹñw k’aluche gbẹ owñ ya ja

#### TRACK 2: ỌLA IWỌ BY TIJAY BALA (JAMENI MUSIC)

Eleelele Ọla iwọ – ooo Elelelelele le Ọla iwọ – ooo Eleele Ọla iwọ – ooo Elelelelelele Ọla iwọ – ooo

Ẹgba kuna chọga, unọkọ m’ogwu no Ubaba wẹ achọga inọkọ m’ogwu no Iye wẹ achọga inọkọ m’ogwu no Eleelele Ọla iwọ – ooo

Elelelelelele Ọla iwọ – ooo Abileku ma chanẹ echubi – ooo

Ali konẹ che owñ madọkọma onẹ yo.

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The slang and catchy terms intrack 1 and track 2 of the song aboveinclude:

### Igala version English meaning Situation in use Denotation/Connotatio

**n**

Ọjọmimimi My God, My God, My God

Igareji Anyigba – ee The generality of the

public in Anyigba ‘garage’.

“Ọjọmimimi is used when almost everybody is affected by ugly situation or criminal activities that nobody has solution to.

This is a clarion call on all comers to the car park in Anyigba to stop evil practices.

This denotes a helpless situation, no human rescue in sight on a continuous note.

‘Igareji Anyigba – ee’ indicates notoriety, a situation whereby the speaker’s former warning or advice had not been hidded concerning incessant disputes.

Ẹñw lẹ - o? What is it again? It is a question usually asked

when misdeeds of various degrees are committed unabated.

It is a hysterical question to group of people that means ‘are you not tired of this perpetual wrongdoing?’

Ẹñw k’aluche gbẹ owñ ya ja

Literally it means what a farmer sowed is what he would reap.

When the truth needs to be said about negligence of children’s misbehavior. When no decisive action is taken to curb children’s misbehavior at tender age.

When recourse should be made to a repercussion of a previous warning given on an issue that relates to training of children.

Eleelele Literally means an issue that pains the speaker to heart.

It is a reoccurrence of bad events that nobody had dared to address - no solution in sight.

An indication that both political and traditional leaders failed to do anything to remedy the situation.

Baba wẹ achọga inọkọ m’ogwu no

Abileku yi ma chanẹ echubi – ooo

Ali konẹ che owñ madọkọma onẹ yo.

When your father was sick, he had no money to buy needed drugs. Now that he is dead, they (children) have started to display affluence.

It is the good behaviour showed that makes one a responsible

It is usually used when the victim is dead.

It is used when the children of the deceased start to organize flamboyant (characterized by extravagance) burial ceremonies. This situation is called “Ẹchubi” in Igala.

This is used when irresponsible attitude is exhibited by adult(s).

This denotes belated action.

A not needed actions.

To castigate irresponsible attitude.

individual.

The music artist (Tijay Bala) points out here an inherent defect in Igala traditional practice which had led to notable imperfection concerning how children of the elderly people handle their aging parents when they (parents) are sick.

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The artist decries the dearth of adequate medical attention (including proper feeding) for the aged people while they are alive; but after they die, money comes out of their ‘hide-outs’ to organise extravagant (so called befitting burial) funeral ceremonies to give recognition to the ‘chief mourners’.

### The Word of the Ugworo Music by M.M. Danlami

#### TRACK 1: ‘GAAABAIDU’.

Ali Ọm’ọbaje leku Ọjọmuwña

Idakwo Ọm’ọbaje ki m’ọfẹ du Ọjọmuwña

Idakwo ch’ugbaikolo Ọjọmuwña

Ugbaikolo abọla bọbọlọ Ọjọmuwña

Oli kima buno kiaro t’ulaka Ọjọmuwña

At’Ọma if’ewo kpa ñwumẹ jẹ Ọjọmuwña

Ẹf’ọma wñ li ẹfa añwọ wñ tẹwñ ki gugu Ọjọmuwña

Idakwo ch’adagba Ọjọmuwña Adagba t’okwu le Ọjọmuwña

Okwu neke amulẹ? Ọjọmuwña.

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The slang and catchy terms in track 1of the song aboveinclude:

### Igala version English meaning Situation in use Denotation/Connotation

Ali Ọm’ọbaje leku Ali the son of Ọbaje died. At the instance of tracing the

history of rulership in the land.

It is an indirect question “who takes over the throne?”.

Ọjọmuwña The day has come or has broken.

The term ‘Ọjọmuwña’ does not merely declare the ‘brake of day’. It is a declaration to some persons that the ‘unexpected has happened’.

‘Ọjọmuwña’ signifies that a no-nonsense tolerating king has come to stay. Therefore, where could be the possible ‘hide-out’ of evil doers in the land?

Idakwo Ọm’ọbaje ki m’ọfẹ du

‘Idakwo ch’ugbaikolo’ ‘Oli kima buno kiaro t’ulaka’.

‘At’Ọma if’ewo kpa ñwumẹ jẹ, ẹf’ọma wñ li ẹf’añwọ wñ tẹwñ ki gugu

‘Idakwo ch’adagba’ Adagba t’okwu le okwu neke amulẹ?’

Idakwo the son of Ọbaje should take-over the throne.

Idakwo is like a fig tree. A tree that does not bud but produces fruits when it wishes to do so.

If a father of a son has killed a goat for you to eat, when you see his son, spread the goatskin for him (the son) to sit on.

Idakwo is like ‘adagba’ (Elephant) certainly, elephant is more than a trap, so the trap cannot catch it (the biggest land animal).

When there is a suggestion about ‘who next’ is the rightful person to take-over the vacant throne?

When unexpected notable performance is associated with a person ‘Ugbaikolo’ is a type of fruit plant that does not bud before it produces fruits. It does not follow the natural budding system which usually precedes fruiting.

When it becomes pertinent to give honour to whom honour is due or to pay homage.

When there are contenders for a position. When certain individuals want to show supremacy in a society; especially among political or traditional leaders.

It is a suggestion that Idakwo should be chosen for the throne.

This denotes possession of unequal prowell for rulership that Idakwo is assumed to have.

It portrays the necessity to pay homage at designated times.

This denotes that one among the several contenders has been identified as superior or most powerful.

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### Ọya Alifiya by Evangelist Abigail Ọmonu (Christian Music)

Analysis of slang and catchy terms in Igala.

### Igala version

**English meaning Situation in use Denotation/ Connotation**

‘Alifiya’ ‘Ọya alifiya’

‘Ef’ọla gworinyọ’

Precious Precious wife

This means to purify oneself from contamination or defilement.

The term ‘alifiya’ means very precious. It also means ‘invaluable’. It is used when a character or an object is said to be of a value beyond estimation. Example, in Christendom, Christians are invaluable in the sight of God; hence, Christ talked about a shepherd that had to leave ninety-nine sheep on the field to go after just one that was lost (Matthew 18:12).

When emphasis is laid on sanctity of a person or thing.

When reference is made to purity in character.

Sanctification is a requirement for entry into heaven.

‘Ra b’adure tẹ’ It means run or flee from

sin.

‘Ef’ọla daji’ This means involvement

in self-defilement. To engage oneself in act of sinning.

‘Ra b’adure tẹ’ is an injunction to people in the Christian faith to abstain/ flee from sin.

It is used when a person is being cautioned against wrongdoing.

Do not attempt to participate in any act of sinning.

Do not attempt to participate in any act of sinning.

The term ‘alifiya’ used by this Christian artist signifies ‘invaluable’. If Christians realize how God values them, they would not touch ‘carcass’ (meaning, they will not indulge in act of sinning). In the same vein, ‘ef’ọla gworinyọ’ does not literally mean cleaning of one’s body. On the whole, this slang means being diligent to stare clear of wrong doing. It is also some advice to listeners to develop strong hatred for sin.

### Discussion

Igala songs and music serve various purposes. The term ‘purpose’ in this context means the use of songs in an intended manner. Igala culture deployed in songs could inspire, educate, and entertain people. Others serve as moral pathfinder, as a medium to recall previous relevant events, as well as to warn about impending danger. Besides, others use songs and music to shower encomiums on great achievers, legends and philanthropists. Songs are also used to ridicule any known vices or moral bankruptcy identified in society.

It is pertinent to remember that beyond the coded message spelt out in the semantic structure of any language, there are implied meanings enshrouded in the immediate context of situation and the socio-cultural background of the message. The slang and catchy terms in Igala songs embedded implied meanings which may elude the youths. They are some Igala hip-hop songs that are therapeutic (having healing qualities). They are used as an anti-dote to pain. When pain-related ceremonies such as burial funerals or a huge loss of opportunities in life are being

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observed by kinsmen, traditional songs are used to cheer up chief mourners/celebrants. In the same vein, when events that call for joy like wedding, naming ceremonies, graduation from schools or training grounds, anniversaries of any sort, etc, are being marked by celebrants, Igala songs and music are rendered as a booster to such existing joyous moments. They are as well used to institute monuments to recall when remarkable events were celebrated. For instance, an album’s title track ‘Ọjọmuwña’ by M.M. Danlami alias ‘Ayofa’ from Ankpa, KogiState, is a monument depicting the time and season a paramount chief in Igala, the Attah of Igala was coronated (installed).

### Conclusion

The analysis of slang and catchy terms should take the youths to the memory lane to necessarily use their language and that duty lies on Igala parents to sustain the zeal to bequeath the linguistic peculiarities in their language to their children. Igala songs transmit the motives or intentions of the elders easily to the youths. Songs and music are used by the artistes to promote and sustain the acceptable norms and practices in Igala land. They are also ideal channels to shape the characters of upcoming generations who shall take over the yoke of administration in future. These artistes use these linguistic elements (slang and catchy terms) to correct unhealthy practices that are prevalent among youths and as tools for revitalizations of Igala culture and language.

### Recommendations

1. The use of slang and catchy terms should be encouraged to enable the youths in Igala land to use their mother tongue.
2. Students should be able to read meanings from slangs used in songs and music.

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