The Language of Sex and HIV/AIDS among University Students in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper unravels the lexicon and expressions about sex and HIV/AIDS used by university students in Kenya. It argues that in order to effectively run anti-HIV/AIDS campaigns, there is need to use the lexicon and expressions that the students employ in their discourse on the subject. However, that language must first be identified. Based on data that were collected from university students, the paper singles out and discusses the evolution, sustenance and spread of the special lexicon and expressions used by the university students in Kenya.

1. Introduction and review of literature

This paper examines the type of language and linguistic expressions that the Kenyan youth use when talking about sex, the HIV virus and the AIDS pandemic. According to NACC (2001), sex-lovers aged between 15 and 49 are at a high risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. In addition, those in the 14 to 19 age bracket spread the virus among each other more than any other age-group (Kamaara 2005: xiv-xv) while 75% of HIV/AIDS positive people are between 15 to 45 years of age. The AIDS cases are rampant in the 25 - 29 age-bracket for women and 30 – 34 age-group for men. This article considers people aged between 14 and 35 years to be youths.

For instance, studies have been conducted in Kenya to find out about the youth's awareness about sex and AIDS. Kamaara's (2004) work for example discusses the challenge for the Christian church to involve the youth in HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. However, the issue of which language variety is appropriate for communicating the message was outside her scope. Momanyi (2004) shows that the disease is widespread in Kenyan urban centres where many unemployed people live in slums and indulge in

unsafe sex. As Sewe (2004) points out, the unsafe sex especially in marriage is due to the patriarchal Kenyan society where women have no say over the use of contraceptives even when they are fully aware that their spouses are unfaithful. Indeed it is taboo to negotiate safe sex both among spouses and unmarried partners (Mareri 2004). Although she studied a university community that is presumed liberal, Mareri found that women usually do not take a lead in talking about safe sex and the use of protection with their partners because it is "uncultural" and they fear losing their male partners who might suspect them of infidelity. The latter observation is replicated in another study in South Africa where female university students appeared to be obligated to trust their partners without question (Narismulu 2004: 466 – 7). They argued that in order "to show your boyfriend that you are not cheating or interested in someone else you will let him have sex with you without a condom" (Narismulu 2004: 467).

An important aspect that features in several studies is the language used in the discourse of HIV/AIDS. For instance, without overtly saying so, Momanyi (2004) used the imagery of a "bug" to describe the pandemic in Kenya. She called it a "deadly bug" that is prominent in urban centres in Kenya. Other imageries used to describe either the virus or the campaign include "torturer", "war", "fight", "struggle" etc. (Horne 2004, Mawadza 2004, Reddy 2004). I am not aware of studies that have focused explicitly on the lexicon of sex and HIV/AIDS in Kenya. However, such studies exist on Malawi (Moto 2004), South Africa (Horne 2004, Narismulu 2004) and Zimbabwe (Reddy 2004). Apart from Narismulu who studied the language of sex among university students, the others dealt with the youth in general. It is the contention of the present study that the youth need to be mainstreamed in the fight against the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In order to effectively do so, it is important to observe that throughout the world, young people have a unique language that they use when talking among peers. In Kenya that language can be Sheng[1] or Engsh[2] (Abdulaziz & Osinde

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[1] Sheng is a grammatically unstable social code that sounds like Kiswahili (Ngesa 2002) but has a distinct and also unstable vocabulary. It is widely spoken among the urban and a few rural youngsters in Kenya (Ogechi 2002: 4). Below is an example of Sheng:

Kithora   *ma-doo*   *z-a*   *mathee*
to steal   CL6-dough   CL10-ASS   mother
'to steal my mother's money' (Abdulaziz & Osinde 1997: 56)

1997, Mazrui 1995, Ogechi 2004, Kiessling & Mous 2001), or Luyaaye in Uganda (Naluwooza 1995). It behooves all players in the anti-HIV/AIDS struggle to unravel the youth language and use it in their campaigns among the youth.

University is the pinnacle of education and it is presumed that those studying there have the knowledge on how to protect themselves against AIDS. Ironically, it has been reported that at present university students fail to protect themselves and are as affected by HIV/AIDS as any other population group (East African Standard, Thursday, August 4, 2005). A special report in the weekly Wednesday pull-out of the *The Standard August 4, 2005,* cited the Kenyatta University's Family Welfare Counselling Centre thus: "Two HIV/AIDS testing days have been held in the past year. The outcome was alarming. We identified many HIV positive cases. We are helping those infected to live positively". It is safe to argue that a similar trend could be observed in other Kenyan universities since the students engage in similar lifestyles and also have partners across universities. This prompts several questions: Do university students talk about sex and HIV/AIDS? If so, do they use a special type of language? If yes, what are the expressions and how are they coined, sustained and spread?

This paper attempts to answer these questions based on data obtained from university students. The article is divided into five sections. Section 2 sketches the theoretical and conceptual framework on which the paper is anchored. The informants and the methodology are discussed in section 3. The data is classified in section 4 while an analysis of the processes of formation, development and spread is done in section 5. Section 6 offers the conclusion.

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[2] Abdulaziz & Osinde (1997: 49) argue that Engsh has English as the dominant donor language, which provides most of the grammatical framework within which words from other languages are blended. I relies heavily on English for both its vocabulary and grammar:

> Let's do a choma dozz at KU as we swallow a small one!
> 'Let us raost meat at Kenyatta as we have a few drinks.'

Theoretical framework

The functional theory of language by Halliday (1973) and subsequent studies by others (i.e. Reagan 1992, Jwan 1997, Jwan & Ogechi 2004, Moto 2004), form the theoretical framework for this study. In addition, the concept of lexicalisation that was proposed by Lipka (1990) and refined through later works such as Waithira (2001) and Ogechi (2004) was used.

Four of several functions of the language elaborated in the functional theory of language are relevant to the present study:

(a) Informative function. According to this function, language provides information of different types to a reader or listener. In the context of the present article, this function is important in classifying and analysing expressions about the status of somebody with the HIV/AIDSs virus, warning and demand that people take care etc. Thus the classification of lexemes and expressions that explain a person's health status and warn against HIV/AIDS are based on this function:

> (1) *Ukimwi huua[3]* ('AIDS kills').

(b) Language is descriptive or imperative. This function issues commands or orders. As Reagan (1992: 37) asserts, this function is "sometimes called the imperative function of language because it often involves the use of the imperative form of the verb". Subsequently, lexemes and warnings that are issued during the discourse of sex and HIV/AIDS are explainable under this function:

> (2) *Chukua* **kontrol** *ya maisha yako* ('Take charge of your life').

(c) Emotive function. Here, language is used to express feelings and emotions such as anger, love, likes and dislikes etc. This function will inform lexemes that label sex generally, sex with who etc.

(d) Evaluative function. This usually serves judgmental and ceremonial functions. This function will inform the various statuses of a person as either infected or perceived to be infected with HIV/AIDS:

> (3) *Ana mdudu.* ('S/he has a worm')

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[3] For all examples in this paper, Kiswahili is presented in *italics,* Sheng is **bold italics,** English is underlined and any other language is in **bold.**

(4) *Ni mgonjwa sana.* ('S/he is very sick')

Although these language functions inform about the classification of the various data I collected, they fail to explain how meaning is embedded in the lexemes and language expressions of sex and HIV/AIDS. That is, based on the tenets of the language functions theory, it is difficult to explain how some words and expressions have assumed new meaning, how they are sustained and spread. This shortfall is made up for through the concept of lexicalisation (Lipka 1990). It is important to note that there is no single definition of the term (Lipka 1990:95). Thus linguists do not use the term in the same way. Hence if not clearly explained, some readers might not distinguish between lexicalisation and lexification.

Trask[4] identifies two senses of lexicalisation. One, lexicalisation involves creating a word to express some meaning. Silva[5] concurs that lexicalisation is the process through which concepts are put into words in a given language. In this case, Trask and Silva seem to be subscribing to Saussure's (1916) dichotomy of 'signifie' and 'signifiant'. In the dichotomy, 'signifiant' is a concept, idea or thing while 'signifie' is a sound of language representing that idea or thing. Lexicalisation occurs when humans either deliberately or effortlessly assign sounds of language to express phenomena. Second, Trask argues that in historical linguistics, the term 'lexicalisation' refers to a process where a sequence of words is reduced to a single-word. In this case, lexicalisation refers to a process of diachronic change in which a notion that had previously been expressed by more than one word is now represented by a single word. Lipka summarises:

> …..I would like to define lexicalisation as the phenomenon that a complex lexeme once coined tends to become a single complete lexical unit, a simple lexeme. Through this process it loses the character of a syntagma to a greater or lesser degree. (cf. Lipka 1981b:120). In my definition an essential condition and a prerequisite for this gradual diachronic process is the fact that a particular complex lexeme is used frequently. (Lipka 1990: 95)

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[4] (http: www.linguist.org/~ask-ling/archive-1997.10/msg01859.html. 14.11.03)

[5] (http: www.linguist.org/~ask-ling/archive-1997.10/msg01859.html. 14.11.03)

In this paper, lexicalisation assists to show the source of a word, embedding of sense, sustenance and the spread of the same.

The paper distinguishes between lexicalisation and lexification. While lexicalisation deals with encoding of meaning to words, lexification refers to the source and/or processes of creating the words. For instance, two languages lexify (5):

(5) *-pata* **doo poa**

    get money cool   ('earn good money')

The source of *pata* and *poa* is Kiswahili. While *-pata* translates to 'get' in Kiswahili, it means 'earn' in Sheng. *Doo*, is sourced from English <u>dough</u> whose informal meaning is money. Sheng takes on this informal meaning. Finally, **poa** refers to cool in Kiswahili but lexicalisation in Sheng changes its sense to <u>good</u>. This signals semantic borrowing from English where <u>cool</u> informally means impressive or when used with an amount of money, <u>cool</u> emphasises how large the money is. So the Sheng phrase *-pata* **doo poa** ('earn good money') has undergone both the lexification and lexicalisation processes.

In the present study, lexicalisation and lexification are adapted according to the following procedure. A word or expression is presented and its lexifier(s) is(are) identified. I also explain the manipulative procedures it undergoes including how its meaning is encoded. Finally, where applicable, I explain the procedure of sustaining and spreading the word or expression.

2. Informants and methodology

The data were collected from 42 undergraduate students of Kiswahili at Moi University, Kenya. My informants were second year BA Kiswahili majors and some third year BED students who were registered in my *Sociolinguistics in Kiswahili* class. The informants were told that the study sought to find out if there exist any unique expressions used to talk about sex and the HIV/AIDS virus among the university students. This was done after teaching about the youth codes in Africa including Sheng in Kenya in the *Sociolinguistics in Kiswahili* course to third years. The second year BA students (N=6) had been introduced to the concept of youth codes in the

course *Introduction to Language and Linguistics* that is usually taught in the first year of study.

All the informants were requested to provide background information on their sex, age, and to state if they use street language and if they talk about sex and the HIV/AIDS virus at all. They were asked to write down this information and submit it to their respective class spokespersons who could in turn hand it over after a day to the researcher.

46% (N = 19) of the informants were males while 54% (N = 22) were females. 88% (N=36) of the sample were aged between 20 and 25, 9% (N=4) were between 26 and 30 while 2% (N=1) was over 30 years old. 83% (N=34) of the respondents agreed that they used street language while 17% (N=7) said that they do not use such language. In addition, 85% (N=35) of the informants talked about the AIDS pandemic but 15% (N=6) claimed that they never discussed AIDS.

3. Data analysis

A total of 98 words and expressions were obtained. The informants explained that the words are used in general daily talk or during gossip. The data comprised unique words and expressions. To begin with, although most morphemes, either wholly or partially, appeared to have a Kiswahili surface form, others were sourced from English, other Kenyan languages, i.e. Gikuyu and Dholuo while others were coined. Secondly, it appeared that even when words were sourced from a language such as Kiswahili, their sense in the source language was not retained in the youth code.

Further analysis revealed that the data could be classified into nine broad categories: sex organs, erection, sex in general, sex partner, homosexuality, anti-HIV/AIDS protection, HIV/AIDS viruses, status of a person with the virus and anti-HIV/AIDS warnings.

3.1 Sex organs

These organs refer to the male and female genitals and the areas surrounding them:

(6)   **Male organs**   **Female organs**
             Joonii > English (?)   *Kitabu* > Kiswahili
             <u>Pen</u> > English ('pen')   <u>Book</u> > English ('book')
             Kalamu > Kiswahili (‚pen')   **Manyake** > coined ('buttocks')
             Nyundo > Kiswahili ('hammer')   **Madhudha>**Kikuyu ('buttocks')

It appears that the sex organs are associated with tools of learning. One of
the learning activities involved is writing. In the youth language and in the
context of sex, writing is likened with sex whereby a pen (male sex organ) is
used to write on a book (female sex organ). In addition, a woman's private
parts that arouse sex feelings are also focused on buttocks. Ogechi (2004)
claims that the use of **manyake, madhudha, rasa** ('buttocks') by the youth
respresents the perception of a woman's beauty by some Africans – a
woman with big buttocks is deemed beautiful.

3.2 Erection

The erection of the male genital is referred to through the use of the
infinitive morpheme {ku-} with a root that is manipulated anew to bring a
Shenglike sense:

    (7) *Ku-**nyonji*** > coining ('erection')
         Ku-mbao > Kiswahili ('mbao' > erection')

The root **-nyonji** in *ku-**nyonji*** is coined. Concerning *ku-mbao*, the origin of
-mbao is the Kiswahili word *bao* ('piece of word'). The word refers to a
hard and neatly chopped piece of wood. Perhaps this image of hardness
and stability is transferred to a hard and erect male sex organ.

3.3 Sex in general

A total of 32 words and expressions were used to represent sex. Some of the
words and expressions were sourced from Kiswahili to refer to the way the
sex act itself is done. Some Standard Kiswahili words (with an asterisk) are
also used but they assume a corrupted pronunciation:

(8) **kupeana** ('to give')   *kuonwa kando* (be seen aside')
    kupanda 118 ('board bus number 118')   *kupewa* (‚to be given')
    ***kuingisha** (to insert')   *kufanywa* ('to be done')
    *kupandan*a ('to climb on each other')   *kutibiana* ('to treat each other')

kusuguana ('to squeeze each other')   *kumwaga* (,to pour')
kusikia utamu ('to "hear" sweetness')   *kudara* (,to caress')
kuandika ('to write')
kusukuma chuma ndani ('to push in a metal')

Other examples comprised coined words:
(9)   *ku-**manga*** ('to make love')
         *ku-**pofya*** ('to make love')
         *ku-**fiya*** ('to make love')
         kumangana* kama *mambusi ('to have reckless sex')

Kiswahili-English codeswitching[6] has also been used to discuss sex. Here we witness the affixation of the {ku-} morpheme on roots of English verbs:
(10)   *ku-*<u>munch</u> ('to have sex')
         ku-<u>chew</u> ('to make love')
         ku-<u>pinch</u> ('to make love')
         ku-<u>surf</u> ('to make love')
         ku-pima <u>oil</u> ('to make love')
         kupatiana <u>lessons</u> ('to make love')
         ku-<u>chill</u> ('to cease from making love')

3.4 Sex partner

The youth discourse also distinguishes the person(s) with whom one makes love.:
(11)   *ku-**bambua*** ('make love to a virgin')
         *ku-**ponyoka na freesha*** ('befriending a first year (female) student')

Although *–bambua* and *–ponyoka* are sourced from Kiswahili, they are assigned new meaning in the youth code (cf. 5.7 for explanation on why this new meaning is given).

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[6] Codeswitching refers to the use of two or more languages in a single conversational episode both intra- and inter-sententially.

4.5 Homosexuality

It has been argued that a linguistic taboo or the fact of avoiding mentioning certain words and expressions in a language is a common practice in more than one society. In traditional Africa, as a result of their lack of decency, shocking character or immorality and in order not to hurt the other members of society, many a term are never used in the lives of some individuals although the latter know them perfectly" (Maweja 2002: 224). More often than not themes that could require the use of such items are also considered taboo. Tabooed items and themes vary from one society to another. Sex and homosexuality are tabooed themes in African societies and words associated with the theme are also considered taboo. Yet the two (sex and homosexuality) have an immense role in the outbreak, spread and sustenance of HIV/AIDS. Thus though considered taboo, any study focusing on the language of sex and HIV/AIDS cannot avoid dealing with the taboo theme. Indeed the university students studied also identify and discuss homosexuality. They do so through euphemistc expressions:

(12)   *-chora saba* ('draw a 'seven'')

      -fungua <u>boot</u> ('open (the car) boot)

      -shika mnazi ('hold a coconut tree')

Semantic expansion that is characteristic of Sheng (Ogechi 2004) is witnessed here. In the first example, *-chora saba* ('draw a 'seven''), there is an allusion to the tendency of a backward bend when the numeral "seven" is written. This backward bend is likened to the possible bending position expected when two men engage in coitus. Concerning the second example, *-fungua* <u>boot</u> ('open a car-boot'), homosexuality is likened to opening a car-boot. In the third example, *-shika mnazi* ('hold a coconut tree'), a coconut tree is likened to a man's genital organ. So, whoever holds the coconut tree is the man who is playing either a male or female role in a sex relationship.

4.6 Anti-HIV/AIDS protection gadgets

The protective gadgets against sexually transmitted diseases are also reflected in the discourse of sex and HIV/AIDS. All the words presented refer to a condom. A large percentage of those examples is sourced from English and only one word comes from Dholuo:

(13)   **Word**   **Source**

Carbon Paper	English
<u>CD</u>	"
<u>Wrapper</u>	"
<u>Rubber</u>	"
Juala	Dholuo

4.7 HIV/AIDS viruses

Other data presented talk about HIV/AIDS virus. Some examples are sourced from Kiswahili:

(14) *mdudu* ('an insect')
   kimbunga ('a hurricane')
   ka-msaada ('a (small) aid')
   ka-mdudu ('a (small) insect')
   homa ('fever')
   tsunami (please explain)

Other words come from French, i.e. *sida* while others are English-sourced, namely <u>life wire</u>. There is also an instance of Kiswahili-English codeswitching, e.g. ka-<u>mosquito</u> ('a small mosquito'). Finally, coined words were also noticed such as ***majeve, ayaki*** and ***ngwengwe.***

4.8 Status of someone

The status of somebody with HIV/AIDS virus is presented through various expressions in Kiswahili:

(15) *Anazo* ('S/he has them')
   Kukanyaga waya moto ('stepping on hot wire')
   Kukanyaga stima ('stepping on an electric wire')
   Kukanyaga ('to step on')
   Amepatikana ('he has been caught')
   Kuwa na damu spesheli ('having special blood')
   Kisima hakina maji ya uzima tena ('the well no longer has
   water of life')
   Mahindi yamerogwa ('the maize is bewitched')
   Kupigwa na stima ('being electrocuted')

More examples are drawn from Kiswahili – English codeswitching:

(16)   <u>engine</u> *ime*<u>knock</u> ('the engine has knocked')
          kujua <u>status</u> ('knowing one's HIV/A**IDS** status')
          kupigwa <u>shock</u> *ya stima* ('getting an electric shock')

4.9 Anti-HIV/AIDS warnings

The youth language data that were collected did not present examples relating to people who have lost their lives after contracting HIV/AIDS. Instead, there were 22 language expressions for warning people to take care lest they catch HIV/AIDS. Here, one sees the use of imperative verbs.

Cooperation against HIV/AIDS

This category however had a few examples:

(17)   *C*hanukeni *pamoja* ('let us work together')
          Usione soo! Sema naye! ('Don't be shy! Talk to her/him!')

Abstaining from sex

Out of the three examples presented here, only one example was a description, the other one was a command while another example was an instance of a verb to denote acceptance of a warning:

(18)   *ku*<u>chill</u> ('to abstain')
          Tuliza boli uwanja mdogo ('stop playing ball; the field is small').
          Nitamoja ('I shall stick to one partner').

Taking care in general

Many examples were recorded in this category. 92% (N=12) were imperative verbs. Some were sourced from Kiswahili while others were instances of Kiswahili-English codeswitching:

 (19) *Chukua* <u>control</u>. ('take charge (of your life)').
          Kuwa <u>Sir</u> <u>negative</u>. ('Be Sir negative').
          Valia <u>boots</u> *usidungwe na mwiba.* ('Put on gumboots to avoid thorn-pricking').
          *Tumia **juala**.* ('Use a condom').

Kila mtu ana yake. Je, una yako? ('Everyone has his (condom). Do you have yours').

Usioge mto Nyando <u>naked</u>. ('Do not swim naked in River Nyando').

Jijue ujipange. ('Know yourself and be careful').

Chunga usipate <u>red card</u>. ('Beware lest you earn a red card').

Vaa <u>seat belt</u>. ('Put on a seat belt').

Tumia <u>common sense</u> *badala ya* <u>condom sense</u>. ('Use common sense and not condom sense').

Usilambe asali katika kila nyumba. ('Don't lick honey in every household').

Usicheze na tundu la simba kwani linawaka moto. ('Don't play with a lion's hole as it has fire').

Jikinge mvua kwa mwavuli. ('Shelter yourself under an umbrella').

Truth about AIDS

This category also has language expressions that attempt to give candid information about the AIDS pandemic. In fact they try to dismiss perceptions that AIDS is a curse:

(20) *Ukimwi si uchawi.* ('AIDS is not witchcraft').

Ukimwi si ajali bali ni msiba wa kujitakia. ('AIDS is not an accident but a selfinflicted problem')

The symptoms of HIV/AIDS such as loss of weight and TB initially led to various explanations among some Kenyans communities. Among the Luo of Kenya, for example, there is a belief that a person that is cursed by society loses weight and eventually dies. Thus when HIV/AIDS patients were seen, especially in the initial days of the pandemic, people never sought medical assistance; instead they took it for a curse (called *chira* in Dholuo). People could even inherit spouses of such people when they died assuming that the cause of death was a curse. In this way, they ignorantly abated the spread of the pandemic.

5. Emergence and spread of the lexicon and language expressions

After presenting the data collected under various categories, this section attempts to describe and explain how the lexemes and expressions are

possibly created/coined, sustained and spread. There appear to be seven possible bases for accounting for the processes.

5.1 Taking advantage of domain contexts

The emergence of some of the words and expressions could be logically associated with the youth's learning environment. As highlighted earlier (cf. section 4.1), the main preoccupation of university students is reading and writing. Thus the tools used in these tasks are associated with the human body organs and how they are used during sexual intercourse:

(21)   *-patia* <u>lessons</u> ('give lessons') > make love
          <u>rubber</u> ('pencil rubber') > condom
          <u>carbon paper</u> > condom
          kalamu (‚pen') > penis
          <u>pen</u> > penis

Though the foregoing examples can be associated with the general students activities, the following examples are most likely coined by university students studying engineering:

(22)   - *pima* <u>oil</u> ('measure oil') > make love
          <u>engine</u> *ime*<u>knock</u> (‚the engine has knocked') > contract
          a sexually transmittable disease
          - *fungua* <u>boot</u> (‚open a car-boot') > homosexuality

People who deal with vehicles know that they frequently have to ascertain the level of oil in their vehicles' engines using a deep-stick. In Kiswahili, that act is called *kupima oili* ('ascertaing oil level'). This is done by removing the deep stick from the oil aperture in the engine casing, wiping it, dipping it into the aperture and removing it to read the oil level.

In addition, an engine that has "knocked" is not functional. This failure to function is due to lack of oil or some other mechanical reason. In the context of love making, engine is associated to a penis or a vagina. These organs could "knock" if they are infected and therefore do not function normally – a situation that could be experienced if one is a HIV/AIDS case.

A *boot* is the hind part of a car. It can be opened and used to carry luggage while the front is where the driver and passenger sit. It is not normal for the driver to open the boot and drive from there. The youth associate this

abnormal opening and abnormal use of the car-boot to practising homosexuality. Thus *kufungua* <u>boot</u> is used to refer to sodomy.

5.3 Imitation of the sex act

The imitation of how the sex act occurs is largely responsible for the emergence of the other lexemes and expressions used in the discourse of love and HIV/AIDS:

(23)   *kutiana* ('insert into each other')
          kusuguana ('scratch each other')
          kusukuma chuma ndani ya shimo ('pushing a metal into a hole')

In coitus, there is the pushing of the male genital in and out of the female genital. This act is called *kutiana* ('inserting into each other') and perhaps since this act is repetitive, the youth associate it with scratching each other (*kusuguana)*. In addition, that scratching probably occurs due to the pushing in and out of the male genital hence *kusukuma chuma* ('penis') ndani ya *shimo* ('vagina').

5.4 Influence of popular music

It has been claimed that popular music has a strong influence in the lives of Kenyans of various ages (Nyairo 2005). Nyairo has for instance studied the strong influence of the *Unbwogable*[7] song in the 2002 political campaign that led to end the 42 years reign of the KANU[8] political party. The popular music especially the one sang by young and stylish musicians has a strong impact in the lives of Kenyan youths. Such music has in the recent years focused not only on love; but also on sex organs and sex itself, vide unique lexemes and expressions. Besides when such music is played, the youth not only sing along with the musician but they also make sex gyrations in their dancing. The following are some of the lexemes in the music:

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[7] A song by Gidigidi and Majimaji duo that shaked the whole country as the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) mobilised Kenyans to vote against the governing party in the 2002 general election. *Unbwogable* is codeswitching between an English prefix <u>un</u>-, Dholuo verb root *–bwog-* (*-bwogo* 'shake') and an English suffix <u>–able</u> thus yielding 'unshakable'. The opposition coalition of parties considered itself unshakable.

[8] KANU is Kenya African National Union political party that ruled Kenya from independence in 1963 to 2002.

(24)   *manyake* ('female genitals')
           juala ('condom')
           jonii ('penis')

(24′) **Artists:** Circuite & Joel **Year:** 2004 **Title:** Manyake

1. *Manyake....* <u>all sizes</u>
   manyake ... kama prizes
   Manyake… kama 'loons na maji
   Juala ndio wahitaji x3

2. Ok <u>alright</u> ungejua *manyake*
   Sawa <u>definitely</u> za m<u>chick</u> msawa ndio *manyake*
   <u>Blow job</u>, tembelea wasee
   <u>This is what they usually say</u>.
   Tuna<u>share</u> *manyerere* X2
   Mikono juu ku<u>worship</u> *manyerere*
   Kwanza tutumie <u>protection</u>
   Au sivyo <u>disease</u> ije haraka kama <u>injection</u>
   African men wakiwa obsessed na manyake
   <u>'Opposed? … what's up?</u>
   <u>Do you have have some</u> *juala* X2
   Ama sivyo ucheki ceilling ya mochari kama fala
   Tumia <u>protection</u> yoo!

   Refrain

   Juala ni *ashuu* tuu!

   Na bado mnacheza na maisha mandugu
   Hata kama *manyerere* ni *poa aje* jua ndio wahitaji.

3. Cheeki hizi facts na hizi figures
   Wasee soo tano wanadedi dailly
   It's like wanabondwa na madinga
   Ati you want bila protection,
   mimi napinga haa!
   Hiyo napinga wee mjinga
   Bila protection napinga

4. Ee naongea kuhusu manyake
   na si zile za butcher
   manyake zinapita mtu anakula kucha
   si unajua zile zenye zimefura
   kama zako hazijafura unafaa uende ukule mtura
   halafu ungoje, pengine watu watakupigia kura
   manyake loo! Mtu anaweza kuziworship
   manyake zinafanya mtu a<u>lose friendship</u>

Ebu enda kwa club, watu wanafight kwa nini
Pastor alikosana na wife kwa sababu ya nini?
Lakini usichanganishwe akili kwa sababu ya mwili
Tumia juala ama utaharibu mwili
Hiyo ni ukweli joo!

Translation

1. Female genitals…. all sizes
   Female genitals…. like prizes
   Female genitals… like waterly loss
   A condom is what you need X3
2. Ok alright, if you knew (what) *manyake*
   Definitely yes, one for a good lady are *manyake*
   Then do the job, visit friends.
   This is what the usually say.
   We share girls X 2
   We raise up hands to glorify the girls.
   But first let us use protection
   Otherwise disease will crop in fast like an injection
   When African men are obsessed by girls.
   Are you opposed to this? What is up?
   Do you have some condoms?
   Otherwise you will stare at a mortuary ceiling like a fool.
   Friend, use a condom.
   Refrain
   A condom costs only ten shillings
   And friends you are only joking around with life
   It (condom) is what you need even if the girls are too good.

3. Look at the facts and figures
   Five hundred people die daily
   It id as though they are being crushed by vehicles
   If you want it (sex) without protection,
   I oppose it
   You fool, I oppose it
   Without protection I oppose

4. Yes, I am talking about *manyake* (female genitals)
   Not those of a butcher
   When they (girls) pass by, one bites his nails
   I hope you know those "swollen" ones
   If there are any that are not swollen, then go and eat **mtura** (local sausage)
   Then wait, perhaps people will vote you in
   Yes, female genitals, one could worship them
   They could lead to one losing a friend.
   Just go to a club and find out why people fight.

> Why did the pastor quarell with his wife?
> Do not lose your mind because of bodily wants
> Use a condom otherwise you spoil your body
> That is the truth friend!

The lexemes *manyake* ('female genital') and *juala* ('condom') are used in the *Manyake* song by Kenyan musicians Circuit and Joel. It has elsewhere been claimed that *manyake* when used in *nyake* refers to meat (Ogechi 2004). However, in the context of the song, *manyake* refers to female genitals. This is made clear in the fourth stanza *"Eeh naongea kuhusu manyake, na wala si zile za butcher"* ('Eeh, I am talking about girls' genitals and not those found at the butcher's place). The picture is enhanced further when the singers use *manyake* as a metonym for the girls and their genitals that drive men crazy - *"manyake zikipita mtu anakula kucha"* ('when the girls (with their genitals) pass by, men are left looking at them biting their nails'). In addition, they make men quarrel and even fight - *"manyake zafanya mtu a<u>lose</u> <u>friendship</u>. Hebu enda klabu watu wana<u>fight</u> kwa nini?"* (girls' genitals can make a person to lose friendship. Just go to a pub and find out why men are fighting').

In stanza one, the song refers to the use of a condom (*juala*) when a person encounters these girls' genitals - *"manyake kama '<u>loons</u> na maji. Juala ndio wahitaji"* (Girls' genitals are like baloons with water. A condom is what you need'). It is obvious that the *juala* is referring to a condom because the singers talk of its cheap price - *ashuu* ('ten Kenya shillings') (Ogechi 2004:334) as seen in the stanza 2 refrain *"juala ni ashuu tu na bado mnacheza na maisha mandugu"* (a condom costs only ten shillings yet you are still gambling with your lives brothers').

The role of music in the rise, lexification and spread of the lexemes and expressions is also seen in the word *jooni* ('penis'). Three musicians, namely Mariko, Andrew and Mr. Filter use the imagery of *Jooni* to refer to a penis. They sing and enumerate the image and characteristics of the penis that women love. One stanza of the song is reproduced here below:

(25)   **Band:** Wakimbizi, **Musicians:** Mariko, Andrew and Mr. Filter
          Jooni[9] nampenda Joooni x2
          Nashindwa mnampendea nini

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[9] This is a corrupted pronunciation of the personal name John. It is however pronounced well in line 3.

Nashangazwa na huyu jamaa anaitwa John
Mara amekasirika ameenda mwezini,
 nashindwa atarudi lini.
Wamemngoja chini maskini kwa matajiri.
Wamevalia vizuri ili wampendeze John na John hana macho.
Nashindwa shughuli anafanyaje na mikono hana,
<u>Weather</u> *ikiwa* <u>rainy</u> *ana sweta yake spesheli anavaa.*
Ukija na container John atakupa kinywaji.
Akina Beyonce, na Talia wa Kenya wote wanampenda John.

Translation
Jooni, I love Jooni X2
I don't know why they love him
I am amazed by this fellow called John
At times he is annoyed and goes into the moon,
I wonder when he will return
They are waiting for him – both rich and poor
They are well dressed to impress John yet John has no eyes
I wonder how he works yet he has no hands
When the weather is wet he wears his special sweater
If you bring a container, John will give you a drink
The likes of Beyonce and Talia of Kenya all love John

The characteristics of *Jooni* who is loved by women though he has neither eyes nor hands, goes into the moon (scrotum) when annoyed (when not erect) but returns (erects) to find both the low and mighty neatly dressed to impress him are reminiscent of the male genital organs. Indeed the reference to wearing a special sweater (scrotum or foreskin) and serving the ladies named (Beyonce and Talia of Kenya) with a drink (sperms) are typical of what happens during intercourse. The semantic expansion of the various images used in the song are part of lexicalisation that is reminiscent of Sheng (Ogechi 2004, Waithira 2001).

Besides the foregoing, other musical items have also contributed to the emergence and spread of the expression ***kumangana kama mambusi*** ('recklessly making love'):
(26)   **Artists:** Nyash, Collo na Roba
                       Title: Tuendelee ama Tusiendelee?
                    1. Kama ningekuwa msanii wa sanaa ya silaha
                       Ningekuwa na jamii ya wa Sadam ka' Sadam
                       Mabunduki makofi ka' bilauri bidhaa za kujijali tu

Hali mashauri sikiza sauti kutoka Kenya.
Mpaka Saudi Arabia maajabu ya Musa Firauni
huyu kijana anafanya vipusa wa <u>town</u> wavue mashati
mapanti
ni ka' wao ni wendawazimu.
Na sa'a sikiza hii ***stori*** vizuri jamaa
rap naifanyia chaapaa na ma<u>fans </u>wananipenda jamaa
sa'a hata ukinichukia siwezi jali X2
Ka'a we'e ni <u>MC stick to the works</u>
Unafaa kuweza kutumia <u>hip hop</u> na <u>other tracks</u>
si kuchukia wadhii juu wanatawala <u>industry</u>
na we'e bado uko huko chini.
Kabla jina yako i<u>grow</u> jipe miaka ka'a nane.
Ka'a lazima nikutukane ndio ujulikane
<u>hip hop</u> ni <u>culture</u> ya <u>love</u> usisahau.
Pole kukumbia sikuchukii na kudharau.
Tuendelee ama tusiendelee X4

2. Nasikia kuna ***mamee*** fulani wametutusi
    ati ***manzee malyrics*** zetu ni za upuzi
    ni heri sisi wao wamejaa na virusi
    kumangana kila mahali kama mambusi mee.
    Na ningekimia ningenyamaza singejali ni ***venye rapu jo!***
    Nilianza uchangani ukalimani ukali
    yaani uhali gani MC?
    Lengo la kuroga ni kupata mali
    Matamshi yachanganya kama lugha ya Punjabi
    kukubaliwa na wanati hata na mababi wee!
    Wacha ***kujiduu masee*** hatari
    Tena na mimi nasema lakini tu ni safari.
    Tuendelee ama tusiendelee? X8

3. ***Niaje brooo?***
    Vipi beshtee?
    Niaje sistee?
    Vipi dada?
    Tunawachekiii
    Ninawachekii

    Translation
  1. If I were an artists for weaponry
     I could have had a Saddamlike society

Clapps of guns like glasses that do not take of others
Listen to voices from Kenya
Up to Saudi Arabia, it is full of wonders like Moses and
Pharaoh
This boy makes girls in to remove their shirts and pants
As though they are mad.
And friend now carefully listen to this story
I rap and fans love me
So even if you hate me I do not worry X2
If you an MC, just keep your work.
You should use hiphop and other tracks
Not to hate others since they dominate the (musis) industry
While you are still down there.
Give yourself eight years before you get famous.
If I have to abuse you to get famous
Then know that hiphop is a culture.
Sorry I do not hate you.
Do we continue or don't we continue? X 4

2. I hear there are some men who have abused us
   That our music is nonesense
   We are better than them who are full of (HIV) viruses
   They carelessly make love like goats.
   And if I were to keep quiet, I could not minded about music
   friend!
   I started this rap when I was still young
   That is, how are you MC?
   The purpose of rapping is to get rich
   You mix words as though it is Punjabi
   You get appreciated by both men and women!
   Stop bragging around, it is dangerous
   Again I repeat all this is just like a journey.
   Do we continue or don't we continue? X 8

3. We got mad mad love for you X2
   How is it brother?
   How is it friend?
   How is it sister?
   How is it siter?
   We are observing you
   I am observing you

The verb *manga* is polysemic (Ogechi 2004) and one of its meanings is to make love, hence the expression *-manga manzi* ('make love to a girl'). In Sheng, the word **mambusi** (perhaps sourced from Kiswahili *mbuzi* 'goat') is also used to refer to reckless sexual intercourse. The song basically gives a warning against irresponsible sex.

From the illustrations given, it is clear that the role of popular music in the rise, sustenance and spread of some of the lexemes and expressions cannot be gainsaid.

5.5 Euphemism

Euphemism appears to be common across many cultures in the discourse of sex since this is deemed a taboo subject (Horne 2004). This is very common in many African communities. For instance, Moto (2004) has discussed the euphemism of "eating" in the context of Malawi. He says "the physiological and psychological need to have sex has at times been compared to the body's requirements to be replenished with food from time to time". Sex likened to food is also rampantly used by the university students through Kiswahili-English codeswitching:

    (26)   *Ku*-<u>munch</u> ('to munch') > to make love

            Ku-<u>chew</u> ('to chew') > to make love

The image that is preponderant here is that men eat women and not vice versa during sexual intercourse. This eating image has also been discussed in studies dealing with the language of seducing and lovemaking among the Kuria of southwestern Kenya (Mwita-Ssemanda 2005). Through *ichingeero* (the artistic language of seducing), a Kuria man woos a woman to love him and even have sexual intercourse with her.

5.6 Impact of the Internet

Besides the euphemism of eating, the indirect language on matters considered sexual is seen through the youth's innovative potential and creativity in borrowing from computer language and the Internet. Thus there is semantic expansion of the special terms associated with computers to refer to sex:

(27)   <u>download</u> ('make love')
        <u>surf</u> ('make love')

After further prodding my informants, I was told that only men *download* and *surf* not vice versa. This claim is consonant with Moto's (2004) study in Malawi where only men "download" women.

5.7 Impact of advertisements in the media

Advertisements on television, radio, newspapers and even special magazines have an impact in the creation of the indirect language used in the discourse of sex and HIV/AIDS. Some of the examples arising from this include:

(28)   *–bambua* ('peel')
        -ponyoka na freesha ('scrape through with a freshman')
        -<u>yellow pages, let the fingers do the walking</u>

Kubambua ('to peel') is the removal of something that is firmly stuck to another. It could be the removal of some item that is fastened by, say, glue or cellotape. One could also associate *–bambua* with skinning some carcass. At the time of doing the research for this paper, (May 2005), the largest beer company in Kenya was running a business promotion competition dubbed **bambua tafrija**. In this competition, a beer buyer was expected to peel rubber on the inner part of the bottle top and win whatever was drawn on the rubber. The peeling of a bottle top rubber and winning a present was extended by the youth to seduction and love making. So, one could *bambua* ('peel') if he succeeded in seducing and making love to a woman who happened to be a virgin. Perhaps the penetration of a virgin was likened to a firmly fastened rubber on the inner side of the bottle top.

In May 2005 also the largest newspaper company in the country **Nation** was running a business promotion competition called '**Ponyoka na pickup**' whereby winners could get a "pick up" vehicle (small truck). In this case, a reader was expected to buy a newspaper and fill in a form with simple questions before mailing it to the company headquarters. After some time, winners could be picked through a ballot. In this ballot, one could "slide through" with a small truck (pick up). The trucks were few but the contestants were many and only very few could win. In the language of the youth, the lottery-like competition is transferred and associated with

seduction and lovemaking. In the context of Kenyan universities, the student population has more men compared to women. The male demand to befriend first year female students is high. Thus there is competition and only very few are lucky to win a first year female student hence *ponyoka na freesha* ('scrape through with a freshman'). The happiness in winning a small truck is likened to the excitement of befriending a first year female student.

6. Conclusion

The goal of this paper was to identify the special lexemes and language expressions used by the youth in their discourse on sex and HIV/AIDS. By analysing data collected from university students, it has come out that there is a special code used by the youth. The uniqueness of the code comes through the lexemes and expressions, which have been lexicalized though they are sourced from Kiswahili, English, Kiswahili-English codeswitching and Sheng. Thus it is not always possible for an uninitiated person who speaks Kiswahili and English to decipher the lexemes and expressions unless s/he is initiated by being an in-group member of the youth. The uniqueness of the code is also seen in the way in which it has been created, sustained and spread. The existence of such a unique youth code shows the creativity of language as it changes and adjusts in order to meet emerging linguistic needs of its users.

The unique code very much tends towards Sheng. It has elsewhere been argued that Sheng is an unstable youth code that is largely identified through its lexemes (Ogechi 2002, 2005). Its grammar is based on the dominant language in the environment where it is spoken. Its lexemes could be sourced from Kiswahili, English, other Kenyan languages and coinings. However, the words from Kiswahili, English and other languages assume a new meaning through lexicalisation. To a large extent, the paper has shown that the words and expressions used to discuss sex and HIV/AIDS among university students in Kenya satisfies these features. Thus one can safely conclude that the code is Sheng.

In its efforts to deal with the HIV/AIDS pandemic, society needs to involve the youth in all its endeavours if the anti-AIDS campaign is to succeed. It is my contention that success will always be elusive unless and until those

leading in the campaign understand and incorporate the youth code when dealing with the youth. Thus it is recommended that the youth language is used in the oral discussions, literature, posters, drama etc. that target the youth. University counseling and Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) Centres need to employ the services of people who know the language. Those people must also be ready to adapt to any new vocabulary that the youth will coin from time to time.

The study reported here focused on the youth code used at the university. It is important to find out if the same or similar code is used in the rural areas, among the youth in towns generally and if there are any differences in the code used by urban youths in the high and low class residential areas.

List of Abbreviations

AIDS   Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BA   Bachelor of Arts
BED   Bachelor of Education
HIV   Human Immunodeficiency Virus
NACC   National Aids Control Council
STD   Sexually Transmitted Disease
TB   Tuberculosis
VCT   Voluntary Counseling Centres

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