

A Thorough Examination of Teens Drug Slang in Algeria

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Abstract

Investigating the world of the drug through providing a linguistic scholarship on the coded forms employed by addicts is not an easy task because they tend to form the slang lexis that keeps them out of trouble with the law and their parents when it comes to teenagers. Several research works showed that drugs become prevalent among schoolers in comparison to cigarettes; for this reason, teens tend to develop street drug expressions commonly known as slang names to ease their access into the very dark and secretive world of drugs and steroids. In this vein, the present research paper pursues to shed light on Algerian teens and their use of drug slang terms. It also provides a thorough overview of the slang created by Algerian youngsters to facilitate the exchange of drug products. In this tight, the researcher made a profound investigation by taking Tlemcen speech community as a case in point. The researcher collected data through a semi-structured questionnaire and an interview. To this end, the results provided an in-depth look at what is behind the backdrop of the drug world. The analysis revealed that there is increasing use of slang terms between teens at secondary schools, especially words for selling and buying drugs. The findings also demonstrated that teens have created slang terms for the most widely employed types of drugs like ecstasy, heroin, L.S.D, and barbiturates.

Keywords: A sociolinguistic investigation, drugs, slang expressions, Tlemcen society, youngsters

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Introduction

There is no doubt that the world of the drug has dropped even the innocent generation to its dark and deviance folds and resulted in their total life destruction. Yes, it is the world of drug that violates all social and religious values. It puts the younger generation at the center of the concerns of those, who make humans at a laboratory to experiment different kinds of drugs and steroids under the umbrella that these products help them to overcome and neglect all the social problems affecting their lives as individuals. Therefore, it prevents them from being effective persons in their societies. In this regard, Mayr and Machin (2012) pinpoint that drug “maps the social world for us by foregrounding the association of well-behaved ordinary young people. These drugs are therefore a threat to the foundations of society” (pp. 39-40).

Admittedly, the invasion of drug products becomes relatively apparent, and a real fatal that threatens all sorts of human natural lives in the whole globe. Most recent studies have revealed that drug addicts are suffering from psychological and social pressures; consequently, they try to fetch for substitutions to overcome their dilemma. These studies also confirm that children and youngsters are the first leaders in using drugs due to parental and social problems such as divorce and poverty. In a study conducted by the American National Institution on Drug Abuse (2016), researchers discovered that 1 in 16 high school seniors reported daily marijuana use, about 5% of high school seniors have abused opioid painkillers (The Treatment Center Lifelong Addiction Recovery, 2018).

Like other groups, addicts have built their world by creating codes and slang expressions to buy and take drugs. These expressions keep them out of sight of their parents, their teachers, schools, and the law. These terms have considerably increased with the invasion of new projects and markets. The use of slang expressions may result in a fertile terrain that needs scholars to investigate thoroughly. In the light of this tight, the present research paper draws attention to terminologies related to drug slang that has recently appeared in the field of language studies and which has triggered the intention of sociolinguists in the last few decades. The use of these codes has paved the path for easy access to drug products and has called for an urgent scholarship that can help other fields like sociology and psychology to overcome the increasing nature of this catalyst. As such, this small scale study strives to present a systematic investigation that confirms the reliability of many assumptions set on the future of the Algerian teens after the emergence of drug addiction. This survey tries to provide some scholarship on drug slang terms developed by Algerian teens. These concerns present the following research questions:

1. Why do Algerian teens develop drug slang?
2. For what reason are these street terms utilized?
3. What is the nature of these expressions?

The researcher put forward the following hypotheses to confirm the reliability of the above research objectives:

1. Algerian youngsters may have developed drug slang to expedite their access to drug markets.

2. Algerian teens may create These street words to keep them safe from the control of the law and their parents. Through these terminologies, teens can protect their privacy and ensure their belonging to a specific group.
3. These terminologies may form a set of words taken from Algerian dialectal Arabic (AA) employed metaphorically to hide the real meaning of drug terms and names.

To bring this study into the light, the researcher took about three years in data collection due to the sensitive nature of the topic at hand. The researcher found difficulties in data collection, especially in selecting the appropriate research tools and where the research can take place.

Review of the Related Literature

Providing an account of drug slang expressions is not enough without understanding the motives that drive teens to engage in a dirty world and destroy their whole future. Perhaps the first reason revolves around their rebellion against the parental and societal systems because they feel losing control over their own lives. Through the use of drugs, they think that they can break the societal taboos and mix all the rules and norms set by their society. Another driving factor is fetching for a sense of popularity and fame. Scientists proved that youngsters are always trying to create their own identities that differentiate them from the whole members of society; this may lead them to fall in the trap of the drug world. Competition is another incentive that encourages youths to take drugs, especially in sports. Henceforth, these motives are the first impetus that develops their positive attitudes towards engaging in a world that has easy access (*What parents must know about teen drug abuse trends and drug slang*, n.d.).

Bringing cues on the main culprits responsible for leading teens to the other corner of the world where norms and values have no place, one has not to forget to talk about the place where they can get drugs. Studies have demonstrated that teens can find these illegal products in streets, parties, and online. Indeed, the most widely used drug products between youths are ecstasy and marijuana.

Expressions like candy, snow, glass, brown, and sugar become old-fashioned between teens because these idioms become a part of daily speech, i.e., they are longer seen as drug slang. Therefore, youths have created their new coded terms that are not easy to detect (*What parents must know about teen drug abuse trends and drug slang*, n.d.). Indeed, slang terminologies are developed depending on the type of drug and its shape. Table one sheds light on some street words produced in the English language:

Table.1. *Drug slang in the English language*

Types of Drug in English	Slang Expressions
Amphetamine	Benz, black and white, blackbirds, blue boys, coasts to coasts, crisscross, roads, footballs, French blues, pink hearts, speed, sweets, whites, and wake-ups...etc.
Cocaine	Angel powder, Angie, aunt Nora, baby powder, beach, Blanco, Coca-Cola, cookie, coconut, mosquitos, powder diamonds, late-night, paradise white, and Rambo...etc.
Heroin	Chocolate, dark girl, curly hair, foolish powder, the

	black pearl, blue hero, brown crystal, black, bitch, black sheep, and dead on arrival...etc.
LSD	Acid, Alice, Angels in a sky, blue chair, mellow yellow, robots, pink wedges, pizza, potato, pure love, square dancing tickets, white dust, wedding bells, and yellow sunshine...etc.
Marijuana	Blue cheese, Arizona, blueberry, Christmas tree, Doobie, cookie, blue jeans, black gold, little green friends, little smoke, young girls, Zamboni, wheat, and white-haired lady...etc.
MDMA	Adam, baby slits, chocolate chips, moon rock, Scooby snacks, sweets, and vitamin E...etc.
Methamphetamine	Chicken powder, clothing cleaner, eyeglasses, fire, walking Zombie, witches teeth, yellow barn, Colorado Rockies...etc.

Note.1. A list adapted from: (*Drug slang code words*, 2017, pp. 2-3-4-5-6)

The subject of street terms related to drug abuse has called for immediate research because addicts do not stop at the level of employing metaphors and nicknames, but it passes to more complicated codes. Criminals and drug merchants utilized these codes. As such, decoding these coded expressions is not an easy task for linguists. It needs to understand the social and geographical variations where they can use these expressions so that they can be able to understand their meaning. What also makes the task of drug detectors hard is that drug dealers employ some terms to refer to different types of drugs. The following table shows some coded forms employed in the English language:

Table.2. Coded words referring to drugs

Coded Forms	Meaning in English
007s or 69s	Ecstasy/MDMA
100s or 25s	LSD
151	Crack cocaine
420	Marijuana use
Al Caone	Heroin
Arnolds	Steroids
Atom Bomb	Marijuana mixed with heroin
Babysitter	Marijuana

Note.2. A list adapted from (Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse, n.d.)

Drug users also tend to develop terminologies to describe not only drugs and their various kinds, but also merchants and all those who participate in their production, prescription, and trade. The following table gives some examples found by linguists and drug detectors:

Table.3. Coded words referring to merchants and users in English

Coded Forms	Meaning in English
Author	The doctor who writes illegal prescriptions
Baby habit	Occasional use of drugs
Babysit	Guide someone through the first drug experience
Bag man	The person who transports money and supplies narcotics or other drugs
Baker	A person who smokes marijuana
Bean	A capsule containing drugs
Bing	Enough drug for one injection

Note.3. A list adapted from (Drug Policy Information Clearinghouse, n.d)

Drug Slang in the Arabic Language

There is no doubt to confirm that the Arabic language, mainly; its dialectal forms are rich in colloquial words which are employed to describe the use of drugs, various sorts, and addicts, etc. A good example, the term مزطول or زاطل in Algerian Arabic (AA) refers to a stoned person, and the name لزطية is used to name drugs. The term لزطية is employed to describe a kind of drugs called cannabis resin. This term is used, mainly in the Algerian borders with Morocco, where drug trade has flourished, and most people are suffering from its effects. Other colloquial expressions mostly exist in Algerian dialects are اللعيف [elklɪ:f], الحشيش, والتكروري, لا حرقا, لا حرقيا للتكروري, الحشيش, [elklɪ:f] اللعيف to describe drugs with its different types. Indeed, there is a little difference between these names in another Arabic dialect; for example, the Egyptians employ من طول and للسطة referring to drug users and drugs in general (Djazair, 2009).

Standard Arabic, like other languages, has also created certain expressions to describe new emerging phenomena like المخدرات, الهمشطات, and اللعاقير referring to drugs with its diverse forms. The term المخدرات is taken from the term خدر, i.e. some of the human organs are under drug effects. This means in Arabic للكنور (laziness), and the most known sorts of drugs are /ħaʃiʃ/, /bnʒ/, and /ʔafju:n/ الحشيش للافيون, in addition to newly employed forms, include الهمواد (hypnotic and stimulant substances), الهمواد للفيومدة, الهمواد.

In Morocco, where eight hundreds of people are drug users, new terminologies and slang expressions entered the Moroccan dialects. Statistics have shown that most of the addicts are children and youths. Those addicts have created new terms such as فليطوكسا لي شاطية /etʃeklɪʔa/, /ftɪʔksa/ in addition to الحمار, بوال حمار, and الهمجاد, بوال حمار, and الهمجاد /bula ħmara/,

/elmaʕzu:n/, and /ekala/(El Ashref, 2016). El Ashref (2016) further highlights that الكافّة is the most used among teens and children since it is cheap in comparison to الامعجون /elmaʕzu:n/, اقراص لقنويي /ʔaqrɑ:ʂ elqɑrnu:nɪ/, and بوال حمرا /bula ħmara/. Furthermore, El Ashref has also added that الامعجون /elmaʕzu:n/ was widely used in North African countries, mainly, Morocco where people were able to prepare it with walnuts and almonds. Still, they began to add some drug products to this mixture in the last few years. The following table provides an overview of the slang expressions found in Arabic dialects to describe drugs:

Table.4. Drug slang terms existing in Arabic dialects

Terms in English	Terms in Arabic Dialects
Marijuana	الحشيش, الحشّة, الحشيشة in Syria, Egypt, and Lebanon الحشيشة, الحشيشة, الحشيشة in Algeria and Morocco الحشيشة, الحشيشة, الحشيشة in Morocco الحشيشة in Sudden الحشيشة in Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, and Morocco
Ecstasy	زبدة الحرجي in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon
Amphetamines	الحشوى in most Arabic dialects

However, these expressions have become old-dated, and youngsters and drug traders start searching for new codes and slang forms that appeared in the market so that it keeps them out of the law and family members. The following table provides some examples of newly employed terms in the world of drugs:

Table.5. New drug slang in Arabic dialects

Terms in English	Slang Expressions
Marijuana	الكافّة, لبوفوك, الامعجون, اللسوداء الحشيشة
Seconal	لبازوكا, لبوجنير, لبوزام, لبولمع, الحمر, القشق, ابحن ببولك, القراط الحشيشة, حمبس بس ام الحشيشة, الصوايخ الحشيشة الحمر
LSD	اللوسيتال, الحشيشة, الحشيشة,
PCP	حشيشة الكافّة
The Cepagon	لبوف, لبف شقراء, الحشيشة, لبو داب, الحشيشة, لبو قوسين

Note.4. A list adapted from Hassen Jan (2015)

In the guise of conclusion, drug addicts and traders have formed their world where everything illegal is appreciated, and they consider youngsters as the first victims to ruin the bases of any nation. To hide their deviant practices, they tend to create coded forms and slang terms that are subject to change every time, i.e., they have no permanent forms used in their daily interaction.

Research Methodology and Design

Sampling and Population

The researcher selected the sample randomly. She based her research on youngsters in three secondary schools at Maghnia town since it is in the borders with Morocco and it witnesses a great use of drugs both in trade and addiction. The researcher did not want to mention the names of these schools due to the sensitive nature of the case study. The sample contained 80 schoolers. The researcher has conducted the study during the years 2013-2016. It took three years because people did not want to answer the questionnaire; as a matter of fact, the participants were asked to reply anonymously due to the sensitive nature of its questions. In this sense, the researcher depended on two research instruments, mainly, a questionnaire and an interview.

As far as the interview is concerned, the researcher was not able to conduct it. For this reason, she asked for the help of some relatives. The interviewer conducted the interview for 8 months with 20 informants whose ages were between 15 and 20 years old.

Questionnaire

The participants' ages vary between 15, 18, and 20 years old, and were from both genders as table six shows:

Table.6. *Distribution of participants according to their gender and age*

Age	Males	Females
Between 15-17	10	03
Between 17-19	35	13
Between 19-20	19	00
Total	64	16

Table six reveals that participants were distributed depending on certain variables, namely, gender and age, although the number of male informants was more than females because girls refused to collaborate with the researcher.

The questionnaire consists of two parts; the first part contains information about their age, gender, and the name of their secondary schools. The second one consists of questions on drugs, including whether they took them or not, where they can be found, for what reason, and what are the mostly employed terms to name the different types of drugs.

Discussion and Interpretation of the Questionnaire

The current study aims to investigate slang terms used in the world of drug, for this reason, the researcher took just four questions that can confirm the reliability of the research hypotheses.

Question One: Do you have an idea if your colleagues are taking drugs?

- Yes
- No

Table7. *Pupils' knowledge of the existence of drugs in their schools*

Answers	Males	Females	Percentages
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Yes	43	04	69.11%
No	21	//	30.89%
Total	64	16	100%

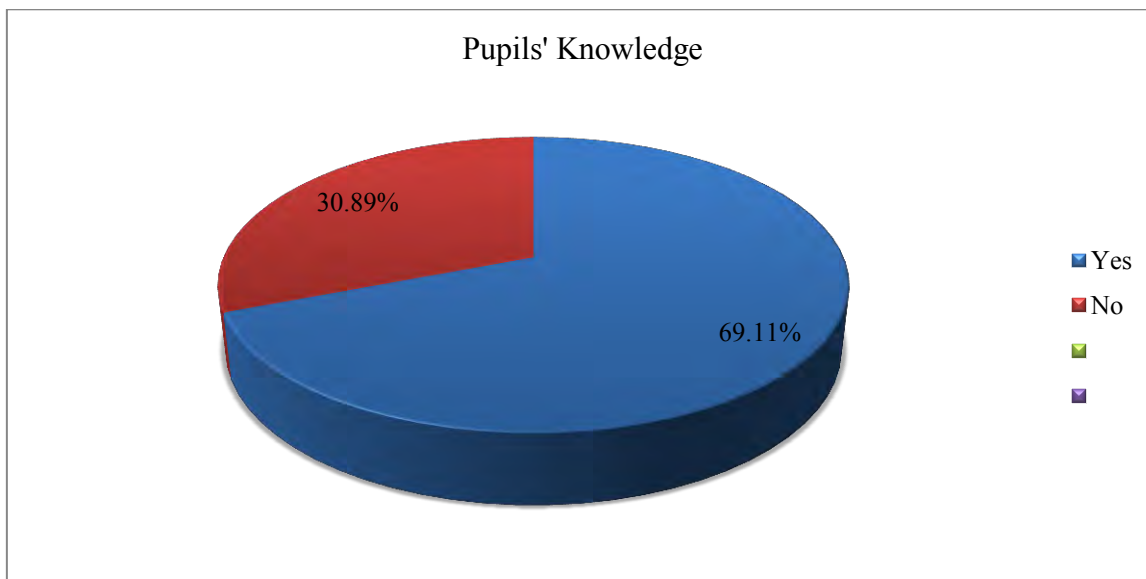


Figure.1. Pupils’ knowledge of the existence of drugs in their schools

This question was difficult to get its answers; in fact, it took about three months to have their responses after promising them that the researcher will not inform the administration about the problem. On the other hand, females refused to answer this question; only four girls agreed and cooperated. The results showed that about 69.11% of the informants helped the researcher and declared that some teens are drug addicts. They added that most of those youngsters are studying at the baccalaureate level. They stated that their age is between 17 and 19 years old. They also declared that some of them are always getting in trouble with the administration.

Question Two: Do you have an idea about which type of drugs pupils used in school?

- Cocaine
- Marijuana
- Ecstasy
- Zombie drug
- Seconal
- LSD

Table.8. Types of drugs taken by teens

Answers	Males	Percentages
Cocaine	/	/
Marijuana	/	/

Ecstasy	32	50%
Zombie drug	6	9.37%
Seconal	17	26.56%
LSD	9	14.06%
Total	64	100%

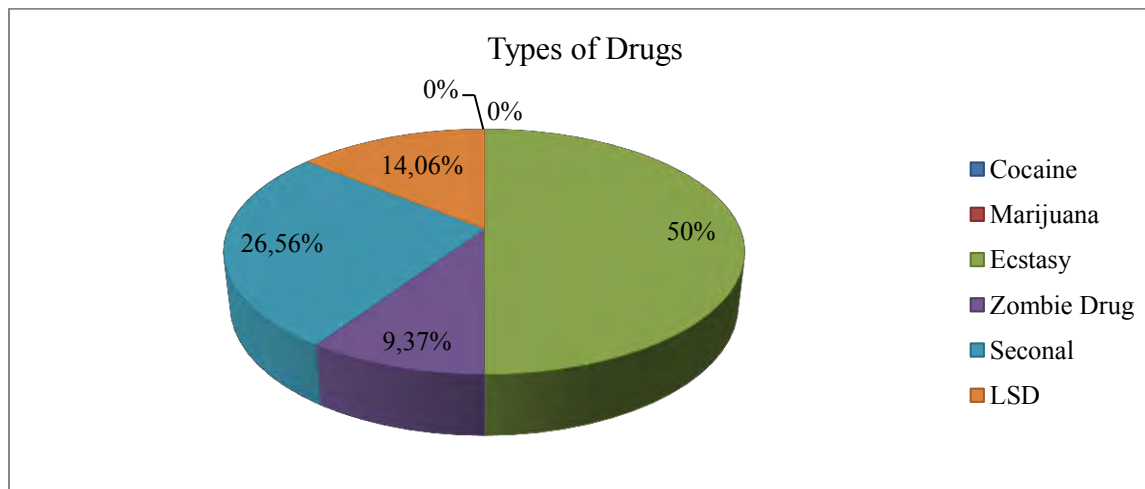


Figure.2. Types of drugs taken by teens

Due to the sensitive nature of this question, female informants refused to answer. The researcher found it difficult with male respondents; she had to explain the different types of drugs with pictures to the pupils since no sessions are provided by the administration to raise their awareness about the negative impacts of drugs on their health and future as individuals. They informed that ecstasy is the most used. They also reported that it is named as ‘ambiance’. They added that seconal or what is called *الحمره* or *لاطوم الطيش* /*ħamra*/, /*tɔmɛti:ʃ*/ and ‘madame courage’ is another type of producing drugs that they saw it in school. Furthermore, they informed that drug dealers give a new type for free outside schools, i.e., in the street. This type is called Zombie drug and its name in the dialectal form varies between groups, but the most widely used are *للزيمبي* and *للحسة*, *للصمف الكفا*.

Question Three: You mentioned some expressions which are not understood, according to your opinion, for what reason is it used?

- To protect their privacy and belonging to a specific group
- To get drugs
- To ease its trade

Table.9. The reasons behind the use of slang drug terms

Answers	Males	Females	Expressed in %
To protect their privacy and belonging to a	48	12	75%

specific group			
To get drugs	16	04	25%
To ease its trade	/	/	0%
Total	64	16	100%

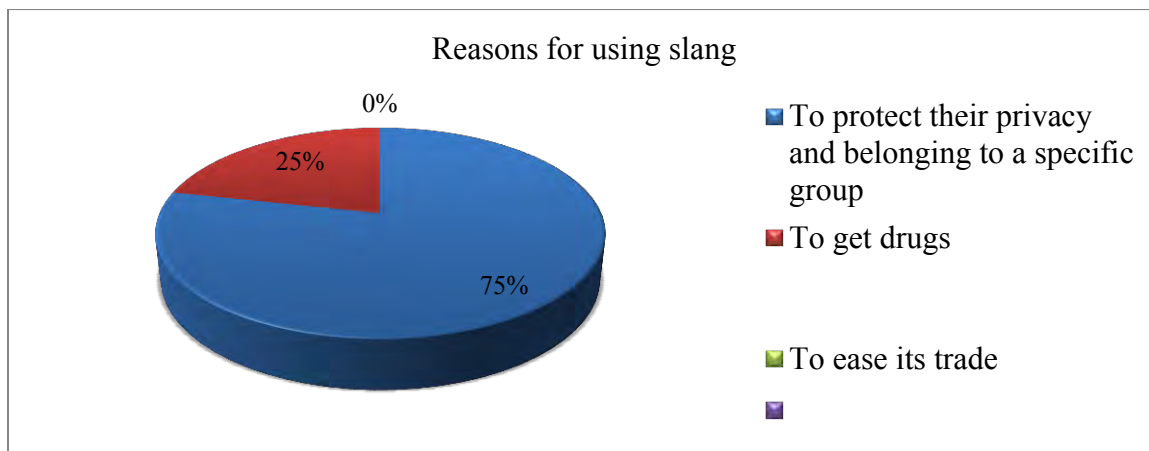


Figure.3. The reasons behind the use of slang drug terms

It is evident from the statistics mentioned above that most of the participants claimed that teens are always looking for ways to protect their privacy from the old, especially their parents; for this reason, privacy is their concern. In contrast, about 25% of the informants maintained that to get drugs, some persons tend to employ codes to hide the real names of some drug products such as *البيسلة* /*ṭbiʃila*/ *سفرجل* /*sferʒel*/ and *كيران* /*karan*/, etc.

Interview

As it has already been mentioned, the researcher was not able to interview the participants due to the sensitive nature of the subject; consequently, she asked for help of some relatives to get the answers for some questions. The researcher interviewed 20 participants whose age was between 15 and 20 years old. She took four questions from the interview, and the rest of these questions are let to finish the study since the lexis being found from the terrain is very poor. She has to relate each name with its drug type because she got slang terms without their real scientific names.

Question One: What are the terms which are employed to talk about Marijuana?

About 16 of the respondents informed that the term *البيسلة* and *الزطية* were the mostly employed terms between drug users to describe marijuana. Still, this idiom is no longer employed, especially by youngsters. They added that they tend to use new slang words like *بيسلة* /*ṭbiʃila*/, *كيران* /*kara:n*/, and *chicoula* /*ʃiku:la*/. In contrast, four informants reported that each group of drug users created coded forms that are not mutually intelligible even by other

drug addicts. They gave the interviewer other terms such as *المسكينة* /eʒa:jħa/, *المسكينة* /emasku:na/, *البيجي* /eʃalja/, *النزعة* /enazʕa/, *الخرنوب* /eħardla/, *الزينة* /ezi:na/, /dɒmɪnɒ/ *الدومينو*, and *الصبرية* /eʃabu:nɪja/.

Question Two: What are the most preferred types of drug and what are their names?

Nine out of 20 interviewees informed that there are new products in the streets. They sold these drugs in libraries, free markets, on the university campus, in nightclubs, and public phone cabinets. They added that some drugs are given for free to engage youngsters like Zombie drug which is named as *الزومبي* /zɒmbɪ/, and *داعش* /da:ʕɪʃ/. They also declared that there is a newly introduced type called *الحوت الأزرق* (the blue whale) (which is a name given to DMT taken from tryptamine). This term was used because of its blue colour, while in Middle East countries; it is named *عقار الشيطان* (the devil drug) and *الفيل الأزرق* (the blue elephant). They added that this type is mostly found between university students, mainly females. They further insisted on the point that teens still regards ecstasy as the most preferred type of drugs. They also tend to find out some street words to describe it as *الأسعادة* /esaʕa:da/, *بالزما* /pla:zma/, *الأسوة* /enaʃwa/, and ‘ambiance’ /ɒmbjɒns/ which is a French word, while the expression *الطحوى* /elħalwa/ becomes old-dated.

Question Three: It is agreed that the government has made tremendous efforts to diminish drug trade in the last years so that getting them becomes impossible. In this sense, are there any alternatives that drug users find to take? If yes, what are their names?

The interviewer faced many constraints in getting answers to this question because most interviewees refused to provide their responses; as a matter of fact, it took about two months to get a reply. In this sense, only five out of 20 interviewees acquainted the interviewer about a new technique that teens used to get new drugs. This technique involves mixing soft drinks like Coca-Cola or Pepsi with a medicament called *lyrica* to produce a drug named as *الصاروخ* /eʃa:ru:ħ/, *المدورخ* /emaʃru:ħ/, *كوكو* /ku:ku:/, *الضيف* /dʒi:f/, *الطليان* /tɒlja:n/, *lyrica 300*, and *البرقية* /bu:rgi:ba/.

Question Four: Are there other names employed to describe drugs?

All the informants answered this question. They mentioned that rich people take a costly kind of marijuana. It is called ‘la polina’; they took the term from the Spanish language, while cocaine has various slang terms like *الجوز* /ma:jzi:na/, *العبرة* /elrɒbra/, and *الفارينا* /elfari:na/. They also mentioned names for other drugs that they did not know their real scientific names including *الخضرة* /elħadra/, *التاج* /eta:ʒ/, *الروش* /ereʒla/, and *lozino* taken from Spanish. They added that there is another type which came from Morocco called ‘superman’. This type is named as *الحمامة* /lħma:ma/ in Morocco and is regarded as the most dangerous type of stimulants because it gives the user enormous energy so that he will feel like a bird. They claimed that this sort is taken mostly by criminals and thieves. They further reported that there are some drug users who take even barbiturate when they want to commit crimes because it helps them to behave unconsciously. Its name differs between users, but the

most commonly employed is /la:rtʌ:n/ إلتان, without forgetting codeine which is also found among their favoured drugs. This type of drug is named as //bra:ra/ براءة

They also enriched the researcher's knowledge about some products that take the same names as in the Middle East such as عش لآغراب (the crow nest) for 'LCD', عآار لآحب (love drug) for MDA, and عآار لآلمة الكفة (angels' dust) for both PCP and LSD, and لآلوسفآال (crystal) for both LSD and methamphetamine.

Limitations of the Paper

Entering this dramatic world for a female researcher is impossible because the subject itself is seen as a taboo topic to deal with. The topic is linked to mafia, and illegal trade that opens the gateway for other taboos like prostitution and adultery. After all, the trade of drugs also becomes the concerns of prostituted women under the reason that they are cast away by society. Although the researcher made all her efforts to help in understanding the world of drugs, her contribution is not sufficient; as a matter of fact, she decided to carry on her investigation of drugs slang, hoping that she can understand how youngsters prepare these terms and how they communicate. Another stumbling block in this research is conducting the interview with teens in streets which is dangerous and seems unattainable; hence, the researcher decided to work in cooperation with some male relatives who told the interviewees that they are drug addicts. Thus, this is the main claim that makes them confident and provided the interviewers with some information.

Another limitation of this research is that most participants in both the questionnaire and the interview have no idea about the real scientific names of these drugs and their effects. For this reason, the study seemed to fail in its beginning because the researcher cannot relate each slang word with its real type. For this reason, the subject is still under investigation, waiting for the acceptance of authorities to enter the world of drug without any legal constraints.

Conclusion

Although this piece of research was hopeless to achieve in the first step of its kickoff, the researcher strived to make it true, wishing that this forgotten angle can find a place between Algerian linguists to understand the changing core of the Algerian society which is based on the young generation. Grasping slang idioms means detecting whether a youth is taking drugs or not because teens are always innovative in terms of language use in comparison to the old people when they want to hide their private lives.

The results of the current research under scrutiny cannot be generalized for all Algerian teens or even for Tlemcen society because drug users are forming groups and each group has developed shared idioms to easy access and trade of drugs; for this reason, these expressions are subject for change every time and cannot be mutual intelligible between all groups. This is the case of gang slang in England which paved the way for the dawn of a new field of research in sociolinguistics and drives sociolinguists to create of a new term to name slang field which is 'slanguage' because the nature of slang expressions is changeable, dynamic and is affected by certain social and linguistic variables including gender, age, educational background, and the social status of the societies under investigation. In light of this idea, one can inform that the

terminologies, which are collected by the researcher of this study during three years, can no longer exist in the future. The fruits of the work can be taken as a roadmap by the researcher of the work at hand and other sociolinguists, psychologists, and sociologists for more scholarship in the field, hoping that it can save youngsters from entering the whirlpool of drugs.

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