

**Enseignement**



# BEYOND CATCHPHRASES ON VEHICLES IN SOME CITIES OF THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

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## **Abstract**

*This article focuses on some expressions popularly used and disseminated in different areas where we find social activities in the DRC. These expressions known as “catchphrases” are found written and displayed in various languages such as, Kiswahili, French, English, Lingala, Mashi, etc. depending on the social activity, the area and the intellectual level of authors. They are mainly used by taxi-and lorry-drivers, shop and drugstore holders, shoes, telephones and watches menders, etc. In short, those who basically operate in exhibiting and socio-economic activities in order to convey specific messages directed towards all categories of society. They are mostly painted or written on cars, lorries, shops, drugstores, etc. to reflect and exhibit the emotional and psychological feelings of users. They are meant to sensitize and entice people to understand and meditate upon some realities of social life, i.e. problems, difficulties, worries, joy, sadness, happiness and behaviour encountered in various areas of active life. They tend to demonstrate that active life is full of ups and downs, traumatizing, intriguing and confronted to a considerable number of realities and situations. Obviously, they usually aim at teaching virtues and wisdom, arouse meditation, provide counsels, advise carefulness, advocate courage and resilience, denounce violence, bring about correction and preach justice in society. They operate like proverbs which hide some truth in them and require deep consideration on their perception.*

**Key words:** Catchphrase - vehicle - city - Democratic Republic of the Congo

## **Résumé**

*Cet article se focalise sur certaines expressions populaires utilisées et disséminées dans différents endroits où l'on trouve des activités à caractère social en République Démocratique du Congo. Ces expressions connues sous le terme « catchphrases (slogans) » sont écrites et exhibées dans plusieurs langues telles que le kiswahili, le français, l'anglais, le lingala, le mashi, etc. suivant l'activité sociale, l'endroit, et le niveau intellectuel des auteurs. Elles sont principalement utilisées par les chauffeurs des taxis et des camions, les dépositaires des magasins et des pharmacies, les réparateurs des souliers, des téléphones et des montres, etc., bref ceux qui principalement opèrent dans les activités exhibitionnistes et socio-économiques en vue de communiquer des messages adressés à toutes les catégories de la société. Ces messages sont le plus souvent peints ou écrits sur les voitures, les camions, les magasins, les pharmacies, etc. pour refléter et exhiber les sentiments émotionnels et psychologiques des utilisateurs. Ils sont conçus pour sensibiliser et inciter les gens à comprendre et méditer sur certaines réalités sociales de la vie, c'est-à-dire, les problèmes, les difficultés, les envies, la joie, la tristesse, le bonheur et le comportement rencontrés dans plusieurs occupations de la vie active. Ces messages tendent à*

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*démontrer que la vie active est pleine des hauts et des bas, traumatise, intrigue et est confrontée à beaucoup des réalités et situations. Il est évident que ces messages ont souvent comme but d'enseigner les vertus et la sagesse, suscitent la méditation, donnent de conseils, conseillent la prudence, préconisent le courage et la résilience, dénoncent la violence, corrigent et prêchent la justice dans la société. Ils jouent le rôle des proverbes qui cachent la vérité en eux et exigent un examen approfondi dans leur perception.*

**Mots - clé :** *Catchphrase ou slogan - véhicule - ville - République Démocratique du Congo.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The present research paper, *Beyond Catchphrases on Vehicles in Some Cities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A Sociolinguistic Study*, is the fruit of double observation. On the one hand, the high proliferation of branded vehicles in different cities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and, on the other hand, the semantic consumption of these brands by the public.

It consists of a study project whose rationale lies in the curiosity world of catchphrases painted on vehicles all over our cities and towns and other areas. It consists of an attempt to understand what is beyond those brands and to share their comprehension with the public. The public indeed merely throw their eyes on these phrases but they are not very often inquisitive about the meanings they stand for. It is here then that, as it will be explained later, we find out the place of semantics, the study of the meanings of words and phrases (Hornby, AS 2000).

The research paper targets three main cities: Goma, the capital city of the North Kivu Province, Bukavu, the capital city of the South Kivu Province and Kinshasa, the capital city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The collected brands are written in the following languages: Kiswahili, French, English, Lingala and Mashi. This multilingualism about brands collected on vehicles in those cities deserves a serious thought in order to cope with the impact it would have on the public.

It would be interesting for us to understand the motivation and the philosophy that urged the authors to conceive such slogans on their vehicles and the deep meanings they are meant to communicate to the Congolese people. In fact, brands on vehicles reflect the authors' philosophy and constitute one way to contribute to the achievement of such philosophy. Authors of those catchphrases act on many levels: at a given time, they intend to depict a society already torn into pieces and which then needs change; elsewhere, they present those catchphrases simply because they want to express and portray the social realities of their respective communities.

## **2. OBJECTIVE OF THE ARTICLE**

This article looks at attempting to understand the underlying intentions of the authors of catchphrases widely disseminated in the cities and towns of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and written on vehicles, shops, drugstores, etc. It intends to disclose what is beyond those catchphrases and decode the various messages they embody in order to share them with the public. It examines the contexts and circumstances which led their authors to display their internal feelings and ideas that denote a range of motives based on social paradigms that express individual struggle for life, general opinions and collective experiences. It attempts to analyse and interpret the philosophical, psychological, emotional and ethical opinions and views, hopes, wishes, exhortations, expectations, exaltations, exaggerations, eventualities, extremism, enthusiasm, optimism, pessimism and environmental wickedness expressed by authors in their catchphrases. Presumably, these catchphrases explore all spheres of social life by praising virtues and denouncing evils. They constitute a high perception of life and show that each situation and event have not only their burdens and worries that require relevant responses but also they provide thoughts and strategies conducive to specific solutions. Their objective consists then in arousing collective consciousness that may lead people to be aware of their environment that seems to be cruel and evil but also inspiring, evocative and resourceful.

## **3. METHODOLOGY OF THE WORK**

To collect data, we have elaborated a simple questionnaire of six questions which was submitted to thirty persons, specifically drivers, cars' owners and taxi passengers. Some of them accepted to be interviewed while others preferred to write their responses down. The other techniques used to gather data consisted in walking around the streets and standing in corners watching and writing down the brands marked on vehicles in the targeted cities and towns.

We adopted this strategy to avoid being considered as spies or intelligence service agents and to dispel frustration in the mind of the targeted people. Obviously, the above techniques were coupled with documentary sources. However, it should be noted that documentary sources were very rare due to the originality of the topic. Actually, no many researchers had focused on this topicalisation, hence the obvious difficulty to significantly tackle the challenge.

#### 4. CATCHPHRASES CORPUS

Before providing the list of catchphrases collected in some cities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it would make sense to define the concept “catchphrase”.

The concept “catchphrase” is according to Wikipedia website a short phrase or expression which has gained usage beyond its initial scope. Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (2003) adds that a catchphrase is a word or expression that is used repeatedly and conveniently to represent or characterize a person, group, idea, or point of view. In other words, it is a kind of phrase that attracts one’s attention. That is, the sender of the message is the holder of the sense of this message, and then it is up to the receiver to guess the content of what is said or written.

According to Richard Harris (2006: 863-879), a psychology professor at Kansas State University, who studied why people like to cite films in social situations, using film quotes in everyday conversation, asserts that catchphrase is a joke and a way to form solidarity with others. “People are doing it to feel good about themselves, to make others laugh, to make themselves laugh”, he said. A catchphrase is then a particular word or expression or a particular style of speaking and phrasing a cultural idea.

The present corpus was collected in Goma, Bukavu and Kinshasa as said earlier in noting down all essential messages inscribed on taxies and buses. They were all at 99% produced in local languages: Kiswahili, Lingala, Mashi, Kikongo, etc. At the first time, the draft sample was about 150 messages but after selection it came to a number of 100 graffiti. They were worked out by drivers themselves who were all males. This male sex can be explained by the fact that it is rare to have taxi-women in these towns due to traditions that do not ease females to drive. On this occasion we interviewed the script writers. To the question “why you put such messages on your cars”. Answers were somehow evasive but what is important is that these answers connote their intense needs to exteriorize their feelings as they could do it in media like radio, television, etc. That is, they express personal views they want to share and the easiest way to do so has been to script them down on their cars. When you come to passengers to ask them, “what do you feel when you enter a taxi which carries certain messages on it?” The answers were once again evasive but the evidence is that the message strikes the passengers though they do not question much their minds directly about what the deepest meaning should be. Scripts presented are simple and clear in their style, sometimes they are phrases or dictums, written on cars in paint. They are indicated on the windshields or the left and the right lateral sides of the vehicle.

The corpus is presented in the following charts pointing out the languages of the graffiti.

#### 4.1. Catchphrases in Kiswahili

Kiswahili is a language that is spoken mainly in the provinces of South Kivu, North Kivu, the former Province Orientale, Maniema and the former Province of Katanga in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

N°	Catchphrases	Translation	City
1.	Nitafute kiisha kazi	Look for me after work. I am available after finishing my work	Goma
2.	Mungu ni mukubwa	The Lord is great	Goma
3.	Mungu ni mwema	The Lord is fair	Goma
4.	Mpaka raha	Always happiness	Goma
5.	Mungu haja shindwa	God is not yet defeated	Goma
6.	Pumbafu analala njaa	The stupid man sleeps hungry	Goma
7.	Mema ni mema	Good actions remain good	Goma
8.	Acha wivu	Stop jealousy	Goma
9.	Nilikuwa kama wewe	I was like you	Bukavu
10.	Wokovu ni mali	Conversion is wealth	Bukavu
11.	Ungelijuwa	If you knew	Bukavu
12.	Mema ya nanitoshelea	Good actions are sufficient for me	Bukavu
13.	Hii ndiyo inanipa kuishi	I survive thanks to this	Bukavu
14.	Mjinga hulewa zarau	The stupid man drinks negligence	Bukavu
15.	Kazi ni raha	Work is happiness	Goma
16.	Chuki ni adui ya maendeleo	Hatred in the enemy of progress	Goma
17.	Wabaya wako	Bad people exist	Goma
18.	Acha domo	Give up speaking for speaking	Bukavu
19.	Acha roho mbaya	Give up bad heart	Bukavu
20.	Funga roho	Stay firm	Bukavu
21.	Uwazavyo sivyo	What you think is not always the truth	Bukavu
22.	Yesu ni jibu	Jesus is the solution	Bukavu + Goma
23.	Sisi nikazi tu	For us, it is only work	Bukavu
24.	Aksanti Mungu	Thanks God	Bukavu
25.	Soma Biblia	Read the Bible	Bukavu
26.	Juwa yako	Mind yours	Goma
27.	Ni wakati	It's time	Goma
28.	Umoja ni maendeleo	Unity is progress	Goma
29.	Vidole viwili huuwa chawa	Two fingers kill a louse. When people are united progress is possible	Goma+Bukavu

Source : Our research.

#### 4.2. Catchphrases in Mashi

Mashi is one of the Bantu languages spoken in the South Kivu Province.

N°	Catchphrase	Translation	City
01	Larh'oganze	God be glorified	Bukavu
02	Ni Lulema	It is the creator	Bukavu
03	Hyawe hinyi	Small but better	Bukavu

Source: Our research.

#### 4.3. Catchphrases in Lingala

Lingala is one of the four national languages spoken in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Originally spoken in the former province of Equateur it is nowadays spoken in many cities of the country due to its army and political influence.

N°	Catchphrase	Translation	City
01	Mabe na yomoko eteya yo	Your evil ideas return against yourself	Kinshasa
02	Bolamu zoba	Goodness is stupidity	Kinshasa
03	Kindoki au nom de Jésus	Witchcraft in the name of Jesus	Kinshasa
04	Ekolia yo	It will eat you	Kinshasa
05	Zanga mosala oyeba mabe ya muasi	Lack job and then discover the negative side of a woman	Kinshasa
06	Batela musala moninga kosenga eza pasi	Mind your work, begging is suffering	Kinshasa
07	Liboke ya moninga ba - sombelaka yango kuanga te	One cannot buy cassava bread for something hidden in a friend's liana leaves bundle	Kinshasa
08	Kolia soso kolia maki	Eating chicken eating eggs	Kinshasa
09	Nani ayebisi yo ke eza yo ?	Who tells you it is you ?	Kinshasa
10	Songi ya mbeli balakisaka yango likofi te	A knife blade is never shown a blow	Kinshasa
11	Kanda te zuwa te	No anger no jealousy	Kinshasa
12	Tika muana	Leave the child alone	Kinshasa
13	Kolia na mwasi kolia na ndoki	Eating with a woman is eating with a witch	Kinshasa
14	Nzete ya mbila bakata ezo kola	The palm tree is exploited while growing up	Goma+Kinshasa
15	Yo nani ?	What are you ?	Goma
16	Molakisi nzela	The teacher is the way	Kinshasa



17	Kozua ya moninga epesa yo likunia te	Your neighbour's chance, your friend's chance should not frustrate you	Kinshasa
18	Kipe ya yo	Do not interfere in other people's matters	Kinshasa

Source: Our research.

#### 4.4. Catchphrases in French

French is the official language of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, introduced in this country by colonizers from the Belgian kingdom. Such phrases are most of the time addressed to intellectuals: those who can interpret the deepest meanings carried by the expressions used.

N°	Catchphrase	Translation	City
01	Merci Seigneur	Thanks Lord	Bukavu
02	Sois pose	Compose!	Bukavu
03	Dieu est grand	God is great	Bukavu
04	Saint!	Saint!	Bukavu
05	Josué	Joshua	Bukavu
06	La promesse de Dieu	God's promise	Goma
07	Dieu n'a jamais été corrompu	God is never corrupt	Goma
08	Eternel Dieu, Merci	Eternal God, thank you	Goma
09	Psaume 351 : 9	Psalms 331 : 9	Goma
10	Qui est derrière toi ?	Who is behind you ?	Goma
11	Miracles de Dieu	God's miracles	Kinshasa
12	Esprit de mort	Death spirit	Kinshasa
13	Staff kinois	Kinshasa staff	Kinshasa
14	Esprit de vie	Life spirit	Kinshasa
15	Rien que la prière	Prayer nothing else	Bukavu
16	Tout est accompli	All is achieved	Bukavu
17	Boite noire	Black box	Kinshasa
18	Bonne humeur	Good humour	Kinshasa
19	Démon de contrôle	Control devil	Kinshasa
20	Elévation de Dieu	Elevation of God	Kinshasa

Source : Our research.

#### 4.5. Catchphrases in English

This is a language that is mainly taught in secondary schools beside French in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These catchphrases are very often used by businessmen and drivers or owners of cars who frequently go to neighbouring English speaking countries like Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya.

N°	Catchphrase	Translation	City
01	All from God	XXXXXX	Goma
02	No time	XXXXXX	Bukavu
03	One love	XXXXXX	Bukavu
04	Just have faith, it will work out	XXXXXX	Bukavu
05	God is one	XXXXXX	Bukavu
06	Hunter kiboko	XXXXXX	Goma
07	Blessing force	XXXXXX	Goma
08	Thanks Lord	XXXXXX	Goma
09	Just man	XXXXXX	Bukavu
10	No beef	XXXXXX	Bukavu

Source: Our research.

## 5. TOPICALISATION OF THE CATCHPHRASES

As said earlier, these scripts aim at attracting readers, community members on certain social perspectives. They involve many functions. They constitute communication and culture educational channels. They constitute tools that enable some people externalize their deepest thoughts. They also contain various themes and their arrangement and processing have been operated according to these themes they bear on.

### 5.1. Recognition and acknowledgement catchphrases

Authors of this kind of catchphrases introduce us into faith in God. All the series displays deep religious feelings deriving from the outcome of their daily job. They are meant to show that persisting prayer to ask God something always results in something real and underline God's blessing in every undertaking. They are aimed at showing that faith in God proves to be rewarding. Obviously, the yardstick for success in business is measured in terms of faith, prayers and close relationship with God for He drives everything.

Catchphrases of this type can be split into three sections. The first category focuses on thanks to God. Their authors are very thankful to God for He hears and rewards those who increasingly ask him for something. They illustrate the fact that whoever knocks at God's door the door is very often opened to him by obtaining what he asks for.

These expressions of thanks are exemplified by:

- Thanks Lord
- Merci Seigneur = Thank you God
- Eternel Dieu merci = Eternal God, thank you
- Larh'oganze = God be glorified
- Yesu ni jibu = Jesus stands for any solution

It is important to note here that cars' owners we questioned to know why they wrote these graffiti on their vehicles stated straightforwardly that these constituted an unequivocal

recognition towards God who pulled them through harsh realities of life they had been undergoing.

The second category illustrates the firm faith in God. Trust in God actually constitutes the key of success in business activities. Faith in God results in the achievement of innumerable things. Basing on the religious character of these expressions, it has yielded to the authors the expected and unexpected outcome and profit. It has opened to them a window of unquestionable opportunities they were not expecting. The illustrative examples are:

- Just have faith, it will work out
- La promesse de Dieu = God's promise
- Dieu est grand = God is great
- Rien que la prière = Prayer nothing else
- Mungu hajashindwa = God has never been defeated

The third series denotes God's might. It clearly shows that God is Almighty and nothing can escape him. He is the creator and presides over everything. Catchphrases embodying this religious feeling are the following:

- God is one
- Elevation de Dieu = elevation of God
- Dieu n'a jamais été corrompu = God has never been corrupted
- Kindoki au nom de Jesus = Witchcraft in the name of Jesus
- Ni lulema = Jesus is the creator

Authors of these catchphrases relative to this topicalisation invite consumers to experience the highlights of the Almighty. They witness that God's kindness and vitality back up those who are in need.

These messages arouse the receivers' awareness of being brave and determined in all that they undertake as God remains their only absolute solution and strength. Also, the aspect of patience becomes an additional ingredient to look at when telling somebody who is desperate that God remains the ultimate solution.

## **5.2. Injunction catchphrases**

Robert J. Sharpe (1992: 4 - 5) defines injunction as a remedy by which the court orders a party to do or refrain from doing a particular act or thing. In addition to this definition, Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2000: 616) defines it as "a warning or an order from somebody in authority". So the term "injunction" is not used radically in this paper. It rather embodies a social character. The following phrases have been selected as injunctive ones:

- a. No time!
- b. Sois posé! Compose !
- c. Tika mwana! Give up the child!
- d. Jua yako! Mind yours!
- e. Soma biblia! Read the Bible!

f. Acha chuki! Give up hatred!

In other words, in their analysis, these expressions superficially and grammatically seem to point out “commands” given to people and society while their deep meanings provide tips exhorting them to be aware that the time has not to be wasted for it is money (“Time is money”), that hastiness has to be avoided as much as possible before acting (“sois posé” = “Compose”), that a child is not able to achieve anything at this age so that one cannot count on him/her until he/she becomes mature (“Tika mwana” = Give up the child), that one has to avoid interfering in other people’s matters for societal harmony (“Jua yako” = Mind yours), that one has to be involved in reading the bible for keeping moral purity (“Soma Biblia” = Read the Bible), and that, eventually, one has to avoid hatred towards other people because it can drive you to misfortune (“Acha chuki” = Give up hatred).

### 5.3. Catchphrases calling for solidarity

Merriam Webster’s Dictionary (2016: 345) defines solidarity as ‘unity which produces or based on unity of interests, objectives, standards, and sympathies’. It refers to the ties in society that bind people together as one.

The term is generally employed in sociology and the other social sciences as well as in philosophy or in social teaching to mean that you alone cannot succeed in life and that progress and development involve many people who are united and understand each other. These catchphrases constitute expression of social life that people share wherever they live. Most of Congolese are characterized by this virtue. Such use of words is not only a way of transmitting social values but also a way of conserving and perpetuating culture. The use of such expressions makes an appeal to unity among people so that when people share the same vision they are likely to develop rapidly. The expression “one love” reminds us of the songs of the famous South African singer Lucky Dube, who titled his song in this way because he was eager to contribute to the fall of Apartheid which split the South African Society. “One love” meaning people together although they are of different colours, different sexes, different origins, etc. constitutes force. Examples illustrating this theme are the following:

- a. Vidole viwili huuwa chawa = Two fingers easily kill lice
- b. Umoja ni maendeleo = Unity is progress
- c. Hyawe hinyi = few but better
- d. One love

The authors of these graffiti invite whoever wants to understand that loneliness leads to lack of progress for a human being. When people unite their forces, visions, ideas and projects, they easily sort out their problems and achieve many things and attain their targets. The expression “Hyawe hinyi” in Mashi meaning in English “few but better” illustrates clearly how people can address issues and reach satisfaction though they are not in a great number. Solidarity is a mutual support of people who have the same interests, aims and opinions etc.

#### **5.4. Self-reliance catchphrases**

The sample of the selected phrases dealing with this specific theme encompasses the following:

- a. Tout est accompli = Everything is achieved (I don't need help)
- b. Hunter Kiboko = The hunter is Kiboko (A dynamic or fearless hunter)
- c. Kipe ya yo = Mind your own business. Do not interfere in other people's matters
- d. Kozua ya moninga epesa yo likunia te = Your friend's success should not drive you to jealousy
- e. Liboke ya moninga basombelaka yango kwanga te = One cannot buy cassava break for something hidden in a friend's liana leaves bundle
- f. Funga roho = Remain persevering
- g. Hii ndiyo inanipa kuishi = My life lies in this (My life depends on this)

The above catchphrases hold a convergent message: self-reliance. They mean that one should understand that in some circumstances one must be the manager one's life. One should not always be dependent on other people. One must rely on oneself instead of begging all the time.

It is important to say that in the area where these catchphrases were collected beggars and lazy people are numerous. They spend their time begging from passers-by and travelers while many of them are fit to work and can rack their brains to perform a job. Hence, these catchphrases constitute a tremendous social communication to make their authors aware that they should not all the time count on other people but they should do their best to pull themselves out of their vegetative situation in which they are involved.

Man should make himself a self-made man. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1850: 23-27) in his essay Representative Men urges the individual to listen to his / her inner voice, to be bold and brave enough to trust that inner genius. According to him, self-reliance constitutes the source of creativity and non-conformity. In addition, by listening to that inner voice, the individual eludes absorbing negative doctrines of social institutions and evil ideologies of other people. The inwardly-focused, self-reliant individual uses his own mind as a source of creativity.

Creativity does not exclude learning from others. It is rather a process of innovation. In short, millionaires we find in different countries planned out and achieved their own ways. They relied on their own efforts which led them to become millionaires.

#### **5.5. Catchphrases involving carefulness**

The topicalisation of the catchphrases is infused with wisdom that involves carefulness and prudence in life. It actually deals with and explores human nature, attitude, behaviour and evil that man (man and woman) are imbued with. It actually discloses the very corrupt and unstable essence of man.

Therefore, it edifies and exhorts people to be careful and prudent in every act they undertake. They are required to always be aware of their surrounding or environment or to know well the persons they live with.

Some of the selected catchphrases pointing out carefulness include the following:

- Songi ya mbeli balakisa yango likofi te = The knife blade is never shown a blow
- Mabe na yomoko eteya yo = You have to learn from your own evil acts
- Kolia na mwasi kalia na ndoki = Eating with a woman is eating with a witch
- Zanga mosala oyeba mabe ya mwasi = Lack a job you will discover a woman's evil
- Wabaya wako = Bad people exist
- Nani ayebisiyo ke eza yayo? = Who told you it is yours?

In the light of these catchphrases the moralizers actually moralize people through their experience of everyday life. For instance, Christian Mbemba is among the drivers we met in Kinshasa and had written on his mini-bus "Esprit de Mort" (the Spirit of death) to mean that his bus has become old and car break down at any time to kill people or passengers. The catchphrase "Kolia na mwasi kolia na ndoki", (Eating with a woman is eating with a witch) reveals that his wife was the keeper of the money collected from the bus transactions and ran away with it. Thus, he intended to share his experience with other people. Actually, his wife betrayed the trust he had in her and obviously he was constrained to open a bank account to keep his money instead of confiding it to his next wife.

This catchphrase turns out to generalize women's evil conduct but the author attempts to display his sour experience with his wife although all women do not act the way she did. However, he edifies men in general to be aware that women seem to love men while they are attracted most by materialism. Beardsley (2009: 78) points out that "Prudence leads to victory". This means that carefulness should turn out a "leitmotiv" in the life of men. Women are not trustful as it is stated in "Zanga mosala oyeba mabe ya masi". In looking at all the series of the above catchphrases, the message proves to be unique. Their authors develop and convey the same message. Carefulness involves stern discipline and responsibility in everyday life. Catchphrases as "Songi ya mbeli balakisa yango likofi te", "Mabe na yomoko eteya yo", "Wabaya wako", etc. increasingly echo the same theme.

### **5.6. Moralizing and encouraging catchphrases**

As discussed in the previous themes, the subsequent phrases raise questions that drive people to think about the way they should morally lead their lives. They advise people to remain brave despite whatever situations they may face. They encourage people to find out therapeutic solutions to laziness, discouragement, hatred, egoism, jealousy, hearsay, which obviously turns out to be the very impediment of progress.

The sample lists the following:

- a. Funga roho = Remain persevering

- b. Nilikuwa kama wewe = I was like you
- c. Pumbafu hulala njaa = Only idiots sleep hungry
- d. Acha roho mbaya = Give up bad heart
- e. Mema ni mema = Charity remains charity
- f. Chuki ni adui ya maendeleo = Hatred is the enemy of progress
- g. Batela musala moninga ya kosenga pasi = Mind your work, begging is suffering

In attempting to distil these various expressions, the addressors send potential messages which overwhelm the addressees' minds due to their pervasive and persuasive effects on them. Presumably, when reading a phrase such as "Funga roho" the addressor advocates perseverance as a tremendous virtue in any undertaking to achieve it. Perseverance enables anyone to succeed in business where one could not. "Nilikuwa kama wewe" appeals to people not to boast because what makes you boasting may disappear at any time depending on unfortunate circumstances. Also, it means that initially somebody can be hesitating or proceed tentatively in his initiative but finally he succeeds in it. On the other hand, when carefully reading the phrase "Pumbafu hulala njaa" you understand that it points out an archetype catchphrase that obviously encourages people to be imaginative, inventive and undertaking and to be able to rack one's brains instead of remaining inactive should a difficult situation arise.

Besides, "Batela musala moninga ya kosenga pasi" suggests that "work is a work" and there is no stupid and useless work in life. If you have a work no matter its dimension and goal you have to respect and care about it. In "Acha roho mbaya", the author alludes to those people who do not wish other people to succeed in their life. It urges people to be kind with others as you do not know who will rescue you while you get yourself in a web of problems. If you have the opportunity to help others help them because kindness is always rewarding. It admonishes us not to be jealous of other people's success. Hence, the phrase "Mema ni mema" enhances the fact that a good turn you do somebody always ends in another good turn. Finally, "Chuki ni adui ya maendeleo" shows that hatred impedes progress or development. Hatred excludes collaboration with other people. It leads nowhere. On the contrary it delays development because everyone admittedly needs the ideas of other people if one wants to go ahead. For instance, tribalism alienates people from others and prevents each other from benefiting from mutual scientific, social and economic contribution.

It actually exacerbates hatred towards other people. Assuredly, distant attitude towards other community fellows or aliens results in a favourable factor of progress hindrance.

### **5.7. Catchphrases appealing to social behaviour change**

The following catchphrases collected especially in Goma and Bukavu cities are addressed to people who live under the yoke of ignorance, poverty, carelessness, gossiping and slander. They provide society with lots of advice and attempt to help them change their indecent behaviour. They are meant to teach people the way they should live with others and to address some of the problems that would arise in an unwanted situation.

The following can be pointed out as illustrative sample:

Acha domo = Stop with your meaningless talk

Nitafute kisha kazi = Look for me after work

Ungelijue = If you knew

Mjinga hulea zarau = The stupid becomes drunk with contempt

Bonne humeur = Good humour

In the light of the above graffiti, let us try to decode the messages drivers address the public. In “Acha domo”, the addressor intends to say that one has to restrain oneself to talk too much about a subject one does not master or to show that one is the only person who knows more things than others. In an argument with other people over a specific topic it is always better to be reserved, reticent, reluctant and restrained to talk too much instead of glaringly displaying one’s ignorance that could lay yourself open to ridicule.

About “Nitafute kisha kazi”, it is clear that one should not disturb other people during their work time. This is evident that the expression “Everything has its day” applies and “it is worth its weight in gold” because “time is money” in every business activity.

The expression “Ungelijua” is not easy to interpret. However, in attempting to engage into a deep analysis of this expression, we understand that the author hints to people that they should not conclude from a fact in haste due to the fact that they are not aware of the “conditions and facts that are connected with and affect the situation” (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 2000: 194). In other words, it is always wise to keep silent and be reluctant to make declarations about some circumstances of which you do not know anything.

To the expression “Mjinga hulewa kazarau”, it is important to note that when somebody is satisfied with a particular situation he thinks that all the others enjoy the same situation. He indulges in mocking others and looks them down. He does not figure out that an unhappy and unexpected situation may occur to him and find himself in the same situation. Presumably, that is the case of upstart rich people who seem not to be aware of the situation of poor people struggling for life in their everyday activities.

Talking about “Bonne humeur”, the essential message lies in the fact that despite the problems, difficulties, adverse situations and harsh life one faces one has to keep good mood and one has not to lose one’s temper.

### **5.8. Catchphrases reflecting police hassles towards drivers**

In Bukavu as well as in other cities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, police officers own private cars or mini-buses that generate money daily. The drivers of these vehicles are never hassled by road traffic policemen even if they do not have traffic documents.



The owners have pointed out on them brands that identify their cars in order to escape the traffic control. In that case, the traffic control concerns other vehicles and not theirs. Among those catchphrases we can cite the following sample:

Demon de contrôle = Control demon

Franckal = The name derives from Franck who is the owner of the car

Larh'oghanze = Glory to God

Mokonzi nde mokonzi = The chief is the chief

The traffic police are already aware of those specific brands of the targeted vehicles. They denote the corrupt traffic system of the Democratic Republic of the Congo which divides the citizens into two categories: the privileged and the non-privileged. The privileged never pay taxes for their businesses whereas the non-privileged do. Traffic hassles do not concern the former but they do for the latter. That is the case all over the country.

### **5.9. Catchphrases aiming at a change for development**

In Kinshasa there exist two types of buses or mini-buses: old ones and new ones. Old ones regularly make accidents in which people often die. New ones preserve lives of people. These two categories stand for the following catchphrases:

Esprit de mort = The spirit of death

Esprit de vie = The spirit of life

“Esprit de mort” regards the old buses which usually kill people. When passengers get into them they are not sure to reach their destination. They expect them to make accidents or to break down.

“Esprit de vie” regards the new buses which are secure and reach their destinations safely. Death risks are highly limited. Also, this brand is meant to attract passengers for its comfort. They also ensure that thefts are rarely operated in them.

What are the messages these catchphrases want to convey to people? In fact, these two categories of buses symbolize the two social strata or social classes existing in the capital city of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The old buses, the unattractive ones, termed “Esprit de mort”, symbolize the poor class, the non-haves, who cannot afford paying their bus fares due to the fact that they lead a miserable social life. Bus fares in their buses and mini-buses are very cheap. They are not son expensive in that they ease the transport of the non-haves. Bus fares fit their social level and conditions. Therefore, they are constrained to travel into those filthy buses at their own risk and bear up in flesh and soul under this intolerable situation as their financial means are limited.

On the other hand, the new buses, the most attractive ones, termed “Esprit de vie”, symbolize the rich class, the haves, who can afford paying their bus fares easily as they roll in wealth. They avoid getting into those filthy buses as they obviously do not fit their social level and conditions. They are reserved for lower class.

Presumably, these catchphrases reflect the flagrant gap existing between the poor and the rich in Kinshasa. In other words, they truthfully embody the social conditions which actually split the society in Kinshasa. On the one hand, the glaring poverty prevailing in Kinshasa society in particular and on the other hand the scandalous richness in which a few people roll in Kinshasa society in particular and in our country in general.

## CONCLUSION

This article has attempted to seek and understand the reasons which urge drivers and owners of buses and lorries to write various catchphrases on their vehicles in different towns and cities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. It has defined its objective and described the methodology used to collect data translated in the languages used in the country.

The paper has discussed different themes contained in the catchphrases raising and reflecting the social realities and conditions drivers and vehicles' owners encounter in their daily activities. As drivers encounter a lot of problems in their work they express them in those catchphrases. However, those graffiti do not only evoke the difficulties vehicles' drivers and owners undergo but they also display the returns they get from their work, and at the same time they embody several provocative messages full of counsels and virtues directed to the society in which they live.

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