

THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF TSANGAYA COMMUNICATION SLANGS IN NORTHERN PART OF NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated thematic analysis of Tsangaya communication slangs in Northern part of Nigeria. The general objective of the study is to analyse the thematic Analysis of Tsangaya Communication Slang in Northern Part Nigeria. The study achieved the following objectives: Examined different ways in which they get food and terms used in obtaining food slang in Tsangaya Community in Northern Part of Nigeria, determined the ways in which indicating level of intelligence understanding of the person, the positions and the places of education in the tsangaya system of education and determine slang in terms of personality, level of education and movement to another in tsangaya community in northern part, Nigeria. The research adopted survey design. The Snowball/Chain-referral stratified sampling procedure techniques employed in selecting the sample of the study. The data was collected from primary source through face-to-face interview. The government should collaborate with all stakeholders in formalizing and funding tsangaya teaching and learning, Government should also collaborate with Academics, Authors, researchers to mount a strategic campaign, community mobilization and awareness through various media platforms and physical orientations to educate the general public on the impact of tsangaya teaching and learning **in Nigeria**, there is a need for the government at all levels of governance to provision of enough and available documentary system/materials and mobilize community and enforcement effective inspection, monetary and evaluation to the system

KEYWORD: Thematic, Slang, Tsangaya, Communication,

Introduction

The *Tsangaya* school system of education is a system of learning inherited over many centuries and geared towards the study of Qur'an and other Islamic knowledge. The system is found in most other Muslim Societies and civilizations throughout the world with variations in some details. It predates colonialism and the Jihad of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio and the formation of Sokoto caliphate (1804 – 1903). Pupils are brought from far and near places to villages, town and cities to study Qur'an and Islam at very tender age and grow with little or no family links. The pupils move from place to place at the pleasure of parents who decide the best *Malam* teacher to go to (Nuhu, 2022)

Oxford Advanced Learner (2020) defined Slang as a very informal words and expressions that are more common in spoken languages, especially used by a particular group of people, for example children, criminals, soldiers, etc teenage slang, rhyming slang or slang is very informal language, sometimes restricted to a particular group of people, for example people of the same age or those who have the same interests or do the same job. One of the most important ways through which all language develop and acquire new vocabularies is through the creation of slang. As sociolinguistic term, slangs are usages which are characterized by their informally and originality. In other words, slangs can be seen as a kind of jargon that is "characterized by a high degree of informality, familiarity and vocabulary richness" (Burdova, 2009).

Slang is very informal language or specific words used by a particular group of people. You'll usually hear spoken more often than you'll see it put in writing, though emails and texts often contain many conversational slang words. Though slang sometimes gets a bad rap for being inappropriate or incorrect, it's also highly creative and shows that the English language is constantly evolving over time Slang terms are often only understood by people in a certain group, using slag is, above all, a way to show that you belong. You show that you're one of the crowd by using terms that others don't understand, and you can connect with like-minded people who understand just what you mean by using the latest slang terms (Kittelstand, 2020). Slang is not a common, everyday usage of language, but a special way of showing closeness, intimacy and solidarity among members of a particular speech community.

Spolsky (1998) define slang as a "kind of jargon marked by its rejection of formal rules, its comparative freshness and its marked use to claim solidarity" following the same line of argument. Eble (1996) also considers novelty and ephemera city as the principal characteristics of slang.

According to Oha *et al* (2010) slang are traditionally considered as vulgar, offensive or profane forms of language with a strong colour of irreverence and yet vitality in a society. This suggests that, through people are likely to develop condescension towards slang, it is still very important to the growth of a language. Additionally, when one compares slangs and the general vocabulary in a language, the former seen to exist for a shorter time, because they are either replaced by another term or they provide a synonym for a word already existing in slang (Burdove 2009). Coleman (2004) noted that slang is often short-lived and usually belongs to a specific age or social clique and is used like a fashion to define in-groups and out-groups.

Slangs are often associated with group membership and its taken to be some specialized kind of “inmate” or in-group speech (Spolsky, 1998). They are generally used by group of people who share something in common, as such; they are sometimes use intentionally to obtain some degree of secrecy. According to Leech and Svartuik (1981), slang is mostly “restricted to the members of a particular social group” Ola *et al* (2010) describe slang as a “secret language of a cult”. Indeed this explains are (in) famours for their use of slang. In many languages, there is slang for armed force, labour union, lawyers, and teenagers and so on. Therefore, slangs could be define and identified by their functions, (Yul-Ifode, 2011).

One of the interesting features of slangs is that it can appear and disappear, depending on the current fashion style. The meaning of slang words or phrases can also extend from their original domain of usage to another (Yusuf and Ismail, 2017). Before advent of Europeans masters to introduce western education to the Northern Nigeria there was no Bara (begging) in to the tsangaya, the introducing formal western education diverted the attention of government and Muslim community neglected tsangaya education, tsangaya became isolated from society. Neither government nor the leaders/emirs pay attention to the *tsangaya* schools and the system contributing food items, funding the system (Musa, 2016). It is therefore, against this background the study assessed the thematic analysis of *tsangaya* communication slang in Northern Part Nigeria.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to Thematic Analysis of Tsangaya Communication Slang in Northern Part Nigeria. The study sets out to achieve the following objectives: To

1. Examine different ways in which they get food and terms used in obtaining food slang in Tsangaya Community in Northern Part of Nigeria.

2. Determine the Ways in Which Indicating Level of Intelligence/ Understanding of the Person, the Positions and the Places of Education in the *Tsangaya* System of Education
3. Determine slang in terms of personality, level of education and movement to another in *tsangaya* community in Northern part, Nigeria

Research Methodology

The research adopted survey design. The Snowball/Chain-referral stratified sampling procedure techniques employed in selecting the sample of the study. The data was collected from primary source through face-to-face interview.

WAYS IN WHICH THEY GET FOOD AND TERMS USED IN OBTAINING FOOD

Bara (Begging): It is a way in which *almajirai* follow to get food. They wander the house to house or street by street holding a small calabash, metal bowl, or robber bowl to beg for *sadaka* (charity/food). They have different styles of begging like *alaro*, *sadaka*, *allazi wahidin sadaka*, *almajiri bara* or *dan kanzo*, and so on.

Zaman Sidi (Waiting for Leftover Food): It is the wiping out of food leftovers inside a bowl using fingers. In the tradition of Hausa man, a married man doesn't usually eat food alone in his house. Men in the neighborhood bring dinners out where they assemble altogether. When the men are eating, *almajirai* will gather and squat at a little distance away from them and wait for food to remain. That type of waiting for the leftover is called *Zaman Sidi* which literally means waiting or sitting for the food left. That means when the men are sated the remaining will be given to them to finish it. They will share the little that remains among them, no matter how little. At times, it is only the stew that will be robbed on your hand, and be told that if you feel moisture, it is what has been gotten. This is because of the littleness of the food or injustice and greediness.

Uwar Daki (Mistress/Female Boss): That is a woman by whom an *almajiri* will be serving like running errands, working, writing some Qur'anic verses on his slate for washing drinking the writing, and she will be giving him food, some little money, and clothes as the reward of his labor. *Almajirai* calls her *Uwar Daki* (Mistress/Female boss).

Gajala (Concoction): That is when *almajirai* get a portion of food and eat it to their satisfaction; they will gather all the different leftovers in one bowl and keep it for the following day. On the next day, they will add water, salt, pepper, locust bean, and other ingredients and put them on the fire. The food contains different soups all cooked together.

Makiyallah: It is the form of begging done by *almajirai* on Friday at mosques or on market Days, Saying *Makiyalla* Loudly Begging People.

Dako: It has the same meaning as *Buka*. When an *Almajiri* goes to a house to beg for food and is informed that the food isn't ready, he will go outside and wait. When another *Almajiri* comes, the former will inform him I'm the one doing *Buka* or *Dako*, meaning waiting.

Dille: It means give me/help me no matter little. If *Almajiri* sees his fellow *Almajiri* eating food, he will say *Dille*, if he knows him. If doesn't know him he will say '*Dille* my brother', meaning give me little. When *Almajirai* see another *Almajiri* that cannot fight them, or they realize that he is stingy and he holds food, they sometimes say, "*dille* (give us little, or *fashi* (robbery), or *wawa* (scrambling to grab the food by Force) or let's go to *Malam* (their teacher),". If he refuses to give them, they will then grab the bowl by force and eat all the food, no matter what the consequences will be. This one is also a habit of *almajirai*. In other word it is a word of entreating, beseeching, imploring, prayerful, petitioning, suppliant, pleading, or begging uses in pleading food from their brothers by saying "*dille dan uwa*" means I begging you my brother. or I entreating you my brother.

Qalqala: This is another form of begging food from the one that did *Dille*. If an *Almajiri* got some remaining food, five morsels for instance, if he runs into another *Almajiri*, the latter will say *Dille* brother. The former will give him like a morsel. When another *Almajiri* runs into the one with the single morsel he will give him his bowl and say *Kalkala*. The morsel owner will cut a little portion of the morsel and give it to him. If another one sees him and begs again, he will smear the stew on his hand for him to lick.

Tandewa (Licking up): It is the act of begging from *Kalkala*. If a morsel is given to somebody that does *Kalkala*, you that is related to him will say to him *Tandé*. He will then smear the soup on your hand for you to lick up. That's why they say if you feel moisture, that's the food.

Ba: If an *Almajiri* says to his fellow *Almajiri* *Dille* my brother and the other doesn't want to give him, he will cut a small morsel from the food and give him, or smear the soup on his hand for him to lick it up. It means he has given him unwillingly.

Kallami: Grownup *Almajirai* recite Qur'an congregationally between *Magrib* and *Isha* prayers. They are too big to wander the communities to beg for food, but some houses send them food as a charity during that recitation time. There is always one grownup *Almajiri* that is in charge of collecting the food and keeping them aside. After *Isha'i* prayer, which is the time for eating the food, the one in

charge of collecting the food will say *Warat*, and they will all come to eat the food. It's the collected food that is called *Kallami*.

Warat: It is a form of calling, meaning 'come and eat food' (Kallami).

***Cin Abinchin Jahilai* (Eating Mode of Ignorant People):** that's eating food between *Magrib* and *Isha* prayers. Normally, *Almajirai* recites Qur'an during the period. They then go out in search of food afterward. They call whoever eats food during that period of recitation Ignorant because his fellows are at school and no one will get a chance to eat from him.

Banda (Smoked Fish): This word was originally used by fish sellers. When carrying the fish, they package and tie it in a unique style. Like the way, a slate is enclosed and carried in the animal's hide or rug, when a young *almajiri* or an adult *almajiri* is leaving home for the search of knowledge (*almajiranci*) he packs and ties his little clothes and other properties similar to that fish packaging style. That's why they call it the packaging of smoked fish. (Haruna, 2023)

THE WAYS IN WHICH INDICATING LEVEL OF INTELLIGENCE/ UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERSON, THE POSITIONS AND THE PLACES OF EDUCATION IN THE TSANGAYA SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Dan Kafe (Brilliant): He is the one that Allah bestowed with a high level of brilliance and intelligence and finds the system of tsangaya very simple. He usually comes before others but becomes the best.

Dakiki (Dullard): He is the one who does not easily understand or learn, and that's how Allah created him.

Kuri: He is the one that people praise as *kuri*, *malam's* kid, meaning a young *Almajiri*.

Buka: When *Almajiri* goes to a house and begs for food and is informed by the owners of the house that the food is not ready yet, he will then go outside the house and wait. That waiting is called *Buka* waiting. If another *Almajiri* wants to enter the house to beg again, the one waiting tells him "I'm doing *Buka*", meaning I'm the one waiting. Sometimes he will even drop his bowl inside the house or at the entrance room to the compound and walk away. When another *Almajiri* comes and sees the bowl he will leave because someone else has come before him.

Dangwazai (The Serving One): It means the servant. Mostly, you will find a grownup *Almajiri* that receives food from many houses. Being a grownup, he can't enter the houses, so he assigned (gets) a small *Almajiri* and sends him to the houses to collect the food for him. The small *Almajiri* also warms the food for him when stayed overnight. The small *Almajiri* is often praised as *Dan Gwazai landaka wuta*, literally meaning small *Gwazai* (boy) your reward is fire. When he warms the food, he gives it to the grownup one without even tasting it, no portion

of the food will be given to him. That's why they say his reward is only the hotness of the fire.

Ja Dare (Night's Recitation): This is the congregational recitation of the Holy Qur'an in the *tsangaya* after Isha'i prayer up to 11 pm before sleeping.

Malami (Teacher): He is the one teaching the students.

Gardi (Matured/Grownup/Adult *Almajiri*): He is a matured *Almajiri* that can read and write Arabic. He writes verses of the Qur'an on his slate and goes to *Malam* to recite them.

Almajiri: He is a young boy that leaves home to study Qur'an. He is also called *Kolo*. The plural of it is called *Almajirai*. In other word is a Muslim (northerners/hausa/Fulani) child migrated from his actual place of birth to another village or town searching for Qur'anic education. The word *Al muhajir* originated from Arabic word means *muhajirun* (emigrants), refers to the companions of the prophet Muhammad saw those who migrated from makka to madina for the sake of Allah.

Kolo (beginner): The word has the same meaning as *Almajiri*. a young kid that leaves home in search of Qur'anic knowledge. In other word is a beginner start learns from Qur'anic alphabet consonant (*babbaku*), vowels (*farfaru*, words (*hajjatu*) then he learn how to construct or read verses, the he learn how to write slate with black liquid ink (*tawada*)

Titibiri (Adolescent): He is the one that's in-between *kolo* and *gardi* by age. He is neither a child nor an adult. People call him *titibiri* (adolescent) the beginning of *gardi* (adult).

Balla (Novice/Beginner): he is a fresh/new *Almajiri* brought to a *tsangaya* school. People call him the beginner because was never taken to Tsangaya School before. Usually, he is found to be worried and very nervous. Some will even be crying because of leaving home. When his fellows see him worrying and crying, they start laughing and making fun of him, saying he is *Balla* and he will soon be used to the system.

Kadikko (Emigrant): is a *tsangaya* student who graduated from *tsangaya* school, he is free to leave and go anywhere but he decided to stay in he take married or acquired a farm land in their *tsangaya* area and continue to live on his own. Mostly *tsangaya* grandaunts do not return to their villages the migrated to another town or villages and establish their own *tsangaya*.

Tsoma: In *tsangaya* schools, sometimes some students are extremely intelligent. No other student completes them. He doesn't care to eat food and no one knows his village or his family. He also doesn't mingle much with other students. He is very perfect to the level that no correction is made for him when he writes on his slate and read it to *Malam*. People believe that he is a jinni and the elders of that

tsangaya school recognize him. His kinds are usually found in *tsangaya* where people of different and unknown homes come. If a man is extremely intelligent and perfect in writing Qur'an without any errors, people call him *Tsoma*. *Tsoma* does not harm people at all, unlike *Magaru*.

Magaru: He is a jinni and a witch that harm *Almajirai*.

Mai Tsangaya (Founder of Tsangaya School): He is a founder of a *Tsangaya* school but not one of the best teachers in the school. Some other teachers in the school are more learned than him but he is the founder and leader of the school.

Tsangaya: It is a Qur'anic school that has a lot of *almajirai* (students) and teachers. It is usually located at the front of the grand teacher's house or a special place specifically for Qur'anic education. In other word it is an Qur'anic institution where by concentrates on the teaching, learning and research of reading and writing of the qur'an, mostly qira'atul *warshu*, from beginners (*kolawa* to professor (*Gangaran*), nursery to university, through the wooden tablets (*allo*), under supervision of *maidarasu* (instructor)

Lakka (Isolation center/place): Is mud-thatches roof house usually built in an isolated place far away from the town especially for *tsangaya* student with that accommodates two to three students for the purpose of learning, memorization of the holy qur'an donated by wealth people, emirs.

Kiskali (Isolation center/place): Is a hut build by few students of *tsangaya* in an isolated places outside of village or city in order to fully concentrate of memorization of the holy *Qur'an* without noise or disturbances. Majority a *gardi* who memorize the holy Qur'an in his heart he moved to *kiskali* and isolate himself to adhere, patronage, perfect and well memories to the extent, in this stage he don't much care about food mostly eat once a day. The Norman stays in *kiskali* from morning to evening then he come back to *tsangaya* whereby general studies take place.

Lakka/Lakkoko (Room): It is a sleeping room for *Almajirai* in *Tsangaya* School. The difference between *lakka* and *kiskali* are: *lakka* it is mud-thatches roof house in form of group of people as a isolation center, while *kiskali* a few of people use to isolate themselves.

Mako (Week): It is the firewood that is used to light a fire for night readings. It is fetched on Thursdays, that's why it's called *Mako* (week) because it is fetched on weekends (Thursdays and Fridays). Some other people call it *Gargari*. There is always a *Gardi* (grownup *Almajiri*) that is assigned to take the responsibility of collecting the firewood. Whoever fetches the firewood will take it to him. He will show you where to keep it. If it's too little he will reject it or sends you back to fetch more. He that's collecting the wood is called *maikarbar mako*, meaning the collector of the firewood.

Gargari: it has the same meaning as *Mako*, which is the firewood fetched on Thursdays and Fridays for weekday reading. Thursdays and Fridays are the weekends (holidays). The holidays are used to fetch enough firewood that will be enough for the whole weekday night's readings.

Mai Karbar Mako (Firewood Collector): He is an adult *Almajiri* that is responsible for collecting the weekly firewood. He instructs the students that bring the firewood on where to keep it. He rejects anyone that's little and directs them to go back and fetch more.

Nada'u: He is a small *Almajiri* and he has a master who is an adult *Almajiri*. Whenever he begs for food, he brings it to the adult ones. They will eat the food without giving him a portion.

Badawai: The word originated from the Arabic word *albadawiy*, meaning Bedouin or rural person. If an *Almajiri* calls one *badawai*, he means he is a rural person. The word also means a remote village where *Almajirai* travel and hide to read. Adult *Almajiri* travels to some remote villages and settles there to get good secrecy and solitude for reading.

Kamman Tilka: It means somebody that has no Qur'anic/religious knowledge, or is simply an ignorant person. They are saying it indirectly so that the person will not understand what they mean. There are 15 *Jahiluna* in the Qur'an and they are all written with alif madd, not with alif, save Suratul Baqara verse 273 which is written with alif. *Kamme* means something that has been separated, while *tilka* means the hizb of *tilkarrusulu*. Therefore, when one says *kamman tilka* they means something that has been separated from the hizb of *tilkarrusulu*, and when asked what was been separated, the answer is *Jahilun* (ignorant), meaning that you are an ignorant person.

Kasgi: It also means a person that has no religious knowledge, meaning ignorant. They are also saying it indirectly so that the person accused will not understand.

Kas Gero: Also, an ignorant person, same meaning as *Kasgi*.

Tahibi: He is the person that was initially brought to *Tsangaya School* but, he left it and ran into other activities to the extent that some other people find it hard to believe that he was an *Almajiri*.

Kotso: The word *kotso* originally means a kind of light minor drum that palace singers like *Narambada*, *Musa Dankwairo*, and *Musa Dafalo* use. They usually hang it on their shoulders. In this context, *Kotso* means a small *Almajirai*. It has the same meaning as *Kolo*. People praise him as *Kotso* the gardi's kid because he is always together with *Gardi* who is taking care of him and teaching him.

Molo: He is a foolish person that has no religious and Western knowledge.

Hadda (Memorization): It is the situation by which one memorizes Qur'an completely, if an *Almajiri* memorized the entire Qur'an, it means he can recite it from the beginning to the end by heart.

Biye: It is the act of writing some part of the Qur'an by yourself and rereading it to master it enough.

Zuku: It is the situation where one reads his slate or Qur'an so fast without mastering it well. He writes it and reads it in haste. If he is ordered to read the past one many errors will be encountered. He does so to quickly complete the whole Qur'an in a short time.

Shan Fari: He is a student that is very expert in writing Qur'an to the extent that he will hardly be corrected when reading from his slate to their teachers. He usually finishes reading it without a single correction.

Mahiru: He is an expert in reciting the Holy Qur'an. He impresses everyone when reciting the Qur'an because of his expertise and brilliance.

Gwani (Expert): He is the person that became an expert in the Qur'anic recitation. He is hardly corrected in his recitation. The unique thing about it is that the title is obtained by appointment, and by another *Gwani* only. There is a ceremony for the title and the appointer gives the title in written form. He will read out his ancestry like I, Gwani (he mentions his name) that was appointed Gwani by (he mentions the name of the Gwani that appointed hi), hereby appoint so so person as Gwani. Most of the lineage of Gwani hood ends at Gwani Musa Barmama.

Gangaram: He is another expert in recitation, writing, rendition, and voice. People praise him as Gangaran you surpassed Gwani.

Kadiko: He is the student that was brought to a Tsangaya school before any other student. Whoever came met him there.

Buna: A student that reads too much without getting tired easily. He reads continuously almost every time. He doesn't care about material possession or gain. He eats only little to survive. He doesn't wear fine clothes, take bath regularly or pursue any luxury, but his village and family are known, unlike *tsoma*.

Alaramma: He is the leader of a tsangaya school, and he is also a great Qur'anic recite (Nura, 2023).

SLANG IN TERMS OF PERSONALITY, LEVEL OF EDUCATION AND MOVEMENT TO ANOTHER IN TSANGAYA COMMUNITY IN NORTHERN PART, NIGERIA

Ci-Rani (Dry season/): this is a migration from one place (Tsangaya) to another (Tsangaya) during dry season for the purpose of study. in other word It is the act of living in a particular place for a year which is within a period of the dry season. People often say one has traveled for *rani*, or let me travel for *rani*.

Mashekari (Isolation center/place): This is a village or town whereby *tsangaya* student use to stay for the whole year without moving to any where from harvesting period to beginning of the season.

Kadan Raba: *Raba* (dew) is moisture that falls from the sky in a small quantity (sounds of its dropping are not heard) usually at the night. When raining season is fully established, you can easily see it in the morning on the surfaces of some bodies like grass. *Kadanraba* means going back home at the beginning of the rainy season. After the first and second weeding and before harvest there is always no more work to do. Instead of staying idle, *Malam* or *Gardi* will travel alongside his students for two to three months. They will return when the plants are ready for harvest. It is a period of few days or weeks between farming to crops harvesting whereby student will wait until actual harvesting is done, normally, they return to their *tsangaya* school or another place to wait for the actual harvest.

Kiskadi: it is the place of isolation outside the villages for *Qur'anic* memorization. Grownup *Almajirai* usually go to the outskirts of their villages during the dry season and build some small huts. They stay there and read. Some will go with foodstuffs and *dangwazai* that cooks for them or *Nada'u* will be bringing food to them.

Tashe: It means waking *Almajirai* in the middle of the night around 3 am to read until time for *Subhi* prayer (dawn).

Tilawa (Memorization): It is the act of memorizing the verses of the holy Qur'an. The act of reciting it by heart is called *Tilawa*. After morning, afternoon, and evening recitation, one will then take his slate in the night and read it over and over till he memorizes it.

Kafin Jahili: It literally means established by an ignorant person. Historically, most of the village markets are established by *tsangaya* people i.e., the teachers, grownup students (*gardawa*), and the small ones (*Almajirai*). They read on all the days of the week save Thursdays and Fridays. That's why the markets are established on Thursdays or Fridays. Any village market that is not taking place on Thursdays and Fridays was not established by the *Tsangaya* people. That's why they call it *kafinjahili*, meaning it was established by an ignorant person (Ayuba, 2023).

CONCLUSION

The *tsangaya* communication slang was found that very affluent in Northern Part of Nigeria. Therefore, *Tsangaya* system of education required communal interference, both government and philanthropist in formalizing and proper document. The traditional and religious leaders have also a vital role to play, considering that the practice is deeply rooted in cultural and religious perspectives. Government can provide the capacity and logistics for reforms, it will require the

collaborations of relevant stakeholders including the northern elites, for meaningful impact to be achieved and sustainability guaranteed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made as follows:

1. The government should collaborate with non-governmental organizations, philanthropist local community's leaders as well as all stakeholders in formalizing and funding tsangaya teaching and learning.
2. Government should also collaborate with Academics, Authors, researchers to mount a strategic campaign, community mobilization and awareness through various media platforms and physical orientations to educate the general public on the impact of tsangaya teaching and learning in Nigeria. This will encourage community to enroll their children in their locality and also reduce urban migration.
3. There is a need for the government at all levels of governance to provision of enough and available documentary system/materials such as Ajami Text books, syllabus, Scheme of work, and also certificates and mobilize community and enforcement effective inspection, monetary and evaluation to the system

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