

Military Slangs Among Nigerian Army Personnel in Selected Barracks in Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria

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Abstract- *This study investigates Military slang usage among Nigerian army personnel, in the selected military barracks in Kaduna State, Northwest Nigeria. Using a descriptive survey design, the study combines qualitative and quantitative approaches to analyze the linguistic features of military slangs in communication. Data were collected through participant observation, structured interviews, and questionnaires administered to 30 military personnel across different ranks. The study analyzes 35 selected military slangs, examining their morphological, phonological, syntactic, and semantic properties. Findings reveal that military slangs exhibit complex patterns of linguistic hybridization, incorporating elements from English, Nigerian Pidgin, and major indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba). The quantitative analysis shows that 60% of the analyzed terms derived from English, 25% from indigenous languages, and 15% represent hybrid formations. The research demonstrates that these military slang terms serve dual functions: facilitating efficient communication and reinforcing in-group identity within the military community. The study concludes that the Nigerian military's slangs represent a distinct sociolect characterized by creative word formation processes, semantic shift, and context-bound meanings. This linguistic variety transcends ranks and specific service branches, contributing to institutional cohesion while reflecting Nigeria's multilingual environment. This research contributes to sociolinguistics by documenting and analyzing an understudied variety of Nigerian military English, providing insights into language contact phenomena in professional institutions, and demonstrating how military slangs practices contribute to group identity formation. Additionally, it establishes a framework for analyzing occupational varieties of English in multilingual contexts.*

Keywords: *Military slangs, Nigerian Army, Personnel, Barracks, North-West Nigeria*

I. INTRODUCTION

Language is a dynamic communication tool that serves dual purposes: exchanging information and signaling social identity. Speakers strategically adapt

their linguistic style based on context, relationships, and social norms. For example, people use formal language in professional settings to show respect and switch to casual speech among friends to convey closeness. This linguistic flexibility demonstrates how language reflects and reinforces social connections beyond mere information transmission. Language is a multifaceted communication system that goes beyond information exchange. According to Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015), it is a fundamental mechanism for cultural unity, enabling members to share norms, values, and experiences through spoken, written, and gestural forms. By providing a shared framework for meaning-making, language strengthens social bonds and collective understanding within a community.

Fromkin (2018) elaborates on the structured nature of language, stressing its adherence to rules and conventions governing word usage, ensuring communication comprehensibility. These rules, spanning grammar, syntax, phonetics, and semantics, collectively enable the creation of coherent expressions. By conforming to these established conventions, speakers efficiently encode their ideas, allowing listeners to precisely decode and understand them. This systematic application of linguistic rules is vital for maintaining clarity and mutual understanding in communication, facilitating seamless information exchange within and across linguistic communities.

Sanmee, (2021) and Aderibigbe, (2023) highlight the importance of cross-cultural communication and understanding for peaceful coexistence. In Nigeria, English serves as a lingua franca, bridging linguistic diversity by facilitating intercultural dialogue and national unity. The language's evolution reflects its role in promoting mutual understanding and cooperative communication across cultural boundaries. Akindele, (2022) states that English in

Nigeria has evolved through internal and external influences. Internally, Nigeria's over 250 indigenous languages have shaped Nigerian English with unique linguistic features. Externally, globalisation, technology, and cultural exchanges have introduced new words and expressions, reflecting Nigeria's dynamic global interactions. Post-independence Nigeria sought to indigenise English while preserving linguistic diversity (Sulemana, 2022). Despite efforts to promote indigenous languages, English remains the primary language in education, government, and legal systems, symbolising social status and opportunity (Ilori, 2023). English continues to serve as a crucial communication tool, balancing national cultural identity with global connectivity.

Emphasis on the complex role of English in the Nigerian military: Critics like Adegbija (1994), Alamu and Iloene (2003), Akinnaso (1991), Adedimeji (2010), and Akande (2016) argued that English perpetuates social inequalities by linking language proficiency to socio-economic privilege. The debates reflect broader tensions between colonial legacies, national identity, and linguistic diversity within military institutions. For instance, Akinlotan (2023) reveals ongoing debates about English in the Nigerian military, point out its role in perpetuating socio-economic disparities. The discourse centered on national identity, cultural authenticity, and the need to recognize indigenous languages while addressing colonial legacies and national security imperatives. Emina & Ikegbu (2020) and Salihu (2021) note that the Nigerian military uses English to facilitate communication across diverse units, reflecting both colonial history and adaptation to modern global security challenges. English remains crucial for coordination in defense, peacekeeping, disaster relief, and nation-building efforts.

According to Oxford Academic on Nigeria's peacekeeping contributions, the Nigerian military uses English to enhance international defense collaboration, enabling personnel to participate in joint exercises, training program, and multinational operations. Prioritizing English proficiency improves interoperability and effectiveness in global military engagements. Alabi (2024), Ugwu (2020), and Wusu (2020) stress that while English enables military communication, its dominance risks marginalising Nigeria's indigenous languages. The prevalence of English in the military may undermine linguistic

diversity and erode cultural identities among personnel. Kaninya (2020) highlights the Nigerian military's linguistic complexity, where English serves as a unifying global communication tool while challenging indigenous language preservation. The military must balance functional utility with cultural inclusivity amid evolving security contexts.

Jones & Themistocleous (2022) explain that sociolinguistics explores how social factors and language interact. In the Nigerian military context, this field illuminates how cultural norms, societal roles, and group identities shape communication strategies, community engagement, and security approaches. Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015) feature how communication environments shape linguistic behaviours by analysing social norms, cultural contexts, and situational factors that influence language use and interpretation.

Hernández-Campoy (2020) describes informal language as a flexible, creative communication style characterised by colloquial expressions, slang, and freedom. Unlike formal language, it reflects cultural identity and social dynamics, enabling more personal and intimate communication across different groups and generations. Military slangs is a dynamic communication form characterized by linguistic adaptability and unique structural features (Keating, 2023). Speakers employ contractions, ellipses, and non-standard grammatical structures to create a more casual discourse style. The language flexibly adjusts to various social contexts, enabling individuals to navigate interpersonal interactions authentically by modifying their linguistic approach based on audience and communicative purpose. This versatility allows speakers to establish rapport and express emotions across diverse settings, from casual conversations to professional exchanges, reflecting the fluid nature of spoken communication.

The Army's new language policy prioritises linguistic capabilities in response to global security challenges (Amatya, 2020). It emphasises language training across all ranks to enhance communication with local populations and international stakeholders. The policy covers strategic and operational languages, ensuring soldiers can effectively interact in diverse international contexts. By integrating language proficiency into military training, the Army aims to improve operational effectiveness and international cooperation. This approach recognizes linguistic

skills as a critical asset in modern military operations. The policy emphasizes cultural competence and intercultural communication in military operations (Byram & Golubeva, 2020). It recognizes language proficiency as more than linguistic fluency, focusing on understanding cultural nuances and sensitivities. By promoting language training and cultural awareness, the Army aims to enhance personnel's ability to build trust and achieve mission objectives in complex environments. This approach reflects the evolving nature of contemporary warfare, where success depends on engaging with local populations, not just military might. The policy underscores the importance of cultural intelligence and understanding in modern military operations.

Military language serves as a specialized communication tool that enables cohesion among insiders while creating linguistic impenetrability for outsiders (Deumert, 2021). The research explores how professional communities adapt technical language across different registers, examining the interaction between work-related communication and social identity. By analyzing military language use in formal and informal contexts, the study investigates how technical terminology negotiates subcultural dynamics of solidarity, hierarchy, and identity. The project questions the effectiveness of highly-specialized vocabulary when used across different social contexts, highlighting the complex relationship between professional communication and social interaction.

The study examines military slangs usage among Nigerian military personnel, focusing on linguistic dynamics within barracks. It aims to understand the socio-cultural, professional, and communicative aspects of language in the Nigerian Army context. By investigating linguistic norms and practices, the research seeks to illuminate how language shape identity and cohesion among Army personnel. The study's findings could be potentially military language policies and communication strategies within the armed forces. Ultimately, the research strives to contribute insights towards a more inclusive and culturally sensitive linguistic environment.

Statement of the Problem

The study focuses on military slangs in the Nigerian army barracks, characterised by Nigerian Pidgin and indigenous languages. Previous researches have examined individual linguistic aspects but lack detail

analysis of pragmatic language use among Army personnel. Existing studies such as Unuabonah (2021), Palchevska (2023), and Akande (2016) provide insights into different linguistic elements but do not fully explore daily communicative practices in the barracks. This research aims to address this gap by investigating how Military slangs functions in interpersonal interactions within the military context. Understanding these linguistic dynamics can offer valuable perspectives on communication, identity, and social interactions in the Nigerian Army.

The study addresses the need to examine military slangs usage in the Nigerian army barracks, drawing on research by Patrick, 2023; and Egbah & Ugwu, (2024). It aims to explore how informal linguistic practices, including Nigerian Pidgin and military slang, impact communication and identity. The research seeks to fill existing knowledge gaps by analysing linguistic features, pragmatic functions, and sociocultural influences. By investigating language dynamics in selected barracks, the study provides insights into military communication. The research contributes to understanding the interplay between formal and military slangs varieties. Ultimately, it aims to shed light on how linguistic practices shape interactions and identity among army personnel.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

This research is to study military slangs usage by the personnel of the Nigerian army in selected barracks in Northwestern Nigeria. The specific objectives of the research are to:

- i. Characterize the linguistic patterns and features of military slangs used by Nigerian Army Personnel in selected barracks.
- ii. Investigate the communicative strategies employed by Nigerian army personnel when utilising military slangs for interpersonal communication.

Justification of the Research

The researcher explores linguistic terrain where context significantly determines word usage and meaning, drawing on linguistic perspectives such as Wittgenstein (1953), Clark (1978), and Brown and Yule (1983). These scholars' work highlights the importance of context in language interpretation, though their focus did not include the Nigerian Military's linguistic context. The study aims to fill this research gap by examining contextual language

use in military settings. The research examines military slangs use within the Nigerian Army, focusing on lexical items and language variation in the Nigerian context. By examining words and phrases in this specific setting, the study aims to expand understanding of language dynamics and societal implications. The project seeks to contribute to existing literature on language and context through a detailed analysis of military linguistic practices. Through looking at how the Nigerian army uses military slangs; the study adds to our understanding of language diversity and context. Researchers and academicians with interest in linguistics, sociolinguistics, and communication studies will find this useful.

The research provides a foundational framework for understanding military language use, contributing to both academic knowledge and practical applications in linguistics, communication studies, and military-civilian interactions. Beyond its immediate academic value, the study offers insights into linguistic diversity and contextual language use that can be leveraged to enhance cross-cultural understanding and serve as a foundation for future research in similar sociolinguistic environments.

Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study analyzes military slangs usage by Nigerian army personnel in the barracks, focusing on unofficial spoken language. It examines lexical words by their contextual meaning, literal definition, the phonological implication, morphological roots and the syntax. The research is limited to selected barracks in Kaduna State, Northwestern region of Nigeria due to resource constraints. The analysis aims to categorize and understand the tone language use within this specific military context.

Theoretical Framework

For analysing military slangs in Nigerian military barracks, three key theories were examined: sociolinguistic theory, communication accommodation theory, and community of practice theory. These theories provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the linguistic dynamics in this specific context.

Sociolinguistic theories: explores the intricate relationship between language and society, examining how social factors like culture, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status influence language use

(Uwen & Ekpe, 2023; Wang, 2023). This multidisciplinary approach investigates how language reflects and shapes social identities, interactions, and perceptions across different contexts. The theory probes into the complex relationship between linguistic constructions and social norms, providing insights into language variation and communication. Sociolinguistic researchers such as May and Perry (2022) analyse linguistic variation across social groups, regions, and historical periods. They investigate dialects, accents, and registers, exploring mechanisms of linguistic innovation. Holmes and Wilson (2022) examine how social dynamics influence language use, identifying patterns of linguistic change within communities.

Communication Accommodation Theory (CAT), developed by Howard Giles, (1970s) explores how individuals adapt communication styles to align with interlocutors (Hoffman & Zhang, 2023; Gaete, 2022). The theory examines linguistic and behavioural modifications based on social identity, power dynamics, and relational goals (Batool & Shakur, 2023; Haslam et al., 2020). CAT provides insights into interpersonal communication, demonstrating how language functions as a tool for social interaction and relationship building.

Community of Practice (CoP) theory, developed by Lave and Wenger, (1990) examines how learning and knowledge creation occur within social groups (Weinberg et al., 2021; Hogue, 2023). The theory explores how individuals develop shared understandings, practices, and identities through participation in communities with common goals and expertise. According to CoP theory, learning is a social process occurring through communal interactions (Rozkwitalska & Lis, 2022). Communities of Practice are defined by shared practices, resources, and understandings developed through collaborative engagement (Bicchi, 2022). The theory highlights how social relationships and collective participation shape individual learning and professional identities.

II. METHODOLOGY

This research uses the following procedures in carrying out the study. They are under the following sub-headings:

Research Design

The study used a descriptive survey method to gather information on military slangs usage by Nigerian

Army personnel in barracks. The research design facilitates collecting detailed insights on language practices within the military context, which enabled comprehensive data collection about linguistic interactions. Population, Sample and Sampling Techniques.

The population for this study consists of all personnel of the Nigerian Army who are serving in selected barracks within I Division area of responsibility, that is Kaduna State, Northwestern Nigeria. Soldiers, officers, and others who engage in daily activities within the barracks communicate using military slangs. The sample is a subset of the entire population, specifically selected personnel from different ranks and units within a representative selection of barracks across I Division. This included a diverse group of individuals to ensure a comprehensive understanding of informal English usage within the Nigerian Army.

To ensure the sample is representative of the population, a stratified random sampling technique was used. The steps are as follows: Divide the population into strata based on relevant characteristics such as rank (e.g., officers, non-commissioned officers, recruits and Boys of NMS), and the barrack locations include (e.g., NDA, Jaji Military Cantonment, Depot Nigerian Army and NMS Zaria). Randomly selected individuals from each stratum to ensure that all relevant subgroups are represented in the sample. This was done using a random number generator or drawing names from a list of all personnel in each stratum. However, a sample size of 30 or more personnel was used for this study.

Instrumentation

The data for this study was collected using questionnaire titled “Military Slangs Usage by the Personnel of the Nigerian army in the Barracks Questionnaire (MSUPNMBQ)”. The MSUPNMBQ was divided into seven sections; that is; A, B, C, D, E, F and G. Section A was used to elicit information on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, such as ranks, gender and so on. While Section B, C, D, E, F and G was used to measure characterize linguistic patterns and features of military slangs used by Nigerian army personnel in the barracks; the pragmatic functions and communicative purposes served by military slangs within the Nigerian military barracks context; the

sociocultural influences shaping the use of military slangs among personnel in Nigerian army barracks; the communicative strategies employed by Nigerian army personnel when utilizing military slangs for interpersonal communication; understand how the use of military slangs contributes to the construction of social identities and group cohesion among personnel in Nigerian army barracks and inform the development of language policies and training programs aimed at enhancing communication effectiveness and linguistic inclusivity within the Nigerian army. The research items consisted of researcher designed statements developed through the reviewed literatures.

In addition, Section B, C, D, E, F and G contained five items each and the response pattern was based on four-point scale, ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Strongly Disagree (SD) and Disagree (D). In order to ascertain the validity of the questionnaire, the drafted questionnaire was presented to the researcher’s supervisors and other experts in the Department of English and Literary Studies to assess the suitability of the instrument and make correction. The researcher effected necessary correction and administer the questionnaire. Cronbach’s alpha method was used to ascertain the reliability of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was administered to respondents of Nigerian Army Barracks. The MSUPNMBQ based on trial-tested with initial 30 items on 20 military personnel for pilot testing.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data was collected from the Nigerian army personnel through a survey. A letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of English and Literary Studies, Federal University of Lafia and was presented at the appropriate places to facilitate respondents’ co-operation. The data was collected by the researcher and other trained research assistants. The questionnaires were collected after the respondents have responded to the instrument. The researcher then collated data for analysis.

Ethical Consideration: The study ensures ethical research conduct by obtaining informed consent from Nigerian Army personnel. Participants were assured of confidentiality, with no identifying information collected. Participation was voluntary, without compulsion or identified risks. Permission was sought from military authorities before conducting the study.

Data Analysis Techniques

The data was collected and subjected to both the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Percentage was used to describe respondents' demographic characteristics, while research questions were answered using percentage and mean rating. Then, thematic analysis was used to answer the qualitative research questions.

III. DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF DATA

Introduction

This section present data and lexical analysis of military slang words which were gathered from interview, observation and printed materials. These military slangs are presented and analyzed according to the context of usage in the barracks among personnel of the Nigerian Army. The analysis are presented below.

Data Presentation

Slangs words	Contextual Meaning
1. Shara	A lady just for casual relationship with men
2. Can we	Food
3. Jikapa, G Cappa	Cleaning, Sanitation, hard labour
4. Buy job	To look for trouble, to offend your superior
5. Climb mango	Intoxicated with Indian helm
6. Banga banga	Any how/not organized
7. Sama	Fine girl
8. Forming Mugabe	Stubborn
9. Packard	Looking good
10. Karability	Questionable act
11. Kelebe	Illegal activities
12. Chaos	Scolding
13. Wawarizing	Fooling somebody
14. Jaji rifle	Single lady available for dating
15. Cut five	Short sleeping/Rest
16. Wala	Information about something
17. Sami	Chicken
18. Azuwaya/Ajuwaya	As you were
19. Pot	head
20. Mamsa	To bring, carry, catch
21. Thin out	To escape, to disappear without permission/ run away
22. Ofe	Serving a punishment for the offence you did not commit
23. Knack	Forward rolls
24. Animalize	Shout morale
25. Massage	Beat, strenuous punishment
26. Kaya	Men private part
27. Zero by zero	Skin hair cut
28. Mateh	Tactical withdrawal, run away, to leave
29. White fowl	Someone that distinguished himself in something bad
30. Roja	To knock someone
31. Chapchap	Smart/neat
32. shayi pot	Someone that rarely serve punishment.
33. Gboyé	Garri
34. Blue falcon	Someone who betrays you, a betrayer
35. Oxygen thief	Recruit who talks too much

IV. DATA PRESENTATION FOR ANALYSIS

Table 1.0:

S/N	Lexical word	Origin of the word	Literal Meaning of the root word	Morphology of the lexical word	Phonology of the lexical word	Syntactic of the lexical word	Contextual meaning
1.	Shara	Hausa	Sweep	None	There is tonal change	My shara is around to spend weekend with me.	A lady not on marital affairs, a casual female friend.
2.	Can we	English	Seeks to determine if something is possible or permitted.	There is word formation at suffix level, words are used as compound word.	None	Can we go and eat? Food is ready.	Food.
3.	Jikapa, G-Kapa	English	Name of construction company	None	None	There is serious Jikapa for us to do for the passing out parade.	Hard labor, (as the name implies, the kind of work construction company does is basically tedious job).
4.	Buy Job	English	To get employment	None	None	The cadets bought commandant's job.	The cadet offended the commandant.
5.	Climb mango	English	To be on top of mango tree	None	None	The soldier has climb mango, that is why he is misbehaving.	To smoke Indian helm, to be intoxicated with substance.
6.	Banga banga	Hausa	Vigilante	There is word formation at the suffix level (Banga).	None	The commander is angry because the parade was banga banga.	Anyhow, not organized.
7.	Sama	Hausa	Up	None	None	The Sama is very pretty and good to go.	Fine lady, beautiful girl.

8.	Forming Mugabe	English/ A name of former Zimbabwe President	The non-submissive character of former President of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe against the policy of Europe on African Countries.	There is word formation at the suffix level (Mugabe). Words were used as a compound word.	None	All the cadets are forming Mugabe to carry out the order.	Stubborn, to be difficult, hard to penetrate.
9.	Packard	English	Package	There is word formation at the suffix level (-ard).	None	The officer dress Packard in uniform.	Looking good in uniform, to be smartly dress in uniform.
10.	Karability	Hausa/English	Add / None	There is word formation with Hausa at the Prefix and suffix (bi-lity) in English.	None	The soldier karability is too much to bear.	Questionable act, show confusion.
11.	Kelebe	Yoruba		None	None	The soldier likes Kelebe that is why he is always absent for parade.	Personnel engage in illegal activity or duty. (to be engage in smuggling rice or vehicle and the likes from Neighboring Countries to Nigeria unofficially).
12.	Chaos	English	Commotion, confusion, anarchy	None	None	The senior officer likes to chaos young officers during Mess meeting.	Scolding.
13.	Wawarizing	Hausa/English	Dull / increasing	There is word formation with Hausa at the	None	The parade we had yesterday was a	Clowning, comic or unserious.

				prefix level and (rizing) at suffix from English.		wawarizing one.	
14	Jaji rifle	Hausa/English	Name of military training school / Gun	None	None	When my friend visited me on course, I got him pretty Jaji rifle that kept him company.	Single lady available for a relationship, barracks babe.
15	Cut five	English	Slash / Serial number (5)	There is word formation by combining two words.	None	The cadet always cut five during lectures.	Short sleep, rest.
16	Wala	Hausa	None	None	None	The recruits were caught with plenty wala during the screening examination.	Caught with unwanted something, malpractice material. (related material found with candidate during examination).
17	Saami	Hausa	To get	None	None	The saami they served yesterday at the dinning was too small for a person.	Chicken
18	As you were /Ajuwaya	Hausa	To get	None	None	Asuwaya the last order, gentle man.	As you were.
19	Pot	English	Container	None	None	The cadet pot is very big he cannot think right.	Head.
20	Mamsa	English	Meat, flesh or muscle	None	None	The soldier was asked to mamsa culprit to the guard room.	To bring, carry or catch.
21	Thin out	English	Slim / available	None	None	The officer thin out of the parade	To escape, to disappear without

						without any body noticing.	permission/ run away.
22	Ofe	Yoruba	Slim / available	None	None	We served ofe yesterday during tattoo.	Serving punishment for the offence you did not commit.
23	Knack	English	Talent	None	None	Every person should knack 50 before the parade will be dismissed.	Forward roll. (This is a kind of punishment that commonly exist during training. The cadet or recruit were asked to forward roll. One will fold himself with the face forward and roll like ball or round object).
24	Animalize	English	Living organism	There is word formation at the suffix level (ize).	None	Troop animalize during routine physical training exercise every week.	Shout morale (Morale song is a song troop sing during morning and evening physical exercises and others to boost their morale. This activity took place 4 times a week to keep fit in military units and formations).
25	Massage	English	Bodywork	None	None	The soldier massage the criminal with no mercy.	To beat, or give someone strenuous punishment with hard substance.
26	Kaya	Hausa	Cloth/Load	None	None	The soldier kaya is very big he is good to go for marriage parade.	Men private part.
27	Zero by zero	English	Nil	None	None	The recruits were directed to take zero by zero every Sunday.	Skin haircut.

28	Match	Hausa	Nil	None	None	The troop match when they came in counter with the enemy ambush.	Tactical withdrawal, run away, to leave.
29	White fowl	English	Silver bird	None	None	The white fowl that always bought job for the course mates.	Someone that likes show off, to be noticed. (the meaning is synonymous with white birth in the midst of brown births, obviously the white is apparent).
30	Shayi pot	Hausa / English	Tea container	There is word formation with Hausa at prefix level (shayi) and suffix (pot) from English.	None	The cadet won shayipot award during training.	Someone that rarely serve punishment.
31	Chap chap	Hausa	Fit	None	None	The cadet was chap chap in his uniform.	Smart/neat.
32	Coming up	English	Pending awake	There is word formation at the suffix level (up). Words were used as compound word.	None	The sergeant is coming up, most officers liked him.	To be diligent / hard working.
33	Gboye	Tiv	None	None	None	The troops like taking gboye when on internal security operation to enable them save some allowances.	Garri.
34	Blue falcon	English	Navy color	None	None	The cadet is a blue falcon	A betrayer.

						amongst his course mate.	
35	Oxygen thief	English	Air/Robber	None	None	Every one avoid the recruit on training because he is an oxygen thief.	Recruit who talks too much, a talkative.

V. DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected as rightly demonstrated above are analyzed here based on the following parameters: the literal meaning, the contextual meaning, the root level, phonology and morphology level. These are explained in details below.

Analysis of the Root Level

The root level presents a complex formation of words. In this regard, it was observed that some of the

words are purely English-based, others have process that involved the blending of English and local languages. The marriage of these two words (English and a local language) have resulted in a different variety, which could be regarded in a way as the military variety of usage. For instance, out of the 35 selected words, 17 are purely English based and 5 are purely the admixture while 13 are purely local composition.

Examples are presented in the table below:

S/N	English-Based Words	Admixture of Eng. & Local Lang.	Purely Local
1	Pot	Wawarizing	Gboye
2	Knack	Karability	Samakwe
3	Massage	Shayi Pot	Shara
4	Chaos	Forming Mugabe	Kaya
5	Packard	Jaji Rifle	Kelebe

Analysis of Literary Meaning

The lexical analysis shows a substantial dichotomy between dictionary-attested and non-dictionary terms within the military sociolect. While certain lexical items maintain standardized dictionary entries, others, particularly those derived from indigenous sources, lack formal lexicographic documentation. Specifically, the interest are compound formations that function as single lexical units within military discourse, despite their surface structure suggesting phrasal construction. Consider the following examples:

- i. 'Cut five'
- ii. 'Thin out'
- iii. 'Zero by zero'
- iv. 'White fowl'
- v. 'Coming up'
- vi. 'Climb mango'
- vii. 'Oxygen thief'
- viii. 'Blue falcon'
- xv. 'Can we'
- x. 'Buy Job'

These constructions, while structurally resembling standard English phrases, function as unified lexical items within military discourse. In contrast, terms such as 'knack,' 'pot,' 'chaos,' and 'packed massage' maintain distinct lexicographic entries in standard dictionaries, though their military usage often diverges significantly from these documented definitions. This analysis demonstrates the complex relationship between standard lexicographic representation and specialized military usage, highlighting how military discourse repurposes both single words and phrasal constructions to serve specific communicative functions.

The Analysis of Morphology

The morphological analysis reveals notable patterns in word formation processes within military language, particularly in the compound formations that combine English and indigenous linguistic elements. Of particular significance is the distinctive morphological process evident in Level Two of the data classification, which demonstrates sophisticated

patterns of lexical blending. This morphological complexity is exemplified in the following compound formations:

- i. 'wawarizing' (wawa + rizing)
- ii. 'karability' (kara + bility)
- iii. 'shayipot' (shayi + pot)
- iv. 'jajirifle' (jaji + rifle)
- v. 'formingmugabe' (forming + mugabe)

Quantitative analysis of the etymological distribution discloses that out of the examined lexical items, 12 derive from English roots, 3 originate from indigenous Nigerian languages, and 5 exhibit hybrid formation. This distribution pattern indicates a predominance of English-based morphological processes, while also demonstrating significant integration of local linguistic elements and hybrid formations. The analysis demonstrates that these military slangs terms exhibit morphological diversity in their formation processes, incorporating elements from multiple linguistic sources rather than being restricted to indigenous word-formation patterns. This morphological hybridization suggests a dynamic process of word formation that reflects the multilingual nature of the Nigerian military linguistic environment

Analysis of the Phonology

The phonological analysis of the collected data reveals significant sound pattern modifications within the military linguistic community. These modifications manifest across lexical items derived from multiple linguistic sources - English, Hausa, and Yoruba. The data demonstrates systematic tonal alterations that occur when these terms are adapted for military usage.

Consider the following examples that illustrate this phonological transformation:

1. 'Shara' (Hausa-derived)
2. 'Ofè' (Yoruba-derived)
3. 'Chaos' (English-derived)
4. 'Aju waya' (derived from English 'as you were')

The analysis indicates that these terms undergo substantial phonological modification in military usage, resulting in pronunciations that deviate significantly from their source languages. These phonological shifts correlate with semantic transformation, as the contextual meanings within military usage differ markedly from the original meanings in their source languages. This

phonological flexibility appears to be a characteristic feature of military sociolect, facilitating the adaptation of terms from various linguistic sources to serve specific communicative needs within the military community. The observed sound pattern modifications suggest a systematic process of phonological adaptation that supports the development of a distinct military linguistic variety.

Analysis of Syntax

The investigation of military slangs language reveals distinctive patterns in how words and phrases are structured. When Nigerian Army personnel communicate informally, they create a unique blend of military terminology and local language features. This combination produces effective communication patterns that are readily understood within the military community. The analysis shows that these expressions, while departing from standard military language, maintain clear meaning and purpose. Military personnel adapt and modify linguistic structures to serve their communication needs, often incorporating elements from Nigerian languages without compromising message clarity. This demonstrates how language can be reshaped while preserving its essential communicative function. This linguistic flexibility reflects the creative ways in which military personnel construct meaningful expressions that resonate within their professional environment, even when operating outside formal military discourse.

Analysis of Contextual Meaning

The presentation of meaning here reveals a great deal of semantic shift in meaning of the words from what it used to be, that is the literal or dictionary meaning- to the meaning obtainable within the context of use. It was observed here that the distributions of words are in two categories:

- i. Those that appear in form of a phrase yet are considered a word in the military. E.g.
 - a. Thin out
 - b. Cut five
 - c. White fowl
 - d. Coming up
 - e. Climb mango
 - f. Can we
 - g. Buy job

Considering the above listed examples, they all are regarded as phrases in English Language; meanwhile, the reverse is the case when apply in the military

context where they are employed as individual words with distinct meanings. It then goes to show that, though some of these words are English based but because of the influence of the context on them, they all have a different meaning relative to the ethics of the profession, in other words, they become a kind of register commonly found in the military.

ii. Those that are purely one word

The second sets of words are those employed as a single word in both its original (denotative) form and the contextual form. Although they seem to maintain some levels of correlation in terms of their forms, they are non-the-less differ in meaning. Examples of these as provided in the data are:

- i. Pot
- ii. Massage (bisyllabic)
- iii. Packard (bisyllabic)
- iv. knack
- v. chaos

All the above words are monosyllabic English words with their varied dictionary meanings as presented in the data but which have been subjected to different meanings in the military context.

iii. Those that are purely local

However, it must be stated at this point that while some of these words are English-based, as few others are purely local invention made up of different indigenous languages. Such a word include: “gboye”, “kaya”, “mugabe”, “mateh”, “ofe”, “shara”, etc. The meaning of these words, even though they are local words, have been subjected to the contextual use just like every other words thereby creating semantic shift from what it used to be in the general local usage. The communicative implication of contextualizing words in this manner is that it allows the military personnel to maintain group identity within their speech domain.

VI. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

The investigation examined the sociolinguistic dimensions of military slang within Nigerian Army barracks, specifically focusing on the contextual semantics of some lexical items. Through systematic analysis of military slang terms, this study explored their etymological origins, denotative meanings, morphological transformations, phonological features, and pragmatic applications. The findings revealed that these lexical items predominantly

function within informal communicative contexts, with their semantic content markedly diverging from standard civilian usage. Furthermore, the analysis demonstrates that the linguistic origin of these terms exhibits a dual pattern: while some terms derive from English, others emerge from Nigeria's linguistic landscape, incorporating elements from Nigerian Pidgin English and the country's major indigenous languages (Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba). This hybridization reflects the complex sociolinguistic environment within Nigerian military installations.

Analysis of the 35 selected military slang terms revealed significant patterns in their distribution and morphological origins. The lexical investigation demonstrated that while some terms lack standardized dictionary entries or literal meanings, others maintain correlations with established lexical definitions. Notable morphological, phonological and syntactic transformations were observed, particularly in the evolution from simple to compound word formations. The etymological analysis revealed complex patterns of linguistic blending. The lexical items originated from three primary sources: English language adaptations, indigenous lexical borrowings, and personality trait idiom that describe someone's personality behaviour or character in a vivid and memorable way. At the semantic level, these terms exhibited significant meaning shifts, demonstrating substantial semantic divergence from their original contextual applications.

Furthermore, the study established that this specialized military sociolect is a common ground employed across the hierarchical structure of Nigeria's armed forces, encompassing commissioned officers, non-commissioned personnel, recruits, and students of military educational institutions (including the Nigerian Military, Air Force, and Navy secondary schools) who have undergone any form of military training. This widespread usage suggests the existence of a unified military linguistic subculture that transcends rank and specific service branches.

The military domain represents a distinct linguistic community characterized by its unique linguistic repertoire. This research demonstrates the dynamic nature of language evolution within military environments, where novel lexical items continuously emerge from both formal military registers and indigenous languages. The proliferation

of these linguistic innovations is particularly evident within the confined social space of military barracks. This investigation was specifically focused on documenting and analyzing the emergence of military slang within Nigerian Army barracks, which served as the primary site for data collection and linguistic observation. The research context acknowledges that, comparable to other professional domains globally, the Nigerian military constitutes a specialized institutional environment with its distinctive terminological framework and registers that facilitate its operational functions, particularly in formal contexts.

The discovery emphasized the parallel existence of both formal military terminology and informal linguistic innovations, highlighting the complex sociolinguistic dynamics within military installations. This duality illustrates how professional institutional language coexists with and influences the development of informal communicative practices within the military community. The findings indicate that the contextualization of military slang serves a dual sociolinguistic function: it facilitates efficient communication while simultaneously reinforcing in-group identity within the military speech community. Analysis of terms such as 'kelebe', 'samakwe', and 'shara' reveals that their semantic interpretation is heavily dependent on context-specific usage within the military environment.

This linguistic phenomenon demonstrates how specialized vocabulary can function as both a communicative tool and a marker of social identity. The context-bound nature of these terms' meanings suggests a sophisticated level of linguistic innovation within the military community, where lexical items are created and maintained not only for their communicative utility but also for their role in establishing and reinforcing group cohesion through shared linguistic knowledge.

CONCLUSION

This research contributes to our understanding of language dynamic and complex nature, particularly in specialized institutional contexts. Through systematic analysis of selected military lexical items, the study demonstrates that military terminology comprises predominantly informal expressions with distinct semantic properties. The linguistic

composition reveals a hybrid nature, incorporating both foreign and indigenous elements, alongside novel terms specifically invented within the military context. Furthermore, this investigation corroborates existing scholarship in the field of sociolinguistics, particularly regarding the relationship between language use and social context. The findings align with and extend previous research on specialized discourse communities and occupational varieties of language.

From a pedagogical perspective, this research offers significant implications for both instructors and students. The documentation and analysis of informal military lexis provides valuable resources for classroom instruction while enhancing awareness of specialized language varieties. Moreover, this systematic documentation serves a crucial role in linguistic preservation, creating a permanent record of these terms and thereby mitigating the risk of such language extinction. The study's findings underscore the importance of continued research in specialized language varieties and their role in professional communities, and simultaneously highlighting the pedagogical value of documenting and analyzing informal linguistic innovations within institutional settings.

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