



Sociolinguistic configuration of a regimented workforce: a study of the Nigerian army's workout songs

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the sociolinguistic configuration of the Nigerian Army as indexed in the workout songs they used during jogging exercises in Calabar, South-eastern Nigeria. Data for the study were generated by means of participant observation and semi-structured interviews. The findings, drawing insights from Discourse community theory and multilingual identity concept, show that the workout songs bear (code mixed) elements of English, Nigerian Pidgin, indigenous languages, and military slang. The songs replicate the language practices in the Nigerian Army's discourse community that describes the participants' multilingual identities. Aside from serving as psychological devices for solidarity, social inclusion, and morale boosting for the regimented workforce, the songs provide insights into the use of institutional registers and slang to attend to communication exigencies in their social contexts. The code mixed songs as outcomes of multilingualism, also portray Nigerian Army as interethnolinguistic and multicultural workforce and define their identity, solidarity, and professional belonging.

ARTICLE HISTORY

Received 2 January 2023

Accepted 3 April 2023

KEYWORDS

Sociolinguistics
configuration; discourse
community; multilingual
identities; workout songs;
Nigerian army

1. Introduction

The Nigerian Army is a formidable force that draws from Nigeria's linguistic resources and the Army's internal devised forms to communicate in different contexts (operations, parades, songs, and activities) that enhance its solidarity towards the protection of Nigeria's sovereignty. Nigerian Army workout songs are rather focused on their re-enactment of multiple ideologies and improvement of their psychology for maximal gallantry needed for their tasking duties (Nnamani, 2016). Its strategic reformations, complex operational networks, and the multilingual identities of its workforce make it a fertile focus for the investigation of the positionality and impact of its language practices (within the Nigerian sociolinguistic setting), and the conceptualisation of military ideals and identity. This is because the language of the Army is meant 'to construct a reality of its own to give themselves a particular identity in the face of the system' (Asher & Simpson, 1994, p. 2499). Their peculiar social reality is constructed and communicated through the linguistic choices within the Nigerian Army's discourse community which prominently distinguish them from other institutions. This corroborates the position that in modern human

affiliations, membership and authentication of a group are determined through the language they speak which shows its heterogeneity through consistent interactions (Hall & Nilep, 2015; Stenzel & Khoo, 2016). The Nigerian Army workout songs are aspect of intragroup interactions derived from the local linguistic resources deployed for use in the different domains of their communicative activities. This falls within the global practices among the militaries meant to delineate communication boundaries that define their uniqueness and the geographical regions of operation. Language use in the Army is therefore influenced by local and transnational participation in military operations, ethnolinguistic identities of its personnel, and the sociolinguistic situation of the operating environment, among other factors.

1.1. Nigerian multilingualism

The sociolinguistic configuration of Nigeria is a complex one with heterogeneous and multilingual linguistic practices. These practices are somehow extended to the nation's institutions including the Nigerian Army. Nigeria is a multilingual nation with about 500 distinct languages used by the diverse ethnolinguistic groups (Adegbija, 1989, 2004; Akinnaso, 1989; Bamgbose, 1971; Heine & Nurse, 2000; Uwen, Bassey, & Nta, 2020). In the African (and Nigerian) context, multilingualism characteristically suggests 'the co-existence of oral and written, foreign and indigenous, official and non-official, pidginized and non-pidginized languages used for distinct and less-intervening purposes' (Achimbe, 2007, p. 9). Multilingualism is a social construct, linguistic practice, and symbolic capital that facilitates cross-linguistic interactions among participants (Bourdieu, 1991). The nature of Nigeria's multilingualism 'is certainly more complex and intricate than [it is] in multilingual European countries like Belgium, Switzerland, or Sweden, where there are only a handful of languages' (Adegbija, 2004, p. 137). The complexity is shown in the over 500 indigenous languages spoken in Nigeria, from where Hausa, Igbo, and Yoruba are recognised by the government as widely spoken and among the national languages (Akande, 2016). This complexity poses enormous task on language policy decision by the government.

Accordingly, government's role in language policy is evident in Section 55 of the 1999 constitution of Nigeria which stipulates that 'the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English and in Hausa, Igbo and Yoruba when adequate arrangements have been made'. For the other co-existing languages, Section 97 of the same document proposes that 'the business of the House of Assembly shall be conducted in English, but the House may in addition to English conduct the business of the House in one or more other languages spoken in the State as the House may by resolution approve' (Federal Government Nigeria, 1999). The selective recognition of speakers of three among other national languages appears to be an inferiorisation of other existing languages (Mensah, 2019; Phillipson & Skutnabb-Kangas, 1996). Another widely used language that serves to integrate speakers from different linguistic groups in Nigeria is the Nigerian Pidgin (NP) (Emenanjo, 1985). The NP was developed as a marginal language particularly as a result of the contact between English and indigenous languages. Its lexical and syntactic structure is English-based with modifications by the indigenous languages (Elugbe, 1995; Elugbe & Omamor, 1991; Mafeni, 1971). However, English is the official language used in diverse domains among Nigerians 'but the ability to speak other languages,

nonetheless ensures a competitive edge' (Edwards, 2004, p. 164). This contextualises the language practices in post-colonial non-Western countries, especially in urban contexts where languages interface, co-exist, and are used for different social contexts and purposes. (Block, 2008; Rampton & Charalambus, 2012). This is the case with Nigerian urban cities where the Nigerian Army is prominently situated. The Nigerian Army's personnel are drawn from the Nigerian sociolinguistic milieu, and is believed to be a representation of the heterogeneous and multilingual landscape.

1.2. Language and the military

The militaries of the world are seen to operate through the utilisation of the linguistic resources within their operating nations. This is because language is a very prominent variable in communicating national consciousness among the users, and in the Army, language is designed to meet the linguistic needs of the personnel in the particular country (Baldauf, 1994; Svoljsak, 2012). For instance, Mensah (2019) citing Goussard-Kunz (2009), argues that in the South African military, English has been designed as its thread language while the other 11 official languages serve as link languages to English to facilitate communication in different social contexts. In this context, thread language is the basic language used for general official communication while the link languages complement English in certain contexts. As a thread language, 'English is used for general communication, instruction and command' in the South African Army (Barkhuizen & De Klerk, 2000, p. 95). This practice ensures the intermingling of the languages in the multilingual sites that express the diverse nature of the environment it operates. It is also argued that the US military language policy is enacted to ensure the expansive knowledge of relevant languages and cross-cultural practices in order to reposition its effectiveness in global military operations (Wible, 2013). This linguistic consciousness harmonises the manipulation of linguistic resources to suit the communication needs of different operations and regions. For the Swiss military, Berthele and Wittlin's (2013) study on the linguistic practices in three military training schools in Switzerland shows a linguistically mixed groups in the Swiss Army. The troops deploy one dominant language for instruction while other languages are used in different domains. In Britain, Jones (2014) also demonstrates that the British Army language policy is made to develop the personnel's knowledge of languages and cultures of the regions they operate. This type of policy enhances the linguistic acculturation of the Army to cope with the demands of military exploits in localised regions.

In Nigeria, Akande's (2016) study on the sociolinguistic profile of Army personnel in four military barracks presents the Nigerian Army as a fertile site for a micro rehearsal of the Nigerian multilingual milieu. Akande's (2016) findings show that the officers and soldiers bear multilingual identities because they speak English, Nigerian Pidgin, mother tongues, and have a gradable understanding of the indigenous languages of their colleagues. This linguistic experience fosters intragroup peace and civilian-military communication. On this, Ojonugwo (2021) contends that the linguistic cues of the Nigerian Army are complex indexical contexts that define their social identity and professional traits of dominance and expressiveness in their language practices.

The linguistic policy of the Nigerian Army has a resemblance of those of other Armies of the world. Mensah (2019) citing Usman (2017), demonstrates that the

press release by the Director of Nigerian Army in 2017 is articulated to achieve the following intentions.

- a. To encourage the enlistment of multilinguals in foreign and local languages to enhance diverse information gathering.
- b. To use English as the official language while Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba would be used to enhance civilian–military interface giving its personnel 2018 as the deadline for proficiency in the three languages which goes with a reward.
- c. That proficiency in the three languages will be an added advantage to candidates seeking to be enlisted in the Nigerian Army, among others.

Although Mensah (2019) argues that by this proposal, many other languages are spitefully relegated in the policy, the Nigerian Army appears to tow the path of the provisions in the Nigerian Constitution. On the categorisation of languages, Phillipson (1992, 1997) contend that such arrangement accounts for linguistic hierarchisation to address what languages are to be used more and the roles they perform among professions. The reviewed studies establish that the multilingual nature of macro societies is often extended to the micro military language practices which the Nigerian Army represents in this context. The study is aimed therefore to investigate the multilingual composition of the Nigerian Army's workout songs as a replication of the Nigerian sociolinguistic context. It examines how the interethnolinguistic contact and multilingual identities of the personnel produce positive consequences for the optimal performance of the workforce. The study is relevant in situating the contemporary multilingual urban setting in a regimental institution. The troops in 146 Battalion and 13 Brigade located in Eburutu and Akim in Calabar, South-eastern Nigeria, were used as the representative subpopulation to situate the Army's multilingual institution as a unifying force for military cohesion.

2. Theoretical framework

The theoretical conceptions for this study are Discourse Community Theory and the concept of Multilingual Identity. Discourse community theory was proposed by Swale (1988). Swales describes discourse community as a group of people who frequently participate in discourse with common ideals, identities, and values with some forms of communication to achieve certain goals. Swale (1988) discourse community theory specifies six characteristics of discourse communities. They include the fact that:

- a. Members have common goals with the expectation of common outcomes from their interactions.
- b. They communicate internally through a shared set of mechanisms and linguistic choices that are mutually intelligible among members of the group.
- c. They have and use specialist lexis; certain specific lexis are consistently used by the discourse community such as slangs, jargons, and neologisms.
- d. They use multiple genres; the discourse community is carried on account of different genres with some technical colouration.
- e. They operate through a conventional information and feedback mechanism.

- f. There may be varying levels of membership related with gradable knowledge and experience in the group.

Going by Swale (1988) postulation, members of discourse community have mutually intelligible language, devised linguistic choices, and/or multiple genres used to interact with members with expected goals and outcomes. Genre, in this context, is 'a more or less standardized communication event with a goal or set of goals mutually understood by the participants in that event and occurring within a functional rather than a personal or social setting' (Swales, 1990, p. 212). This assertion expands the roles of such forms beyond the linguistic to the extralinguistic and social semiotics. Meaning is therefore interpreted within the convention of the discourse community who views linguistic forms, registers, and genres as some sort of stance, social behaviour and a means of deepening knowledge of the group (Biber, 2006; Hyland, 2002; Hyland et al., 2021). This situates the theory within the context of the Nigerian Army's workout songs.

Multilingual identity on the other hand, is a multidisciplinary concept that draws input from applied linguistics, psychology, and sociology, among other disciplines. Block's (2006) post-structural approach in the construction of epistemological stance on language practice presents multilingual identity as a dynamic, multiple, and shifting phenomenon. Fisher et al. (2020) argue that multilingual identity is connected with individual and groups' language habits who use more than one language, and their psychological open-mindedness, beliefs, and satisfaction towards the conscious practice of bi/multilingualism. Fisher et al. (2020) advocate for the use of fieldwork for the generation of data to gain valid nuanced insights into the domains of participants' practice of multilingual identities. Also, Forbes and Rutgers (2021) study on multilingual identity shows its psychosocial and developmental nature that dwells on the interplay of social, historical, and social contexts for the shaping of the individual or group identity. The scholars link multilingual identity to the motivation and experiences in macro ideological discourses about languages. The motivations ranged from the interrelationship of language and culture, self (group) conception and feelings for belonging, to the quest for linguistic accommodation in communicative activities. The function and choice of language(s) among multilingual participants are therefore informed by the perception of speakers, the social contexts of use, building of solidarity and social inclusion or exclusion, and the discourse goal(s) that communicate the multilingual identities (Adegbija, 1987; Austin, 1962; Dijkstra, 2004; Searle, 1969). These appropriately situate the Nigerian Army within the concept because it is the consistency and goals of their language practices that ascribe multilingual identities to the workforce.

From the above insights, Discourse community theory and Multilingual identity are relevant to the study. As Swale (1988) argues, the Nigerian Army's workout songs are not (entirely) locally adapted but standardised across the Army as a discourse community. The officers and soldiers who are participants in this context, must (gradually, through their years of experience) gain proficiency with the mixed coded songs to become insiders and socially included into the discourse community that defines the multilingual identities of the Army. It is this proficiency that deepens the regimental conceptualisation of the multilingual songs and enables them to respond appropriately to the singing routines imposed by the conventions of the Nigerian Army's discourse community.

3. Materials and method

The representative sample are personnel of the 146 Battalion and 13 Brigade of the Nigerian Army located in Eburutu and Akim in Calabar, Cross River State, South-eastern Nigeria. The setting was the jogging exercises by the two regiments along major streets in Calabar, where they sang Nigerian Army workout songs. The study adopts the qualitative research approach that involved a one-year period of fieldwork. Forty-two participants were consulted but 30 were willing and recruited to participate. The researcher(s) clearly informed the participants of the purpose of the research and the roles required of them. The criteria for the sampled selection were based on the participant's years of experience, knowledge, and understanding of Army military workout songs, bi/multilingual in English and one or more Nigerian indigenous languages (just as the researchers), and the regimental meanings of the songs in the social context of the Army sites. The demographic information of the participants such as gender, rank, age, years of experience, and ethnolinguistic background were well documented. Twenty-three of the participants were males while seven were females. In terms of the ranks of the participants, 27 were soldiers while three were commissioned officers. The participants' ages ranged between 27–55 years. The years of experience of the participants showed that they had worked in the Nigerian Army for a period of five to 32 years. Their ethnolinguistic backgrounds indicated that eight were Hausas, seven Yorubas, and six Ibos, while nine were from other ethnic groups. The demographic data revealed information on the ratio of gender composition and ranks which had impact on the numerical ratio of personnel who participated in the exercise. The age and years of experience deepened participants' understanding of the bearing of the songs. Also, the ethnolinguistic backgrounds situated the multilingual identities of the workforce. These are combined to have the desired impact on the validity of the data. The research was conducted within the specifications of the University of Calabar Ethical Committee.

The data for the study were generated through participant observation and semi-structured interviews using audiotape recording as a research tool. The Nigerian Army is officially an inaccessible regimented site for non-members. What granted the researcher(s) somewhat 'easy' entry to the military formation was (his over a decade) membership of one of the uniformed services. This insider status granted by *esprit de corps* facilitated unhindered participation in 12 of such jogging exercises organised by the Army for joint security forces. The researcher's insider status and other demographic information (such as the rank) enhanced deepened knowledge on the topic and created affordances that eased the collection of data and making of participant's observation notes. The 'insider' privileges allowed access to information that substantiated the participants' views on the linguistic repertoire of the Army. On the methods, participant observation (even with the researcher's dual positionality as an observer and researcher) allowed unhindered access and provided avenues for unsolicited interactive exchanges within the Army institution that revealed their language practices. The semi-structured interviews served as complementary instruments that generated the relevant information on the situational contexts and interpretation of the linguistic mechanisms of the workout songs. Interviewees were asked questions on their ethnolinguistic origins and other demographic information, how their enlistment in the Army and participation in the songs facilitated their understanding of other languages and military slangs, the

regimental conceptualisation of the songs, and the positive consequences of the multilingual identities of the personnel for optimal productivity. The digital audio recording of the songs and interviews was documented to aid the transcription. Excerpts from the semi-structured interviews were also reported as participants' opinions on the underlying implications of the multilingual songs and identities of the Nigerian Army in the analysis sections. The data were harmonised, validated, and transcribed by the participants with the researchers. The songs were then grouped and coded, from where the subheadings formed on the basis of the multilingual composition of the songs were generated for qualitative analysis. The qualitative method is relevant in the identification and interpretation of the (code mixed) linguistic elements in the workout songs that define the multilingual composition of the Nigerian Army as a representation of the Nigerian sociolinguistic setting.

4. Findings and discussion

The analysis below examines the multiple linguistic codes used in the Nigerian Army's social contexts represented by their workout songs. The coding and interpretation of the linguistic items are based on the participants' knowledge of the languages in Nigeria which they speak as either L1 or L2 within the Nigerian Army's discourse community. The categorisation of the (code mixed) songs is informed by the predominance of lexical items from a given linguistic code(s), not necessarily the absolute absence of items from other language(s). Drawing from this, the analyses of the songs are grouped under five headings: English for Specific Purposes (ESP) and Nigerianisms, English, and NP; English, NP, and Nigerian Indigenous languages; and English, NP, indigenous languages, and military slang. The songs are labelled 1–4 to align with the italicised data with their meaning equivalents immediately following the songs (where applicable). In the Army institution, the songs are often initiated by OC Morale (officer in-charge of morale-boosting songs), who takes the lead by initiating the songs while members of the regimented groups chorus in their different tones. Although the origin and first usage of the songs in the Nigerian Army are somewhat conflicting, the songs are somehow standardised and used across the Army formations.

4.1. *Esp and nigerianisms*

ESP is operationally used in this study to refer to aspects of the British or American English used by the Army in the social contexts of their operations. ESP accounts for the use of English in a particular domain evidently motivated by the communication needs of the users (Johns, 2013). That is, the 'greater understanding of the ways language is used on an everyday basis in the workplace context [to establish] and the contextualized nature of workplace talk' (Marra, 2013, p. 176). Commenting on the Nigerian Army, Mensah (2019) has stated that English has a formal function in the Army's discourse community and language practices. This 'English', is concerned with specific registers situated within English usage in the military. Nigerianism on the other hand is the variety that has yielded to some linguistic modification and adaptation to the Nigerian sociocultural milieu through acculturation, twists, and nativisation, and meant to account for, and express the sociocultural concepts, norms, modes, and values in social interactions. This

'nativization consists of three aspects: linguistic, pragmatic and creative' (Bamgbose, 1995, p. 20). Also, Jowith (2000) argues that Nigerianism as a nativised variety incorporates the diverse ethnolinguistic features into Nigerian English usage that show some intrusion or interference from indigenous concepts. The songs that bear the features of ESP and Nigerianisms are listed below.

1A	<i>We are good to go, yes, we are good to go (x2)</i>
1B	<i>From the centre, jogging begins (x2)</i> <i>From the right, checking begins (x2)</i>
1C	<i>My left, my right (x2)</i> <i>Jogging all the way</i> <i>It makes me stronger, throughout the day</i>
1D	<i>We are soldiers, we are gallant and rugged (x2)</i>
1E	<i>Take my girlfriend if I go(die)</i> <i>O' RSM</i> <i>If I happen to die in the battlefield</i> <i>RSM, take my girlfriend when I die</i>
1F	<i>We are soldiers</i> <i>Fighting for our nation</i> <i>In the name of God (Allah)</i> <i>We shall conquer</i>
1G	<i>When jungle matures(o) (x 2)</i> <i>See monkey before monkey sees you</i> <i>So that you live to fight again tomorrow</i>
1H	<i>Obey o (x3)</i> <i>Obey o, obey the Commander</i> <i>Obey o, obey your senior</i> <i>Obey o, even in hunger</i> <i>Obey o</i> <i>Even in the battle</i> <i>Obey o</i>

Songs 1A-E are in the category of English in the workplace (English in the military) that is dominated by military registers with connotative and semantically shifted explications. These institutional registers facilitate situated communication in the discourse communities of (professional) organisations (Biber, 2006; Hyland et al., 2021). Also, Uwen (2020, p. 134) demonstrates that the proliferation of professional groups has stimulated the 'creation of sub-types of the variety of English for occupational purposes which is advanced to provide distinctions in terms of function and purpose of certain registers'. The preponderance of certain lexical items appropriately situate the professional linguistic contents of the workout songs. Songs 1A-E, are linguistically constructed within the domain of English in the military. The songs bear registers that are interpreted within the sociopragmatic competence of members of the Nigerian Army's discourse community. For instance, lexical items such as *good to go* in Song 1A, *jogging begins* in 1B, *my left, my right ... makes me stronger* in 1C and *gallant ... rugged* in 1D are registers within the discourse community of the Army. In this context, they are linguistic significations for physical fitness, psychological stability, gallantry, and combat readiness, which are combined to present a daring workforce. In the same vein, other registers such as *checking begins* in Song 1B is semantically shifted to connote the practice of accounting for soldiers in a troop before and after battles. It is the same way *RSM* (Regimental Sergeant Major), *battlefield* and *if I go(die)* in Song 1E and *battle* in 1H connote enforcement of orderliness and discipline, and (un)certainity of death as the recurring prediction in the battlefield. Also, *Commander* and *senior* in Song 1H are registers in military English that

rehearse the inviolability of hierarchisation in the Army, a practice that strengthens discipline. Discipline and subordination, as observed, are core military values and are sacrosanct in regulating soldiers' behaviour. Again, *fighting*, *nation* and *conquer* in Song 1F connote resilience, sovereignty, and victory within the Army's discourse community. Song F rehearses the religious beliefs of the participants in according to victory and supremacy to God over the troop's physical preparedness. In the Army, the conscious recitation of songs in religious themes, further establishes the formation's construction of their religious beliefs. Music and songs in this state ultimately minister to the souls for possible establishment and encouragement in strange situations (Uwen & Ukam, 2020). Also, the category of institutional registers corroborates Hyland's (2002) position that there is increasing knowledge about the specificity, generic norms, and variation of language use across disciplines and professions. Such variations situate the differences between professions, social groups, and discourse communities in communicative events.

There are other linguistic elements that show Nigerian English usage in Songs 1G and H. For instance, *when jungle matures ... see monkey before monkey sees you* is derived from the flora and fauna in the Nigerian ecosystem situated in the proverbial corpora within the Nigerian sociocultural context. In the Army parlance, the text socio-pragmatically signifies professional vigilance and consciousness against enemy attack. Also, the recurring epenthetic vowel 'o' following obey in Song 1H serves a pragmatic function of reminding the participants of what they ought to know about the Army's practices, a feature that reoccurs in Nigerian English usage. This variation is the speakers' (Nigerian Army's) response to the linguistic and social factors peculiar to the speakers (Drummond & Schlee, 2016; Heller, 1984; Labov, 1972, 1977, 1994). A male Lance Corporal admitted that 'the use of military English combined with Nigerian English builds the personnel linguistic competence to communicate in the registers of the profession and the English that reflects the sociocultural context of Nigeria'. The participant's argument suggests dual linguistic identities and competencies: the use of military English (within the field of ESP) and Nigerian English usage which validates the multilingual identities of the Nigerian Army. The knowledge of military English in the Army context, confers insider's status on the speaker while Nigerian English usage situates them within the sociocultural context of the Army's operating environment.

4.2. English and NP

The next category of songs recited by the Army subpopulation are those with code-mixed elements of English and NP. English (for general purposes) is the language used by Nigerian Army to facilitate the performance of their official duties. NP on the other hand is widely spoken in Nigeria across class and ethnolinguistic groups (Elugbe, 1995). The songs with such code-mixed items are written below.

2A

*Why o, why o
Dem go pin our heads o
Dem go say na training
We go dey run with loads
Dem go callam training
Dem go dey give us water
Dem go say na tea o*

	<p><i>You go dey wey dem keep you</i> <i>Even if na danger</i> <i>Even wey you dey vex o</i> <i>E no go show for face o</i> <i>Even wey you dey weak o</i> <i>You go dey obey de order</i> <i>Why? (x2)</i> <i>We painfully pinned our heads to the ground</i> <i>As part of the training</i> <i>We ran exhaustively with heavy loads</i> <i>As part the training</i> <i>They offered us coloured liquid</i> <i>And called it tea</i> <i>You must be at your duty post</i> <i>No matter how dangerous it is</i> <i>Even while you are angry</i> <i>You must not frown</i> <i>Even while you are weak</i> <i>You must wait for the last order</i></p>
2B	<p><i>Dem go bon better (x2)</i> <i>Wey infantry marry soldier dem go bon better</i> <i>Dem go bon mumu (x2)</i> <i>Wey soldier marry civilian dem go bon wowo</i> <i>If a soldier marries a colleague, they will produce better children</i> <i>If a soldier marries a civilian, they will have fool</i></p>
2C	<p><i>See how dem dey luk us (x2)</i> <i>See how dem dey luk us like otondo</i> <i>See how they are staring at us</i> <i>See how they are staring at us like newly recruited personnel</i></p>
2D	<p><i>If you see my mama</i> <i>Tell am say o</i> <i>I don join Army</i> <i>I no get problem</i> <i>Sime sime no dey for Army</i> <i>If you come by my mother</i> <i>Inform her that I have been enlisted into the Army</i> <i>And I am comfortable with that</i> <i>Army does not accommodate weaklings</i></p>
2E	<p><i>Ikebe wan fall o</i> <i>Eeeeeeh, ikebe wan fall o, yayaya support am</i> <i>Hold am well well o, yayaya support am</i> <i>Her large bottom is falling off</i> <i>Guide and hold it jealously</i></p>

Among other lexical items in Song 2A-F, *heads*, *training*, *danger* and *you* in Song 2A, *better*, *marry* and *civilian* in Song 2B, *see*, *how*, *like* and *us* in Song 2C, *problem*, *Army* and *join* in Song 2D, *toast*, *she* and *make* in Song 2E, and *fall*, *support* and *hold* in Song 2F are elements from English. Also, examples of NP elements include *dem.*, *na*, *dey* and *wey* in Song 2A, *bon*, *mumu* and *wowo* in Song 2B, *luk* in Song 2C, *don* and *sime sime* in Song 2D, and in *wan* and *ikebe* in Song 2E. Following the structures of the examples, Egbokhare (2003) has demonstrated that the vocabulary of NP is predominantly in Anglicised spellings with a large percentage sourced from English. NP usage by soldiers widens its status and perception beyond the language that bridges the communication gap between diverse ethnolinguistic interactants, it shows that it is widely spoken in urban settings for social inclusion and solidarity. The multilingual site of the Nigerian Army is a fertile platform for the use of the NP, as Mensah (2019, p. 337) has rightly argued that 'in a fluid multilingual setting like the Army, where soldiers and officers belong to different ethnolinguistic groups, NP serves to integrate them into a unified linguistic

group'. This position confers the function of integration and linguistic accommodation on the NP.

The content of Song 2A deepens understanding on exercises that internalise the physical comportment within the Army since the institution operates in stringent rules and orders. Song 2B recommends intramilitary marriages so that the couple should not produce foolish (*mumu*) and ugly (*wowo*) children. *Otondo* (used to describe the civilian spectators) in Song 2C is used to create social boundary between the Army and nonmembers. Song D prioritises the choice to defend the nation over familial love while Songs E represents the segment of women who appear to be sexually motivated by the site of soldiers. Except for the epenthetic 'O' in Song 2A, all the other songs have code mixed elements from English and NP. The code mixed expressions as presented in the Songs are deployed by the Army's multilingual soldiers to develop linguistic resources that facilitate their optimal performance in the linguistic roles.

The negotiation of the multilingual identities of the personnel through the songs is triggered by the social roles and relationships of the participants, the topic and language choice, consideration of the discourse goals, and the dominant language attitude acceptable in the Army's discourse community that shapes the practices. On the diverse linguistic identities of the personnel, a soldier of the Private rank argued that

in informal and some other social contexts, we used NP combined with English to interact among ourselves to accommodate everyone in the discussion. This code mixed interactions is the norm since it is often difficult to be in the midst of soldiers that are entirely from a single linguistic group in Nigeria.

The two languages (English and NP) are communicative codes in the Nigerian Army's discourse community that also define the personnel in terms of their competencies in the official language and the language that permeates across social and linguistic boundaries in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context. A female Sergeant reported the regimental conceptualisation of the seemingly sexist colouration of Song E as 'mere jocular, as the Nigerian Army is contemporarily positioned, and is devoid of any sexist and gendered sentiments, it gives equal opportunities for male and female personnel to advance in career unhindered'.

4.3. English, NP, and indigenous languages

This section considers songs that contain lexical items from English, NP, and indigenous languages. It has been emphasised that Nigeria is a multiethnic and multilingual nation with many co-existing languages. This multilingual practice is reflected in the Nigerian Army workout songs as shown below.

3A

Nzogbu nzogbu
Enyi mba enyi
Nzogbu nwoke
Enyi mba enyi
Nzogbu nwanyi
Enyi mba enyi
 Suppress them to death
 A nation as big (strong) as the elephant
 Suppress the men to death
 A nation as big (strong) as the elephant

3B	<p>Suppress the women (fighters) to death A nation as big (strong) as the elephant <i>Jeje</i> (x 3) <i>We dey go o</i> <i>Jeje, we dey go o, jeje</i> <i>Steadily</i> (x 3) We are advancing Steadily, we are advancing, steadily <i>If you no get heart, no come o</i> <i>Army no be for children</i></p>
3C	<p><i>Army na for strong men</i> If you are not strong enough, don't join the Army Army is not for children Army is for strong men</p>
3D	<p><i>Wetin dem say go spoil our barracks? Jaburata</i> <i>Mai lemu go spoil our barracks, jaburata</i> What is being rumoured to will weaken our gallantry Ladies' breasts will weaken our gallantry</p>
3E	<p><i>Agbeke o, Agbeke, wonderful</i> <i>Aboki wetin you see o</i> <i>Small nyarinya big big bolom bolo</i> Agbeke, it's wonderful My friend (colleague), what did you see? Slim girls with big breasts</p>

Song 3A is composed in Igbo, echoes the courage and psychology of the Nigerian Army compared with the strength of the elephant while Song 3B re-enacts military advancement in battles which demands courage. Courage, according to Frank and Ukperi (2012, p. 291) 'is a psychological approach to warfare'. Song B has code mixed elements of Yoruba (*jeje*), English (*we, go*), NP (*dey*), and the epenthetic *O* that is a common in Nigerian languages. Song C combines English lexical items (*you, heart, strong*, and so on), NP (*na*), and Hausa (*nyarinya*) to establish the Army as a masculinised site not meant for infants (*children*) but for the energetic and ferocious 'men'. This corroborates the position that 'women participation in the military hyper-masculinised system does not undermine its masculine ideology that prescribes violence and control to ensure security' (Khalid, 2015, p. 6). Song D maintains code mixed items from English (*spoil, barracks* among others), NP (*wetin* and *dem*) and Yoruba (*jaburuta*), and Hausa (*mai lemu*). *Jaburuta* suggests military gallantry while *mai lemu* is orange seller which metaphorically represents beautiful ladies within the barracks who could distract male soldiers. As argued earlier, the mention of the physical endowment of women, as reported by another female Corporal, 'was not demeaning but mere rehearsal of old songs whose communicative imports are no longer tenable in the Nigerian Army's modern practices'.

The multilingual nature of the songs is a feature of language practices in modern urban settings. This category of songs unifies the troopers and keeps them as indivisible entity beyond other affiliations. This substantiates Uwen and Ekpenyong's (2022) argument that the Nigerian military site 'defuses the crystallised leanings of the multiethnic and multi-religious composition of the personnel into one unified people'. Song E is code mixed with items from English (*see, small* and others), Nigerianisms (lexical reduplication – *big big*), NP (*wetin*), Yoruba (*agbeke*), Hausa (*aboki* and *nyarinya*) and the epenthetic *O* to present the female anatomy as pleasurable looks. The NP in the songs competes flourishingly with the three national languages: Igbo, Hausa, and Yoruba which aligns with the Nigerian Army language policy and what Weber and Horner (2012) describe as the

'notion of hierarchies of languages'. That is, the dominance of some languages over others in a multilingual setting. This practice in the Nigerian Army, according to Mensah (2019, p. 331) 'recognizes and promotes the dominant languages as resources for military training, intelligence gathering and peace building'. This is so because it is often difficult to give equal status to languages in a culturally heterogeneous and linguistically diverse country (Wardhaugh & Fuller, 2015). However, the code mixed songs with foreign and indigenous languages' elements increase active participation and connect the participants to the roots. The songs are institutional reflection of the sociolinguistic situation in Nigeria and construct formidable tools for development and negotiation of multiple levels of multilingual identities in the Nigerian Army's discourse community.

On the exclusion of some Nigerian languages in the songs, a male Corporal who is from one of the minority ethnolinguistic groups argued that:

the languages that are consistently used with NP and English in the Nigerian Army's discourse community are the national languages that have higher population of speakers. The linguistic elements of these languages have infiltrated into the military activities. The practice unifies the personnel and re-enacts the multilingual identities of the Army as a multilingual workforce.

The participant's position aligns with Akande's (2016) observation that the languages that co-exist in the Nigerian sociolinguistic setting are used by the Army depending on the social context, topic, and participants. The inclusion of lexical items from Nigerian indigenous languages deepens the institutional re-enactment of the ethnolinguistic identities of the soldiers to foster sense of belonging and unification for optimal productivity. It shows the vast and multilingual variables in the Army's discourse community.

4.4. English, NP, indigenous languages, and military slang

The final set of songs further communicate the multilingual identities of the participants in Nigerian Army's discourse community. The songs in this category were composed with linguistic elements of English, NP, indigenous languages, and military slang. Military slang is operationally used in this study to refer to the slangy expressions that are mutually intelligible within the Nigerian military micro contexts as aspects of their discourse community. It is a blend of slang and language. Liaw et al. (2013) argue that the slangy terms in this framework, are devised to account for the multiple aspects of military social contexts and operations. The terms bear situated and diverse meanings intelligible to the participants, and are appropriately deployed in the social contexts of relevance to attend to their communication needs. The Songs in this category are written below.

2B, line 2
2C, line 2
3E, line 3
4A

*Wey infantry marry soldier dem go bon better
See how dem dey luk us like otonto
Small nyarinya big big bolom bolo
Omimiko miko o, eeyaa eeh
Omimikoko Liberia, eeyaa eeh
Omimikoko Sierra Leone, eeyaa eeh
Omimikoko Congo, eeyaa eeh
Omimikoko Gambia, eeyaa eeh
Omimikoko Bakassi, eeyaa eeh*

Wey infantry marry soldier dem go bon better (extracted from Song 2B, line 2) and *See how dem dey luk us like otondo* (extracted from Song 2, line 2) bear code mixed lexical items from English, NP, and military slang while *small nyarinya big big bolom bolo* is code mixed with English, Hausa, and military slang. Having discussed English, NP and indigenous languages and their code mixed elements in the previous sections, this section will focus on the explication of military slang. The elements of military slang in the above extracts are *infantry*, *otondo* and *bolom bolo*. Citing *infantry* as a derogatory military slang, Silkett (1985, p. 13) explains, thus:

... while details are obscure of the first use of *infant* to describe foot soldiers, the term as probably coined by cavalymen as one abuse Since early cavalymen (who, notably, were associated with chivalry, nobility, knights, and the aristocracy), rode on horseback, they could easily create the primitive analogy that since infantry could move only on a foot's place and could not carry their own baggage and supplies to last any length of time, therefore cavalry is equated to adult, the foot soldier to *infant*.

Although there appears to be a semantic shift in the use of *infantry* to describe the modern day soldiers, it is not however used as an honorific reference, but a slangy expression. Also, *otondo* in the Army parlance is used to describe an inexperienced recruit who stares suspiciously around the strange military environment especially at the training camp. Another interesting aspect of military language is sex slang where *bolom bolo* falls into. *Bolom bolo*, as a female Staff Sergeant revealed, is a military slang that refers to female breasts likened to inflated balloons. On sex-related slangs, Disler (2008) argues that the military site is where slangy expressions and chants are marked by reference to sex. The code-mixing of the slangy expressions with elements from other languages whose meanings are determined by the participants' common knowledge and experience, underscores the relevance of Army's situated discourse community and the multilingual identities of the troopers. It is 'this common knowledge [that] provides clues to the asymmetry in the relationship between linguistic choices and their connotations' (Uwen & Ushie, 2022, p. 165). These expressions with situated meanings are often in the category of classified items used in military exploits.

Song 4A is composed in military slang to narrate memories of exploits and victories. The military uses slang, which is institutionally controlled, to express daring acts and exercises that invoke the ideology of the formation and communicate power relations (Gardener & Martin-Jones, 2012; Liaw et al., 2013). The Song reproduces the combative victory in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Congo, Gambia, and Bakassi intended to spur the soldiers for victory in subsequent battles. A female Sergeant argues that 'the alliterative military slang *omimikoko miko* represents the sounds of weapons'. Such codes are used to express social inclusion of members of a discourse community. Interactants with same orientation and experience are often connected by the language they speak, and in this case, the soldiers psychologically connected to their past exploits. A male Staff Sergeant reported that

the dominant items in military slang can never be used in songs that are in the hearing of the public. Such items are highly classified, they are also not generally known in the Army, it depends on troop, type, time and place of operation.

The use of different categories of military slang (with or without items from other languages) substantiates the attainment of the proficiency to participate in different

levels of interactions in the Army's discourse community. The combination and use of these codes expands the linguistic identities of the participants and establish power relation, social inclusion and outgroup bias.

5. Conclusion

The nuanced insights from Discourse community and Multilingual identity models were explored in the instantiation of the linguistic elements from diverse languages and institutional slangy expressions that constitute the unified and multilingual nature of the workout songs used by the Nigerian Army formations in 146 Battalion and 13 Brigade situated in Calabar, South-eastern Nigeria. Being an interethnolinguistic and regimented federal institution, there are significant impact of the multilingual personnel on the language practices of the Nigerian Army conveyed in the code-mixed songs. The songs bear prevalent elements from English, NP, indigenous languages, and military slang language to substantiate the Nigeria's multilingualism and position the Army as a distinct discourse community. The English components of the songs communicate three varieties: English for general purpose used in daily interactions, ESP which explains the situated meanings of registers of military English, and elements of Nigerianisms which situate English usage in the Nigerian sociocultural context. This differentiation indexes the status and the multiple roles English performs in the Nigerian sociolinguistic context. The frequency of the elements of NP in the songs justifies its contemporary shift from a marginal language to an urbanised and link language of wider usage cutting across social class and educational backgrounds. NP, as populated in the songs, bridges the communication gap between multilingual discourse participants which the troopers represent. The use of indigenous (national) languages defines the return of the participants to their linguistic roots. The practice creates linguistic accommodation and facilitates military-civilian communication and relationship desired for quality service delivery and intelligence gathering. The elements of military slang language in the songs underscores the relevance of secluded military codes deployed as linguistic patent of the Army for operational purposes. The linguistic choices in military slang language are coded and resemanticised terminologies that define the Army profession and situate the personnel in the Nigerian and institutional multilingual space. The study has demonstrated that the code-mixed elements of English, NP, Nigerian indigenous languages, and military slang language in the Nigerian Army workout songs are a narration of their language practices and multilingual identities.

The thematic threads of the songs convey multiple layers of meaning embedded in the themes of masculinity, resilience, courage, death, sexuality, patriotism, and service. The songs demonstrate regimental sites for multiple identities construction, maintenance of good health and gallantry, and the quest for professional productivity. The choice of language(s) for communication in the military sites, as the songs suggested, is institutionally elicited and controlled. This regimental regulation is influenced by the topic, social setting, institutional roles, power relations, ethnolinguistic affiliations of the participants, goal of the interaction, communication exigencies, and the type of activity. Apart from the re-enactment of a typical Army's discourse community and multilingual composition of the regimented workforce in the songs, the mixed expressions also present the Nigerian Army as a micro representation of the complex Nigerian sociolinguistic landscape. The use of diverse linguistic resources as a strengthening and unifying force to dominate the

security space to win battles in defence of Nigeria's sovereignty, is an indelible takeaway for the larger Nigerian populace. Nigerians should therefore utilise the gains from her heterogeneous and multilingual complexities to foster unity and build a stronger and indivisible sovereign nation that the Army exemplifies. The study has also opened new frontiers to the investigations on the sociolinguistics of professional groups and institutions, and how the positive consequences are harnessed to enhance a sense of belonging and productivity.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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