

LANGUAGE AND SOCIAL CLASS: AN ANALYSIS OF LANGUAGE VARIATION IN THE NIGERIAN AIR FORCE BASE, KADUNA

Ikpomwosa Andrew Egbah,

&

Dilichukwu Lilian Efobi

Abstract

Language is a vital tool for communal interaction and social mobility. The levels of its application in any given society usually provide an insight into the social structure of the group. Consequently, modern linguistic studies have focused their attention on the relationship between a linguistic code and the society in which it is being employed. It was in this perspective that this research, 'Language and Social Class: An Analysis of Language Variation in the Nigerian Air Force Base, Kaduna.' was carried out. Using Milroy's Social Network theory in line with the results from questionnaire analysed via the ANOVA statistical technique, the findings revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the levels of linguistic variation and class structure in the Kaduna NAF Base. The findings also implied that some selected variables, such as group membership, educational attainment and gender distinctions, could have an overt effect on the choice and distribution of linguistic variation in a given speech community.

Keywords: Language variation, social class, sociolinguistics, social network theory, militarese.

Introduction

Language is an indispensable tool for human communication and a vehicle for the exchange of thoughts and ideas. In the realm of

linguistics, language is usually associated with the production of meaningful substances (phonic, semiotic or graphic) which are built into a complex system of communication. Language therefore plays a major role as an effective medium for the pursuit of individual and communal goals, and a linguistic code could be a marker of the social identity for its users. Varieties and registers are created in the process of group interaction and these linguistic elements go a long way in illuminating the societal trends of any community at any given time.

Language of the military is a functional mode of interaction which is founded on class structure, and this in turn gives rise to the formation of variant types of linguistic codes within the military setting. It is therefore imperative to consider the connection between language and social class in order to understand the linguistic structure of the Nigerian Air Force (NAF) Base as a speech community.

The Nigerian Air Force was created by an Act of Parliament on 10th April, 1964 with key objectives such as complementing the other arms of the Nigerian military system, assisting in aerial logistics and transportation of personnel and resources, defending the country's aerial territorial domain and coordinating air laws ascribed to the nation. (Zighadina 1997:3).

Zighadina (1997:20-37) also notes that the NAF maintains control and supervision of internal and external air matters through special commands, which received official recognition on 24th July, 1978. These commands (and their respective directorates and units) are situated in key towns in the major geo-political zones of Nigeria (Kaduna, Lagos, Ibadan, Abuja, Enugu, Port-Harcourt and so on). Each of the NAF Commands mentioned above is located within a geographic setting referred to as a "Base". A Base serves as an occupational setting as well as a residential site for the military personnel and their families.

Although the Kaduna NAF Base, like other military settlements in Nigeria, is situated within a geographical location with

sociolinguistic realities, the settlement of her personnel does not follow any form of ethnolinguistic procedure. This infers that the military environment could be perceived as a multilingual setting with indigenous ethnic groups comprising the Yoruba, Hausa, Igbo, Igala, Edo and and so on well represented.

The pattern of settlement in all residential and occupational sites on the Base is also systematised with the intent that there is no collection of people of similar ethnolinguistic or religious backgrounds, since administrative and accommodation-related issues are coordinated directly from the respective NAF administrative headquarters. This now gives the Base its 'transit structure' since the Air Force personnel cannot determine or easily influence the next NAF station that they would be posted to in the course of their military profession.

The settlement pattern of the Kaduna NAF Base could be broadly classified into three major divisions: administrative sites; residential quarters; and centres for socio-economic and religious activities. The administrative sites include the offices, parade grounds, training centres (military and vocational), hospitals, hangars, and the landing strips. The residential areas are structured along class divisions with the commissioned officers having special residential sites which are well designed to suit their lifestyle as members of the upper strata on the Base and they are usually completely cut off from the mainstream base community. The structuring of the residential sites is done strategically to enforce control and the distribution of resources and there is no way that an individual could decide on the site he wants to settle or if he wants to erect a structure for personal use.

The third setting of centres for socio-economic and religious activities covers areas like the community market centres banks, farmlands, academic institutions, amusement parks, sports centres

(buildings and fields with facilities where members of the public can go to play different kinds of sports), the gymnasium, the Mess Halls, and the places designated for religious worship such as the Base Central Mosque (for Muslims), Our Lady Queen of the Sky Parish (for Catholic Christians) and the NAF Protestant Church (for Protestant Christians).

From the foregoing, the Kaduna NAF Base, like all other military environments, is a boiling-point for individuals of various multicultural, geographical and occupational backgrounds. As such, a language variety of unification (sometimes referred to as ‘militarese’) has evolved that embraces all facets of communication within its diverse social groups. This ‘militarese’ variety is in active use within the Base, making it to be recognised as a speech community following the criteria provided by Hudson (1980), Milroy (1980), and Fairclough (1995). This variety also develops sub-types based on demographics like class stratification, group association, educational level, gender distinctions, and geographical differences within the NAF domains.

This study thus sets out to examine the role of language variation in the stratification of social classes in the Kaduna NAF Base, with the assumption that class structure, educational attainment, and social norms could significantly influence the speech patterns of individuals in a given community. By carrying out a statistical investigation of the interplay between language and the diverse social classes within the Kaduna NAF Base, the work aims at unveiling the significant relationships between some selected typologies of social class variation (such as class structure, educational attainment, and group-membership) and language use within the military domain.

Review of Related Literature and Justification for the Study

Much work has been done on the nature of linguistic codes peculiar to various professions, specifically in the fields of law, politics,

religion, science and journalism. Relatively, there has been a growing interest in the study of the nature and features of the language of the military (militarese). Abaya (2008:1) highlights the pragmatic sphere of the language adopted in Nigerian coup announcements and his findings provided useful insights into the relationship between language use and contextual realities.

Military conversation is a common phenomenon as warfare and military cohesion get complicated, signifying the early purpose of group solidarity and authority. Gradually, soldier-talk between the personnel gives way to the communication pattern of professionals. This code would be further encouraged by the growth of distinct specialisations and job descriptions within the military. As Erickson (1994:2496) states:

The art of war and the recognition of its singular requirements demanded a language of its own right, specifying, and codifying, elaborating communication with terminology (which is) at once inclusive and pervasive.

Soldier-talk (militarese) transcends several issues (social, economic or religious) both on and off the battlefield. In the perception of Danbazau (1991), the language of the military derives its uniqueness from its inherent features and characteristics. Subsequently, it has been observed by linguists and sociologists that a part of the power and flexibility of a language, including that of the military, lies in the ability of the speakers to multiply their vocabulary in any given field in the interest of precision and clarity.

The preceding point is true of the language of the language of the military, which is used to restrict its users to a specified place in the hierarchy. Power dimensions in the military play a very intrinsic role in the understanding of language use by an individual. To explain this, one must know that:

Military ranks, and ranks in any strictly hierarchical organisation of people in relationship to seniority, command and subordination, are examples of a culturally-produced field that is closely determined and ordered. Part of the meaning of any military rank-word (major, captain, corporal etc) is the product of the whole system of such terms in the relevant part of the language, and of the exact place of each in reflection to others. (Robins 1996:69).

Abaya (2008) supports the foregoing view by stating that the factors of seniority and subordination, as well as group solidarity, may be decisive in the understanding of language use with respect to rank-structure in the armed forces and other related organisations. Language use is often linked to group identity and the development of a code for social interaction (like the use of English in the Nigerian Air Force Base) could be regarded as the most significant control symbol of emerging societies universally. On the interface between language and group interaction is ritualisation of communication patterns to suit the needs of the speakers. Kotze (1994:1153) puts it thus;

Socio-cultural relations (such as family structure and status differences) are often reflected in the lexicon of particular settings, age differences, and relative position of asymmetric dyads (or peers) involved in the communication. The markers of social identity may be demographic or linguistic.

The demographic markers could be occupational (including job descriptions), age, family status and so on. The linguistic markers, on the other hand, could be syntactic, lexical and stylistic elements. In Hudson's (1980:121) perspective, these accepted forms of communication help to signal the power-solidarity relations between the speaker and the addressee. They also assist in the building of a

premise that would be controlled by a more superior individual or group.

The relationship between language and society can be best understood within an ecological framework; that is, the internal relation between the society and the users of the language (or language variety) who are structurally integrated into this environment, in line with what Kotze (1994:1151) explains. Therefore, the relationship between language and society is indirect and quite obvious by the ways in which the speakers use their language to express group identity.

Having considered previous works on language variation relating to the military, this paper aims to fill a gap in literature by contributing to the body of scholarship in military studies. The present study is aimed towards the interplay between social class and language varieties by explicating

Secondly, the study would be of great advantage for those in the field of Education, Sociology, and Language planning in presenting an objective and scientific perception of the linguistic situation of the Nigerian Air Force Base as an important setting for residential and administrative activities. This is crucial in order to complement the efforts of these professionals using the interdisciplinary approach of Sociolinguistics.

The Social Network Theory

An approach based on the Social Network model by Milroy (1980) is considered the most suitable for the investigation of variation in this study. This approach attempts to answer the question as to the reason why people continue to use a low status variety when it may be in their economic and social interest to acquire the variety of high prestige. Also, the Social Network, as Milroy (1992:50) highlights, proposes that “varieties of a language are subject to maintenance through the pressure exerted by the informal ties of kinship”.

A Social Network stresses the importance of kinship ties in determining a speaker's access to employment and to other resources. The individuals develop close and continuing relationship with each other as they help one another, first their kin, and then their small territorial communities and co-religionists. Milroy developed this theory to study how stable sets of linguistic norms emerge and maintain themselves in a community. She calls these items 'Vernacular norms' and explains that these norms symbolises values of solidarity and reciprocity rather than status (Milroy 1980:35-36). These norms contrast with middle class norms because they are quite flexible and could be extended to cover the speaker's communicative purpose.

Milroy (1980) looked at working speech in three stable inner working-class communities in Belfast: Ballymacarrett (a Protestant area in East Belfast with little male employment), the Hammer (another Protestant town in West Belfast), and the Clonard (a Catholic town in West Belfast). In both the Hammer and the Clonard, there was considerable male employment (about 35%) and male relationships were less close than those in Ballymacarrett, and there were no sharp differentiation in men and women's activities. Consequently, both the Hammer and the Clonard exhibited strong ties of social networks within them unlike the situation that is obtainable in Ballymacarrett, particularly for the males. This is because, as Milroy explains:

In modern urban society, large society and geographically mobile sections of the population will lack the conditions necessary for the formation and maintenance of reciprocity....individual mobility produces well established territorial rights (Milroy 1980:180).

Milroy's model was revolutionary in several respects:

- (i) Milroy's theory avoided the socio-economic classes and concentrated on the speech of the working-class people in Belfast.

- (ii) Within each area, Milroy built a relationship she referred to as 'friend of a friend', a well-recognised status as a researcher which helped in data elicitation. Hudson (1980:156) explains that it got to a point where Milroy's presence, or that of the recorder, did not affect the speaker's formality level, reflected by the 'observer's paradox'.
- (iii) The processing followed Trudgill's (1974) format, with scores awarded on the basis of the frequency of occurrence in the use of a variable.

Milroy (1992) argues that the pressure to use a variable norm is likely to be stronger when the personal ties involved are 'dense' and 'multiplex'. A network can be described as dense when, in a given group of persons, virtually everyone knows everybody else and this exists in villages and ghettos (Milroy, 1992:58). The degree of the network multiplicity on the other hand is probably highest when the group concerned is territorially based (for example, in a low status group as we have in the Kaduna NAF Base where members of a given rank are lumped into a residential framework), and the density band multiplicity of network constrain the behaviour of individuals within its network. Therefore, multiplicity attempts to measure the strength of the ties between the individuals within the network. While multiplicity measures the estimated number of capacities in which A knows B (for instance A knows B as a relative, friend, and work-mate), density is based on whether or not speaker A knows B, C and D, and whether they all know one another.

According to Milroy (1994:3987), the Social Network Theory has several methodological advantages such as theorising why non-standard varieties and dialects survive, especially on the basis that such sustenance of the non-standard linguistic forms is strongly linked to ties of relationships among the speaker. Another strength is that the Network approach is methodologically useful in the investigation in the

investigation of small groups in a class-structured society. This is a sharp contrast from the model of Labov (1972) which was applied in the study of dialects in New York City. This Labovian approach was criticised for its prescriptivism and over-generalisations regarding large populations, rather than having a comprehensive study of relatively small, self-centred groups in greater details.

Furthermore, social network theory provides a means of obtaining an objective analysis of sociolects in any community. This is important because several researchers in the past had encountered serious problems in studying minority ethnic groups, migrant populations and ghettos..It also offers a procedure for dealing with variation between speakers at the level of the individual rather than the group.

The weaknesses of the Social Network Approach include the arguments that it is theoretical and may not reflect the behavioural pattern of members of the group; the ranking of linguistic variants according to separate scores could be quite deceptive because language is arbitrary and systematic; the distribution of the linguistic variant is usually considered on a general frame without providing separate figures for individual variations, thus valuable information could be easily lost; and Network approach is a way of advocating for low prestige linguistic forms which had suffered stigmatisation from the users of a standard variety. Hence, the study may not be tilted towards language standardisation but dialectal variation.

Despite the weaknesses noted above, it is important to state that the Social Network Theory still remains a viable tool in the examination of individuals and groups in any given society. To this end, this research would adopt a multi-disciplinary approach involving both sociological and linguistic methods in an attempt to study the levels of linguistic variation in the study area of NAF Base Kaduna.

Research Methodology

The research is a qualitative and quantitative enquiry into the sociolinguistic nature of the Kaduna NAF Base. A total of three hundred and four (304) persons were used for this research out of the estimated number of about three thousand (3000) adults of ages 18-60 years residing in the Kaduna NAF Base. The parameters used in the determination of the subjects to be sampled in this study includes social class (the informants were distributed along the representative percentages of the three major classifications of the officers, airmen/airwomen, and civilians within the Kaduna NAF Base); educational Attainment (this included levels from the non-literate to the tertiary stages of education); age and gender classifications (the age range for this study covered the span of 18-60 years; the gender descriptions reflected both the male and female categories); and geographical sites (the sites employed in this research included the residential sites and key centres for socio-economic activities). In addition, the research considered the length of time spent by the subjects within the selected sites.

The mixed sampling method was adopted in this research with the administration of questionnaire and face-to-face (direct procedure) applied in the interview elicitation process. The data used in this research were elicited via the questionnaire method and audio tape recordings. In terms of presentation and analysis of data, the data generated in this study were examined and presented as a display of questionnaire and interview' responses in statistical and dialogue format. The Single Factor ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) method was employed in the statistical analysis of responses received from the questionnaire. At the end of this presentation, the findings received from the research instruments were evaluated to ascertain whether the observed frequencies are sufficiently close to the expected values or not. When the calculated value is greater than the critical values at the

selected levels of significance, the null hypothesis (Ho) would be rejected.

Presentation and Analysis of Responses to Topical Issues raised in the Questionnaire and Face-to-face (ATR) Interviews

(i) Social Class and Language Variation

The Kaduna NAF setting, like other military settings universally, is a society structured along classified groups. As such, members within the military ranks are graded along a stratum that reflects influence and power connotations, sometimes to the extent of creating social distance. The inference here would be the assumption that language variation is directly proportional to social stratification, in other words, a speaker's linguistic performance could be indicated by his status in the society. There was the need to examine the views of the subjects in rating the level of Spoken English usage among the NAF personnel on a broad scale. First, the respondents were asked **'Which group, in your opinion, ranks best in the use of English language in the Kaduna NAF Base'** and their responses in the questionnaire is presented below for analysis in a statistical format.

Table 1: Responses to Question 1 (Which group, in your opinion, ranks best in the use of English language in the Kaduna NAF Base?)

Social Class	Officers	Airmen/Ai rwomen	Civilians	No Answer	Total
Officers	16 (69.57%)	0 (0%)	5 (21.75%)	2 (8.70%)	23 (100%)
Airmen/Airwo men	23 (35.38%)	29 (44.62%)	0 (0%)	1 (1.53%)	65 (100%)
Civilians	58 (51.79%)	10 (8.93%)	42 (337.5%)	2 (1.79%)	112 (100%)

The table shows that the majority of the respondents are of the opinion that the members of the officers' cadre (the top social class in the military domain) perform best in the use of English language in NAF Base Kaduna. The Null Hypothesis (1) was stated at this level, that is: **There is no significant difference in the association that exists between the levels of linguistic variation and class structure in the Kaduna NAF Base.** Table 2 presents the ANOVA test-scores for the data received from the responses to Question 1 in the Questionnaire (Which group, in your opinion, ranks best in the use of English language in the Kaduna NAF Base?)

Table 2: ANOVA Table showing responses to issues on social class and language variation.

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P-Value	F crit
Between Groups	474.3333	2	237.1667	0.518964	0.640389	9.552094
Within Groups	1371		457			
Total	1845.333					

From the table, the F crit = 9.552094 and the Alpha levels are set at 0.05. The ANOVA result could be interpreted as $F^* \leq F \text{ crit}$, or $0.640389 \leq 9.552094$. Thus, the Null Hypothesis (1) is accepted. Consequently, it is statistically proven that there is a significant relationship between the levels of linguistic variation and class structure in the Kaduna NAF Base.

The validation of the acceptance of the $H_0(1)$ stems from the fact that class structure could have an obvious effect on the use of a particular language variety. Hudson (1980:121) confirms this by stating that there are linguistic forms in every society that reflect the social characteristics

of the speaker, of the addressee and the relationship that exists between them. Subsequently, each member is expected to use a speech pattern which contains the linguistic properties associated with speakers of that group.

In some of the interview sessions, the question of a close relationship between social class and language use also featured. In an abridged transcription of the data in ATR-1, a discussion between the researcher (R) and an officer (O) would show how the conscious awareness of a speaker's class could be a determining factor on his use of a standard code. The first part of the interview had focused on the theme, "What was your greatest experience in 2008?"

The officer goes on to narrate his experiences, with the researcher providing prompts in Standard English. After the narration, the Researcher switched into the use of pidgin while introducing a new topic:

R: which taim naim Baba dey go? (*what time is Baba going?*)

MO: This morning.

R: Okay. How the movement go be? (*How will the movement be?*)

MO: Like how?

R: I mean how the movement go be? (*How will the movement be?*)

Which place you go enter? (*what place will you enter?*) Which place you go turn? (*what place will you turn to?*)

MO: Right now...when I leave here 'am going to the site. I want to buy ...em...shovels and nails, every building material-things I will need to take to the site. The man is coming very early this morning....and from there, say around twelve, I have to go and carry the door. I will still come back, say around four to come and take that door to the site.

The Officer was able to retain the use of the standard variety, despite the change in the topic being discussed or the researcher's use of the non-standard variety. The motivation for the persistence in the use

of the standard form could be linked to the fact that the Officer considers the researcher as a member of the lower social strata occupied by the civilians. Hence, it is necessary that he (the Officer) gives a good representation of his social status because the members of the Officers' category are commonly confronted with occupational activities, leadership constraints and other formal situations that would warrant the use of the standard variety in measures greater than those faced by members of other social classes. In such situations, the typical member of the Officers' class is expected to give a good account and representation of the prestige and status associated with his social stratification.

(ii) Group Identity and Language Variation

This premise is closely related to the subject-matter of social class. The assumption at this level is that group identity and solidarity is better understood and managed with a proper knowledge of the levels of linguistic variation exhibited by its members.

Table 3: Responses to Question 2 (Would you say that people who live in the Base consider the military language and jargons as a part of their personal identity?)

Social Class	Agree	Disagree	No Answer	Total
Officers	15 (65.22%)	5 (21.74%)	3 (13.04%)	23 (100%)
Airmen/Airwomen	31 (47.69%)	32 (49.23%)	2 (3.08%)	65 (100%)
Civilians	66 (58.93%)	41 (36.61%)	5 (4.46%)	112 (100%)

The Null Hypothesis (2), **“There is no significant difference in the relationship between social control/group behaviour and language variation”**, was analysed at this level. Table 4 is an ANOVA test drawn

from the results of the participants' responses to Question 2 (Would you say that people who live in the Base consider the military language and jargons as a part of their identity?)

Table 4: ANOVA Table showing responses to the question of group identity and language variation.

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P-Value	F crit
Between Groups	144	1	144	0.441041	0.574938	18.51282
Within Groups	653	2	326.5			
Total	797	3				

Table 4 shows that the F critical value is 18.51282 at Alpha levels of 0.05. From this analysis, the Null Hypothesis (2) is upheld since the $F^* \leq F \text{ crit}$. Thus, the fact would now be accepted that the levels of linguistic variation and group identity in the Kaduna NAF Base are directly proportional. The degree of an individual's participation in a given group is signalled by his ability to manipulate the various levels of the linguistic code(s) in use within the group.

A related interview session, ATR-2 was employed to support the fact that the attempt to identify oneself with a group may demand a change in the use of language. Take this excerpt drawn from ATR-4 involving the Researcher (R) and a Female Officer (FO).

R: What was your greatest experience of ...er...2008?

FO: My greatest experience for 2008 is...

(A female friend of FO, represented by the code 'FF', intrudes into the setting.)

FF: Papa show...papa show. (A nickname for the FO, used here by the FF)

FO: (To FF) You na my mummy now. (*You are my mummy (emphasis)*)

FF: My jebo-jebo. (*Another nickname for the FO*)

FO: Pickin no dey vex with mama. (*A child does not get angry with his mother.*)

FF: Ah e gud make you vex o. (*Ah, its good you are angry (emphasis).*)

FO: No. Pickin no dey vex with... (*No. A child does not get angry with...*)

FF: If you no vex you no go get time. (*If you don't get angry, you won't gain attention.*)

The discussion went on between both women, with FO using the lower variety (pidgin) due to the presence of her friend and the jocular atmosphere that has been created. It could thus be said that a change in the profile of the co-interlocutors and a shift in the subject matter being discussed had led to a change in the use of the variety associated with members of her social class.

Hudson (1980:122-124) and Milroy (1994:3984) are in agreement that a language could be considered as an indicator of group identity apart from serving as a means of communication. This could be perceived in the various usages that speakers within a group could subject a particular code into. Furthermore, as Kotze (1994:1152) explains, the way in which such a language is used, via the adherence of the users to its lexico-semantic, phonological and morpho-syntactic properties could provide an insight into the cultural aspects of the group such as in the areas of ceremonies and specific rituals.

(iii) **Educational Attainment and Language Variation**

There has been an age-long debate on the effect of a speaker's educational attainment on the understanding of his level of variation in language use. This dispute usually takes a firmer tone in an environment like the Kaduna NAF Base where the power dimensions in that society are drawn sharply along class differences. Another angle to this

argument is the claim that personal linguistic development, rather than an educational institution situated in the military environment, could have a deeper influence in the speaker's use of either the SNE or the military languages and jargons. Question 3 is aimed at providing an answer to these contentions:

Table 5: Responses to Question 3 (Would you say that anyone who attended any of the institutions listed above is more likely to have a better understanding of military terms/jargon?)

Social Class	Agree	Disagree	No Answer	Total
Officers	14 (60.87%)	5 (21.74%)	4 (17.39%)	23 (100%)
Airmen/Airwomen	25 (38.46%)	36 (55.38%)	4 (6.16%)	65 (100%)
Civilians	60 (53.57%)	44 (39.29%)	8 (7.14%)	112 (100%)

The contentious issues relating to the relationship between education and language variation were analysed on the premise of the Null Hypothesis (3): **There is no significant difference in the association between the use of military languages/jargons and attendance in academic/vocational institutions in the Kaduna NAF Base.** Table 6 is an ANOVA table drawn on the basis of the subjects' responses to Question 3 (Would you say that anyone who attended any of the institutions listed above is more likely to have a better understanding of military terms/jargons?):

Table 6: ANOVA Table showing responses to the question of attendance in educational/vocational institutions and language variation.

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P-Value	F crit
Between Groups	6.25	1	6.25	0.019395	0.901998	18.51282

Within Groups	644.5	2	322.25			
Total	650.75	3				

The analysis shows that $P=0.901998$ which is greater than the Alpha values of 0.05. Also it shows that $F^* \leq F \text{ crit}$, or $0.019395 \leq 18.51282$. The analysis shows that at 0.05 values, the Degree of Freedom (DF) is set at 3 points. The H_0 (3) would now be accepted on the premise: that an individual's enrolment in the selected educational/vocational institutions in the Kaduna NAF Base could be a factor to his understanding of the military language.

Another dimension of the possible relationship between education and language variation considers the influence of the quality of teachers/instructors on the general performance of individuals in the use of Spoken English within the Kaduna NAF Base. This was the argument behind the Null Hypothesis (4) which states: **There is no significant difference in the relationship between the pedigree of the teachers/instructors and the learning of Standard English by individuals in the Kaduna NAF Base.** Question 4, 'Do the quality of the teachers/instructors in these educational/vocational institutions in the Kaduna NAF Base (e.g. the AFPS, the AFSS, and TTG School) affect the learning of English in the Kaduna NAF Base?' was posed to the subjects, data were received, and presented below:

Table 7: Responses to Question 4 (Do the quality of the teachers/instructors in these educational/vocational institutions in the Kaduna NAF Base (e.g. the AFPS, the AFSS, TTG School) affect the learning of English language within the Base?)

Social Class	Agree	Disagree	No Answer	Total
Officers	14 (60.87%)	5 (21.74%)	4 (17.39%)	23 (100%)
Airmen/Airwomen	25 (38.46%)	37 (56.92%)	3 (4.62%)	65 (100%)

Civilians	56 (50%)	45 (40.18%)	11 (9.82%)	112 (100%)
------------------	-------------	----------------	---------------	---------------

Subsequently, the responses were further subjected to an ANOVA test and Table 4.shows the results:

Table 8: ANOVA Table showing the relationship between the quality of the teachers/instructors and the learning of English language in the Kaduna NAF Base.

Source of Variation	SS	DF	MS	F	P-Value	F crit
Between Groups	0.25	1	0.25	0.00097561	0.977919	18.51282
Within Groups	512.5	2	256.25			
Total	512.75	3				

From the findings, the Null Hypothesis (4) is upheld because $F^* \leq F \text{ crit}$, that is $0.00097561 \leq 18.51282$ at Alpha values set at 0.05. The H_0 (4) was accepted since the larger proportions of the responses are in favour of a direct relationship in the quality of the teachers/instructors and language use.

The relationship between educational attainment and language variation also featured in one of the interview sessions. ATR-3 is an excerpt drawn from a discussion between the Researcher (R) and a Male Civilian (MC).

R: Just a simple question.

MC: Okay.

R: Please...sorry. What's your best experience of 2008?

MC: Em. My best experience 2008. I see God...em..Blessing...protection.

R: Okay go ahead and summarise. I mean 'An experience'.

MC: Okay, I will say protection because the accident that I...er...have...er...if I had said it was the way of the Devil, I would have been dead by now.

R: Okay. In a minute, just narrate it.

MC: The accident...er... (Some distractions by a little child and some friends exchanging greetings) Let's stand here. You see em...I just see myself. The car somersault. But I see me alive...em..... I thank God. Because em... the money I didn't expected, yet I see them, because even all the mandate, there is a mandate to recover all. (Exchange of greetings with friends passing by). There is some things I didn't ask for God for me but I see it in my life. This ...er...is a very good...experience.

The findings from the foregoing discussion revealed that the Civilian interviewed showed the evidences of the broken form of English language, rather than the standard variety. The syntactic errors presented in the participant's speech could be linked to his level of academic acquisition, since linguistic proficiency, in the view of Banjo (1995), could sometimes be related to one's educational attainment. The proposition is therefore upheld: that the quality of the teachers/instructors does have a significant effect on the learning and use of SNE within the Kaduna NAF Base.

Summary of Findings

The study sets out to investigate linguistic variation along social classification in a military setting. The major results of the findings are enumerated as follows:

- (i) The findings revealed that there is a statistically significant relationship between the levels of linguistic variation and class structure in the Kaduna NAF Base.
- (ii) The findings implied that the levels of linguistic variation and group identity in the Kaduna NAF Base are statistically

proportional. This inferred that the degree of an individual's integration into a given group could signal his ability to manipulate the linguistic codes in use within a group.

- (iii) The findings showed that it is statistically accepted that enrolment in selected educational and vocational institutions in the Kaduna NAF Base environment could be a factor in the usage of the military language by individuals within such settings.
- (iv) The findings indicated that the quality of the teachers/instructors could have a significant effect on the learning and the use of Spoken English within the Kaduna NAF Base.

Discussions of the Findings.

The investigation of the relationship between social class and language variation showed the impact of a speaker's social classification in relation to the use of a particular language variety. Hudson (1980:121-122) confirms this by stating that there are linguistic forms in every society that reveal the social status of the individual speaker and the tacit relationship that exists between himself and other interlocutors. Consequently, a speech pattern which contains linguistic properties and features associated with speakers in that group would be expected from each member on a general scale.

The examination of the link between group behaviour and language variation revealed that the majority of the subjects who participated in the research actively sought an identity as members of the Kaduna NAF Base community. These speakers tend to use the military jargons and Nigerian Pidgin in exploiting the resources and privileges available to both the military personnel and the civilian populace. To corroborate this, Milroy (1992) notes that the function of a non-standard language is usually attained at the level of group identity. He opines that "these same low status languages and dialects are often seen as an important symbol of group cohesion and identity." (Milroy, 1992:111). The survival and persistence of these vernacular norms could therefore

be linked to the density of the speakers and the multiplex nature of relationships that exist between them. In line with the view of Asher (1994:4861), this study agrees that there is a symbiotic relationship between language and group behaviour.

Furthermore, the study highlighted the direct relationship between the level of an individual's educational attainment/enrolment and his performance in a standard code. The study shows that the level of a speaker's academic attainment (as well as attending military institutions) could be a useful index in the understanding of language variation in the military domain. Thus the speaker's performance in the manipulation of the linguistic system of the standard language could be traced to his level of academic qualification as well as his enrolment in these military educational institutions.

Contributions to Knowledge

This research has revealed that social class is closely related to language variation in the military settings where tightly knit communities have the tendency to use low status linguistic forms in communicative situations. As such, in spite of their educational attainment, the soldiers continue employing special codes and non-standard varieties which eventually become publicly legitimised in certain administrative and residential domains. Also, the study is an addition to the existing body of research on studies of the English language in the Nigerian military setting, a domain that is receiving increased attention by linguists in recent times.

References

- Abaya, A. S. (2008). "A *Pragmatic Analysis of Nigerian Military Coup Announcements.*" An Unpublished Doctorial Dissertation, Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

- Akindele, F. And W. Adegbite. (2005). *The Sociology and Politics of English Language in Nigeria*. Ile Ife: Obafemi Awolowo University Press.
- Allen, P., and P. Corder (1975). *Language and Language Learning: The Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Asher, R., and Y. Simpson. (Eds.) (1994). *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*. New York: Pergamon Press.
- Crystal, D. (1980). *Cambridge Encyclopaedia of Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crystal, D. (1997). *Encyclopaedia of Language and Linguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Danbazau, A. B. (1991). *Military Law and Terminologies*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books.
- an Pidgin: Background and Prospects*. Ibadan: Heinemann.
- Enesi, A. O. (1990). "Evaluation of Junior Secondary School E.S.L." An Unpublished M.A. Thesis, Department of Education, Ahmadu Bello University.
- Enesi, A. O. (2001). "Effects of Multidimensional Learning Variables on 'O' Level English Underachievers." An Unpublished Doctorial Dissertation, Department of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Gani-Ikilama, T. (1992). "A Sociolinguistic Study of Nigerian Pidgin." An Unpublished Doctorial Dissertation, Department of English and Literary Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
- Gani-Ikilama, T. (2005). *Pidgins and Creoles*. Zaria: Onis Excel Publishing.
- Halliday, M. A. K. (1978). *Language as a Social Semiotic*. London: Edward Arnolds.
- Hudson, R. A. (1980). *Sociolinguistics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Hymes, D. H. (1974). *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
- Kolo, F. D. (1992). *Components of a Functional Education in Nigeria. Guidance and Counselling in Perspective*. Zaria: Jofegan Associates.
- Kotze, C. F. (1994). "Ethnicity." In: Asher, R., and Y. Simpson. (Eds.) (1994).
- Labov, W. (1972). *Sociolinguistic Patterns*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania.
- Labov, W. (1980). *Locating Language in Time and Space*. New York: Academic Press.
- Milroy, J. and L. Milroy (1992). *Authority in Language: Investigating Language Prescription and Standardisation*. London: Routledge.
- Milroy, L. (1980). *Language and Social Networks*. London: Basil Blackwell.
- Milroy, L. (1984). "Communication and Context: Successful Communication and Communicative Breakdown." In: P. Trudgill (Ed.). *Applied Linguistics*. London: Academic Press.
- Milroy, L. (1994). "Social Network." In: Asher, R., and Y. Simpson. (Eds.) (1994).
- Trudgill, P. (1974). *The Social Differentiation of English in Norwich*. Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press.
- Trudgill, P. (Ed.) (1983). *Sociolinguistics*. 2nd Edn. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books
- Wales, K. (1989). *A Dictionary of Stylistics*. London: Longman.
- Wardhaugh, R. (1988). *An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. London: Basil Blackwell.
- Zighadina, D. (1997). *Architects of the Nigerian Air Force*. Lagos: Central Lithographic Services.