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# Swahili Military Terminology: A Case of an Evolving Non-Institutionalized Language Standard

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## Abstract

Kiswahili, like all languages, is dynamic. It evolves to accommodate economic, scientific, technological and social changes. Such changes are evident in Kiswahili military terms. The changes can be traced back to the 16<sup>th</sup> century contacts with visitors from Asia and Europe to the East African Coast. The outcomes of these contacts were borrowed military terms which form relics of their impact on Kiswahili vocabulary. Moreover, with the advent of globalization and its attendant Information Communication Technologies (ICTs), Kiswahili has more contact with the outside world via English. Kiswahili has grown from describing rudimentary military strategies, processes and hardware to describing today's highly sophisticated warfare. While such changes might appear inevitable, most of the military hardware is imported from Western countries. This paper therefore scrutinizes the non-institutionalised advancement of Kiswahili through the years to elaborate new military concepts such as terrorism (*ugaidi*), bomb (*bomu*), sniper (*mdenguaji*), nuclear weapons (*silaha za kinyuklia*), weapons of mass destruction (*silaha za mauaji halaiki*) and the linguistic strategies employed in creating such terms.

**Key Words:** Kiswahili, Military Terminology, Globalization, Vocabulary

## Introduction

As languages evolve, they not only absorb new material and develop new patterns; they also preserve inherited material in a solid base transmitted faithfully from one generation to the next. The most obvious linguistic form has always been the word. Some changes in a language occur when speakers come in contact with people speaking other languages and begin to use some of their words. Old words in their language are replaced by new ones and drop out of use or take on restricted meanings. The evolving terminology and concepts can be opaque if not planned.

Some sections of the vocabulary of a language are more susceptible to changes than others. For instance, a language's basic vocabulary referring to familiar objects, natural phenomena and common daily activities rarely changes. On the contrary, cultural vocabulary, employed in reference to cultural, scientific and technological items tends to change very quickly. The latter captures Kiswahili military terminology aptly.

On the basis of its basic sound system, morphology and syntax, it is an indisputable fact that Kiswahili is a Bantu language inherently related to the north-eastern Bantu languages of Kenya, Tanzania and the Comoro Islands (Nurse & Spear, 1985; Sutton, 1992). It is with this in mind that the present paper traces the development of Kiswahili military terminology with reference to Kenya and Tanzania way back to the pre-colonial era, colonial, post colonial up to the present age of globalization and her attendant Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). It then delves into the sources of military terms, discusses the future of Kiswahili terminology and delineates the way forward. A Kiswahili-English glossary of military terminology has been appended at the end of the paper.

## Pre-Colonial Kiswahili Military Terms

Pre-colonial East Africa was organised along linguistic or ethnic nation states usually headed by a king and a council of elders. More often than not communication within the nation state was via a common vernacular language. The use of military terms therefore depended on the level sophistication of the individual communities and was limited to the expanse of her boundaries. However, contacts with neighbouring states such as occasional conflicts, raids and barter trade where languages were mutually intelligible, would ensure not only the borrowing of military technology but the terminology as well. The Swahili state was not an exception.

The East African coast, that is the Kiswahili hub, was far more influenced by the Indian Ocean than the interior. It was part of the Indian Ocean commercially, culturally, and even at times politically (Maxon, 1989:35). Contact between the coast and the interior was never easy owing to a belt of *nyika* (arid land) characterised by bush and semi arid vegetation. The belt could not support a substantial population thus serving as a natural barrier. On the contrary, lands adjacent to the Indian Ocean easily accomplished contacts with the Waswahili and had more far reaching impact on them.

At this point in time most East African ethnic communities neither had written traditions nor standard orthographies. Moreover, where available, written sources are sketchy and their reference to the East African Coast is unclear until after the dawn of the Christian era (Maxon, 1989:38). Consequently, their communication was largely based on a rich and elaborate oral tradition. It is therefore difficult to establish the etymology of certain military terminologies shared across ethnic communities. Moreover, like many other African languages, Kiswahili military terms punctuate both form and content of the rich folklore. Oral literary genres such as narratives, war songs, riddles, proverbs, praise and epic poetry and the theatre arts are replete with military terminology.

Unlike other African languages in the East African region, Kiswahili has a long tradition of literary production. Poetry has been written in Kiswahili since at least the middle of the 17th century. Kiswahili poetry draws on Arabic, Persian, and Urdu literary sources. Kiswahili literary works such as *Herekali*, Muyaka bin Haji's poems (Abdulaziz, 1979: 37); *Utendi wa Fumo Liyongo* (Knappert, 1979:63, 75, 100); *Utendi wa Ngamia na Paa*, *Utendi wa Masahibu*, *Utendi wa Mikidadi na Mayasa* and *Utendi wa Ayubu* (Allen, 1971: 112) are indelible records of military terms such as shown in (1) below:

- (1) *ngome* (the fort), *vita* (war), *uta/mata/mbavu* (bows), *mafumo* (lances), *vyembel/mishale* (arrows), *kasha* (chest), *fimbo* (stick, cane), *ngao* (shield), *p'angalsefu* (sword), *p'anga-kule* (long blades), *vitara* (curved swords), *msu* (broad blades), *risasi* (then matchlocks, but presently refers to 'bullets'), *jambia* (dagger), *vijaluba vya risasi* (bullet pouches), *ngurumza* (blunder-buss) and *shujaa* (hero).

Cultural values, indigenous military knowledge and military folklore were and still are important sources of military terminology. Individual communities had their craftsmen, blacksmiths, iron workers, technicians, medicine men, warriors and military strategists. Their experience, knowledge, skills and professionalism was either reflected in their finished products – artillery or in their level linguistic elaboration. Their rich folklore was awash with jokes and farces (*utani*), fairy tales (*simulizi*), special war songs (*nyimbo za vita*), (self) praise poems (*majigambo*), dances (*ngoma*) and games (*michezo*) performed to instruct young men in the proper handling of *silaha* (weapons) and generally in the art and science of warfare. As with most military rhymes (see Where, 1980; Murray, 1986; Trnka, 1995), these genres were characterised by a vulgar and poetic language in describing or discoursing about weapons such as knives, daggers, lances, swords, firearms, guns, pistols and revolvers. According to Abdulaziz (1979) Muyaka identifies *Ngoma ya Kizungup'ia* (lit. 'Game of top') as a vigorous war game played on the beach by coastal communities. Indeed to date, most Kiswahili dialects are abounding in an extensive military terminology as part of their rich indigenous knowledge and cultural values spanning centuries. Some of these terms have since been incorporated into the Standard Kiswahili lexicon. The examples in (2) below illustrate this.

- (2) *Mkuki* (spear), *mshale* (arrow), *kombeo/teo* (sling) *ngao* (shield), *panga* (machete), *kisu* (knife), *sime* (sword), *upinde* (bow), *uta* (arrow), *silaha* (weapons), *rungu* (club), *mtutu* (barrel), *gobori/korofindo* (muzzle loader, musket), *mrau* (matchlock gun), *gumegume* (flint gun), *marisau* (pellet), *handaki* (trench, channel) and *vita* (war).

Such terms are also embedded in popular Kiswahili oral genres such *misemo* (sayings) and *methali* (proverbs) as illustrated in (3) below:

- (3) *Mkuki kwa nguruwe kwa binadamu u mchungu.* (A spear for a pig [is painful, but] is agony for a human being.)

*Suluhu haiji ila kwa ncha ya upanga.* (Appeasement does not come save by the tip of the sword.)

*Vita vya panzi ni furaha ya kunguru.* (A [war] fight between two grasshoppers is a joy to crows.)

*Ala moja haikai panga mbili.* (Two swords don't fit in one scabbard.)

*Msi chembe wala uta, si muwani.* (One who has neither an arrow nor a bow is not a warrior.)

*Bila silaha usiingie vitani.* (Without weapons do not wage war.)

*Fimbo* iliyo mkononi, ndiyo iuayo nyoka. (The stick [cane] in the hand is the one that kills the snake.)

*Mshale usio nyoya hauendi mbali.* (An arrow without a feather will not go far.)

*Undugu wa upanga si mzuri, afadhali undugu wa kisu.* (Fraternal relationships of the sword [machete] are inferior to those of the knife.)

It is certain that most of the examples cited in (1), (2) and (3) above are structurally indigenous Bantu Kiswahili words and not loans from other languages. From the foregoing, it is evident that in the past, Kiswahili to a certain extent, borrowed from neighbouring African languages. Nonetheless, prior to the arrival of the European colonialists and missionaries, the East African coast received a number of visitors who included navigators, explorers and traders. Their linguistic influence on Kiswahili is still evident as espoused by Arabic, Persian, Portuguese, Turkish and the various Hindi languages. In fact, almost every nation that came in contact with the East African coast has relics of her vocabulary in Kiswahili.

Historical records attest to the fact that the East African coast had long trade and religious ties with the Arab world dating back to the tenth century (Chiraghdin & Mnyampala, 1977:12). In consequence, Kiswahili has a substantial quantity of vocabulary borrowed from the Arabic language. Arabic loans are clustered in various specialised fields of cultural terminology relating to jurisprudence, trade, religion, non-indigenous flora and maritime affairs. For instance, the words in (4) were borrowed, modernised and adapted to suit Kiswahili language's linguistic needs.

- (4) *sheria* (law), *rais* (president) *siasa* (politics), *zaka* (tithe), *Rahimu* (God the Merciful), *jahazi* (dhow), *karafuu* (cloves) and *msikiti* (mosque).

Other borrowed terms relate to Arabic material cultural artefacts such as clothing, household utensils, and words indicating time of the day, weekdays and months. However, it is worth noting that contrary to what would naturally be expected, the contribution of Arabic to Kiswahili military terminology is very modest. Perhaps this can be attributed to their peaceful coexistence with and more importantly the activities in which they were involved – trade, administration and the spread of Islamic religion and lifestyle. Moreover, the terms in (5) below directly relate to military activities or hardware.

- (5) *Jeshi* (army, battalion, armed forces), *haramia* (pirate), *fataki* (cartridge, cap gun, crackers fireworks), *risasi* (bullet, pellet), *gwaride* (military parade), *jasusi* (spy, secret agent), *mahabusu* (prisoner) *jasisi* (spy on, investigate), *amuru* (command, order), *amiri* (commander, leader), *amiri jeshi* (military commander), *ghala* (*ya silaha*) (armoury) and *yamini* (oath, vow).

It is worth noting that most of the concepts referred to by the terminology in (5) are modern and therefore not necessarily a reflection of the pre-colonial interaction between the Arabs and Waswahili. These terms are likely to have been borrowed in the recent times.

Following contacts with Persians, Kiswahili has Persian loans referring to navigation and sea trade in general. While such terms may not be considered military *per se*, with time they have come to be associated with military activities and operations. They include the terms in (6) below:

- (6) *karakana* (workshop), *barangeni* (dhow of two colours) *mnara* (tower, lighthouse), *roshani* (balcony or veranda) *nanga* (anchor), *gurudumu* (wheel), *serikali* (government) and *dari* (upper floor).

Moreover, in terms of military terminology, Kiswahili borrowed from the Persian language words such as outlined in (7) below:

- (7) *basha* (leader of soldiers/man of war), *taji* (crown), *boma* (garrison, fort, fortress, stockade, bulwark), *bunduki* (gun), *ghala* (store, also arsenal), *mtundu* (mischievous person) and *jambazi* (rogue).

The vocabulary in (7) above was a reflection of the Persian civilization of that time.

Trading activities plying merchants of Indian descent and the Kiswahili speaking communities of East Africa have been going on for a very long time. Most Kiswahili words referring to retail and wholesale trade of household provisions are loans from Hindi languages. Hindi has also contributed words for various foodstuffs and implements as listed in (8) below:

- (8) *pesa* (money), *bima* (insurance), *kodi* (tax), *hundi* (cheque), *laki* (one hundred thousand), *korija* (score), *cheti* (certificate), *gari* (vehicle on wheels), *gunia* (bag), *bangili* (bangle) and *terafini* (turpentine).

Moreover, the few military terms borrowed include the examples in (9):

(9) *jemadari/jamadari* (Marshall), *jemadari mkuu* (field marshall)

The influence of Turkish language on Kiswahili vocabulary is of particular interest to us. It is unique in the sense that nearly all the Kiswahili loans from the Turkish language are either military terms or associated with military activities. They include the terms in (10) as follows:

(10) *tapo* (regiment or troop), *baruti* (gunpowder), *singe* (bayonet), *shaushi* (corporal), *solu* (sergeant major) *ombasha* (lance corporal), *baruti* (gunpowder), *afande* (sir/madam, a respectful or formal address used by a soldier to a superior), *korokoroni* (guardroom or cell).

It is worth noting that Turkish military terminology was also used by the Germans later on when they colonised Tanganyika. This also accounts for the vast Turkish military terminology in Standard Kiswahili.

Portugal had protracted contacts with the Coastal people of East Africa. As they journeyed by sea to India, Mombasa was used as their last port of call. On arrival in East Africa in 1489, the Portuguese fought and destroyed the Arab supremacy along the Coast. Their fleets unleashed brutal and destructive attacks on various coastal cities. Their intention was to introduce Christianity in place of Islam which was the religion of the coastal communities including the Waswahili. Their intent was met with hostility forcing them to build *ngome* (Kiswahili for fortresses) for security and protection.

Etymologically speaking, the Kiswahili word *gereza* (prison) comes from the Portuguese *igreja* meaning church. This semantic change can be attributed to hostility greeted on the Portuguese by the then Islamised coastal communities forcing them to build their churches within the precincts of the fortresses. As such, either the churches were 'imprisoned' in the fortresses or the faithful who dared to join Christianity. Portuguese stay and influence on Kiswahili can be traced back to the period between 1500 and 1700 CE when they dominated trading activities along the East African coast. The other terms (11) that Kiswahili retained from such interactions include:

(11) *beramu* (flag), *bomba* (pipe), *kasha* (chest, case), *leso* (handkerchief) and *amari* (hawser, anchor rope).

It is apparent that during the pre-colonial period, there were no formal institutions tasked with the planning, modernization and development of Kiswahili. Whenever interlocutors encountered new objects or concepts, linguistic borrowing happened freely through daily contacts and interactions. With continued use, such terms became embedded in Kiswahili vocabulary.

### Colonial Era Military Terminology

Following the Anglo-German Agreement of 1886, the parties agreed that their spheres of influence in East Africa should be divided by a line running from south of Mombasa, then north of Kilimanjaro to a point on the eastern shore of Lake Victoria. This began the extraordinary process by which the territories and subsequently the nations of East Africa were blocked out first upon the maps far away in Europe and only later upon the ground in East Africa itself. The agreement put the area to the north (most of modern Kenya) under British influence and the area to the south (Tanganyika; modern mainland Tanzania) under German influence. The Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 placed additional territory (most of modern Uganda) under British influence.

Some pockets of hostility and resistance were witnessed especially in kingdoms and communities that had warrior traditions and elaborate administrative units such as the Nandi of Kenya and the Hehe of Tanganyika. These communities had an elaborate military technology with terminology to describe it. In these communities, military strategy, organisation and command was conducted in the native languages.

Kenya was proclaimed a British protectorate in 1895 and a crown colony in 1920. Most of what is now Uganda was formally proclaimed a British protectorate in 1894, with additional areas being added to the protectorate in the following years. Tanganyika was declared a German protectorate in 1891 (<http://www.britannica.com>). Germans encouraged the use of Kiswahili in their colony whereas the Britons embraced local languages in order to divide and rule their subjects.

Germans ruled mainland Tanzania although their stay was short lived. Their rule in Tanganyika faced resistance from the diverse Southern communities culminating in the Maji maji war (1905 – 1907) under the spiritual leadership of Kinjeketile Ngwale. Their short colonial rule could be part of the reason as to why there are very few German loans in Kiswahili. The other reason was their use of Kiswahili and Turkish military terms in their colony. However, very few words such as *hela* (money), *shule* (school) and *barawani* (bath) are still in use.

Moreover, during the First World War, Britain captured the German holdings, which subsequently became a British mandate in 1920. Britain retained control of Tanganyika after the Second World War when it became a United Nations trust territory. Their stay, contact and interaction with local communities impacted on their traditional social, cultural, political and religious institutions.

In order to entrench their rule and maintain law and order, colonialists established rudimentary police forces and territorial armies composed of African Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) drawn from different ethnic communities. One such army was the British colonial army - King's African Rifles (KAR) consisting of battalions recruited in Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika (Tanzania), and Nyasaland (Malawi). It was through this outfit that a section of East African troops participated in the Second World War. According to Mutonya and Parsons (2004) African soldiers and British officers serving in the Kenyan battalions of the KAR army in the 1920s and 1930s spoke KiKAR, a pidgin variety of Kiswahili characterized by a relatively simplified structure and a distinct lexical borrowing of military terminology. KiKAR, also known as *Kikeya*, initially emerged as nonstandard Kiswahili, laden with substrate influences of African indigenous languages, spoken by soldiers recruited from diverse ethno-linguistic groups. Moreover, since there were no formal Kiswahili language lessons in military training, very little was done to standardise the military terms that were used colloquially. The terms consisted of borrowed lexicon relating to command, equipment, and other foreign concepts pertaining to a military and European lifestyle as shown in the examples in (12) below cited in Mutonya and Parsons (2004: 123-124):

- (12) *mabus* (detention), *maktab* (office), *kasu* (less time), *sumu* (gas), *mbash* (corporal), *korokon* (guard room), *bayoneti* (bayonet), *pistola* (pistol), *bathi* (bath), *targeti* (target), *scouti* (scout), *kupiga bull* (to hit the target), *kupiga ripoti* (to report), *kukamua* (press trigger), *kulanda* (to be equal to), *hivihivi* (upside down), *kulia* (to shout) and *manyatta* (village).

Most of these terms are either borrowed or translated from English. Consequently, as Mutonya and Parsons aptly put it, 'development of such an institutionalized variant of Swahili may have accentuated the need for an orthographic and grammatical standardization of the language that ensued' (2004: 124).

Perhaps the most notable contribution by the British colonial rule was the establishment of the Inter-Territorial (Kiswahili) Language Committee (ILC) in 1930 charged with the promotion, codification and standardization of Kiswahili. Most of the military terminology in the earlier versions of the *Standard English-Swahili Dictionary* and the *Standard Swahili-English Dictionary* were products of this process. Other language developments by the committee were documented in the *Bulletin of the Inter-Territorial Language (Swahili) Committee*. The ILC was the precursor to the Institute of Kiswahili Research (IKR), now christened the Institute of Kiswahili Studies (IKS) at the University of Dar es Salaam.

The period following the end of the Second World War heralded the onset of nationalist liberation movements' clamour for independence in the East African states. Africans who had participated in the world war as part of the KAR were enlightened, had knowledge of a common uniting language and were also trained in rudimentary western warfare. Resistance to colonial rule and the clamour for independence was therefore inevitable. Their efforts were augmented by upcoming African nationalist intellectuals, trade union movements, and the rise of political parties. These efforts culminated in the demand for larger political freedoms and independence. Kiswahili played a vital role in uniting various communities.

Militant combat in defence of justice was the clarion call on the continent. Kiswahili was the language of choice for the new crop of African political leaders to push for African nationalism and the African right to self-determination and independence. By the early 1950s Kiswahili had become symbolic of the African identity while assuming the all important political role of fostering national consciousness. For the East African Region terms such as outlined in (13) below characterised the armed struggle that culminated in regime change, larger freedoms, removal of injustices and the utilization of national resources for the citizen's betterment.

- (13) *mateso* (torture), *hali ya hatari* (state of emergency), *weka kizuizini* (detention), *kiapo* (oath), *amri ya kutotembea wakati fulani* (Curfew), *homugadi* (homeguard), *kikundi cha vurugu* (violent group), *kikwazo/kizuizi* (embargo), *kufa kwa ajili ya nchi* (bloodshed) *makabiliano* (confrontation), *mapinduzi* (revolution), *ukombozi* (liberation, emancipation), *uhuru* (freedom), *vuguvugu la kizalendo* (nationalist movement), *mzalendo* (nationalist), *uzalendo* (nationalism) and *uhamasishaji* (mobilization).

At independence in the 1960s, unlike most African countries south of the Sahara who declared their imperial language as the national language, most East African countries chose Kiswahili. Tanganyika attained her independence in 1961 and in 1964 merged with Zanzibar, later taking the name Tanzania. Uganda got her

independence in 1962, and Kenya became fully independent in 1963 (<http://www.britannica.com>).

### Post-Colonial Era Military Terms

On attainment of political freedom and independence, African states put in place mechanisms and institutions guarantee their national security and protect territorial sovereignty. To achieve this arduous task, they set up police and national defence forces. Owing to the low literacy levels of the citizens, recruitment to the forces was mainly based on personal interest and physical fitness. Consequently, for East African countries the medium of military instruction and command in the disciplined forces was mainly a form pidgin Kiswahili consisting of lexicon borrowed from local vernacular languages and English. This partly explains why Kiswahili has remained the working language of the forces in the East African region. Terms such as outlined in (14) below are common in military parlance:

- (14) *saluti* (salute), *afande* (sir), *rumande* (remand), *kizuizini* (detention), *kambi* (camp), *ulinzi* (defence), *gwaride/paredi* (parade), *msafara* (procession), *buti* (boot), *kirauni* (crown), *kamanda* (commander), *komandoo* (commando) and *makao makuu* (headquarters).

Language use in the region's armed forces including the paramilitary and police forces is strikingly similar. For instance, in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania, Kiswahili is the *de facto* language of command in the disciplined forces (Mazrui and Mazrui 1995: 7). Most military operations and activities are either conducted in Kiswahili or some form of slang Kiswahili laced with military jargon as illustrated in (15).

- (15) *kuruti* (new recruit, novice), *kukamua ngamia* (poor matching, hands not straightened), *ghasia* (useless person, rubbish), *nyang'au* (fugitive, criminal), *chai* (bribe), *mchakamchaka* (warmup exercise), *obi* (OB), *mbele tembea* (quick match), *maneva/luteka* (manoeuvre), *swaga* (swagger), *saluvo* (salvo), *tako la bunduki* (butt), *baji/tepe* (badge), *mapurenda* (epaulette) and *kwata/drili* (drill).

However, contrary to the anticipated peace and stability most post-colonial era African countries have been visited by continued escalating internal conflicts, insecurity, *coup de tats* with the attendant loss of millions of lives, refugee crises, human misery, wanton destruction of property and proliferation of arms. This has posed a myriad of challenges to the nation states. With the exception of Tanzania, this narrative describes most countries in the East African region. Consequently, military terms such as detailed in (16) below characterise both electronic and print media reports:

- (16) *mamluki* (mercenary), *ngawira* (booty), *makabiliano* (confrontation), *vita vya msituni* (guerrilla warfare), *vurugu za baada ya uchaguzi* (post election violence), *mauaji ya kikatili* (assassination), *mauaji ya kimbari* (ethnic cleansing), *mbabe wa vita* (warlord), *vuguvugu* (movement), *sungusungu* (home guard), *mtoro* (fugitive), *mpinzani* (dissident), *kundi la waasi* (insurgent movement), *mapinduzi ya kijeshi* (coup de tat), *mwasi* (rebel), *uasi* (rebellion), *maasi ya kijeshi* (mutiny), *vita vya wenyewe kwa wenyewe/vita vya ndani* (Civil war), *wakimbizi* (refugees), *wakimbizi wa ndani ya nchi* (Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs), *Mapatano ya kusimamisha vita kwa muda* (armistice), *kusimamisha mapigano/vita* (ceasefire).

The situation in postcolonial Africa was further complicated by the Cold War. The term 'Cold War' was used to describe the a state of political and military tension or hostility after the Second World War between powers in the Western Bloc (the United States, her NATO allies) and powers in the Eastern Bloc (the Soviet Union and her allies in the Warsaw Pact). It was characterized by threats, propaganda, and other measures short of open warfare. Historical accounts on the dates vary widely, but the period between 1945 and 1991 is widely cited (see for instance, Smith, 1993; Lynn-Jones & Miller, 1993; Walker, 1995; Lightbody, 1999; Smith & Davis, 2000; Gaddis, 2006; Philips, 2001; Mason, 2002; McMahan, 2003; Harper, 2011; Arnold & Weiner, 2012). It was considered a 'cold' war because there was no major fighting pitting the two superpowers. However, rivalry between them resulted in mutual suspicions, heightened tensions and a series of international incidents that brought the world to the brink of disaster. It dominated international affairs for decades with crises as the Cuban Missile Crisis, Vietnam, Hungary and the Berlin Wall being associated with it.

The most alarming issue associated with the Cold War was the arms race and the ensuing proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. An arms race denotes a rapid increase in the quantity or quality of instruments of military power by rival states in peacetime (Kemp & Pfaltzgraff, 1975; Raskin, 1980; Isard, 1988). The build-up of arms was a key characteristic of the Cold War. Military terms such as outlined in (17) characterised

international discourses in different forums.

- (17) *mashindano ya silaha* (arms race), *mashindano ya anga* (space race), *kombora* (missile), *silaha za nyuklia* (nuclear weapons), *keki ya manjano* (yellow cake), *baraza la usalama* (security council), *silaha za kemikali* (chemical weapons), *urutubishaji wa madini ya nyuklia* (nuclear enrichment), *kombora la masafa mafupi* (short range missile), *kombora la masafa marefu* (long range missile), *kombora la skadi* (scud missile), *kombora la patrioti* (patriot missile), *nyambizi* (submarine), *mzinga* (canon), *bomu la atomiki* (atomic bomb), *bomu* (bomb), *bomu la kutega* (mine), *bombomu* (machinegun), *bomu fungu* (cluster bombs), *magari ya deraya* (armoured vehicle), *deraya* (armour), *kifaru* (tanks), *manowari* (warship), *roketi* (rockets), *kichwa cha kombora* (war heads)

Most of the terms in (17) above were first developed by either print or electronic media practitioners before diffusing to the general public. Considering the environment in which they were coined – short deadlines owing to the perishable nature of news - most of them are either adaptations from foreign languages, calques or both. Moreover, a close scrutiny of the terms reveals the urgent need for harmonization and standardization in order to facilitate Kiswahili technical communication in the military sciences.

The cold war's demise was heralded by rapid globalization and its attendant Information Communication Technologies. Improvements in communication technologies and the speedy spread of information were critical to the collapse of the Iron Curtain that separated the two blocs. The more people knew about each other in the two blocs, the more difficult it became to sow seeds of discord. Through modern communication, nations learnt that it was better to do business with each other than to hate each other. More than ever before, citizens could easily learn what was happening in other countries, and understood that they did not have to live the way they were living. Suspicions eased and in consequence, the Iron Curtain fell.

### **Military Terminology in the Age of Globalization**

Globalization is complex and multifaceted or differentiated social phenomenon. Subsequently, it renders itself to several interpretations depending on the context and on the person who is talking about. It is neither a new phenomenon nor is it easy to define in military terms. It is the ongoing process of greater interdependence among countries and their citizens. It has political, technological and cultural, as well as economic dimensions (Giddens, 2002:10).

Steger (2003) defines globalization as a social process characterized by the existence of global economic, political, cultural, linguistic and environmental interconnections and flows that make the many of the currently existing borders and boundaries irrelevant.

Globalization101.org, a free website of resources for teachers and students, provides a comprehensive definition of globalization as follows:

Globalization is the acceleration and intensification of interaction and integration among the people, companies, and governments of different nations. This process has effects on human wellbeing (including health and personal safety), on the environment, on culture (including ideas, religion, and political systems), and on economic development and prosperity of societies across the world ([www.globalization101.org](http://www.globalization101.org)).

According to Guy Brainbant the process of globalisation not only includes opening up of world trade, development of advanced means of communication, internationalisation of financial markets, growing importance of Multinational Corporations (MNCs), population migrations and more generally increased mobility of persons, goods, capital, data and ideas but also infections, diseases and pollution.

In nutshell, globalization is about the growing of worldwide interconnectedness, relations and networks between human communities, mutual exchange of technology and knowledge, an increase in the intensity of these, and a general acceleration of all these phenomena. Put differently, it is also characterised by faster and more reliable means of transportation and communication, which have facilitated greater inter-country movement of capital, human traffic and the exchange of larger volumes of information and goods.

Globalization has the capacity to create new vulnerabilities and tensions as well as ease or transform old ones. Correspondingly, the seemingly peaceful trends can cause violence with little or no strategic warning. The advances in communication, transportation, and information technologies that have accelerated the pace of globalization are also at the disposal of terrorists, money launderers and international cyber criminals.

From the foregoing, it is evident that processes of globalization affect virtually all facets of life, including language. They are reflected in all social domains ranging from the cultural through the economic, the political, the legal, the military and the environmental. The resultant challenges are numerous and immense. It is in this regard that we now turn our attention to the relationship between globalization and language.

Culture is basis for globalization while language is the centre of culture. It thus follows that globalization is best understood and determined in cultural terms. In the present day, due to scientific, technological, political and socio-economic developments, Kiswahili absorbs loan words from the globalised languages - especially English and in turn exerts an enormous influence on the vocabularies of other indigenous languages of East Africa.

Military technology evolves at supersonic speeds with superpowers striving to outwit each other. Novel weapons, military tactics and strategies as well as ways of 'fighting' or 'wedging war' emerge each new day. Owing to the unprecedented levels of sophistication, concepts of 'war' and those associated with military technology are highly fluid and take on new meanings depending on the communication context. The terms in (18) serve to illustrate this:

- (18) *droni* (drone), *shambulizi la droni* (drone strike), *mauaji ya halaiki* (massacre), *mzinga* (canon), *mzinga wa roketi* (rocket launcher), *-a kutengua kombora la kibalisti* (antiballistic missile), *kombora la kibalisti* (ballistic missile), *urani* (uranium), *mdeguaji/mlenga shabaha* (beltway sniper), *vita vya kemikali ya viumbe* (biochemical warfare), *vita vya kibiolojia* (biological warfare), *ukaguzi wa silaha* (weapons inspection), *urutubishaji wa madini ya urani* (uranium enrichment) *silaha za kibiolojia* (biological ammunition), *kombora la kasi* (cruise missile), *vita vya vijidudu/viini vya maradhi* (germ warfare), *tumia binadamu kuwa ngao/kinga* (human shield)

With the world tending towards a global village, innovations and dealings – good or bad - on one end of the hamlet have ripple and multiple effects on the entire village. The preponderance of military or war crimes against humanity in the contemporary world is perturbing, to say the least. Internationally, acts of terror motivated by racial, ethnic, ideological and religious intolerance are on an upward trend. As a result, military terms such as listed in (19) below have found currency in both mainstream as well as social media across the globe.

- (19) *gaidi* (terrorist), *ugaidi* (terrorism), *haramia* (pirate), *uharamia* (piracy), *muumini mkereketwa* (fundamentalist), *mwuaji kwa sababu za kisiasa/kidini* (assassin), *mtu mwenye siasa kali* (radical), *siasa kali* (radicalism), *funzwa siasa kali* (radicalization), *Mtu mwenye siasa kali sana* (extremist), *siasa isiyo na kadiri* (extremism), *bomu la kujitoa mhanga* (suicide bomb), *mwanamgambo* (militia), *mauaji ya halaiki* (massacre) *gaidi wa kibiolojia/gaidibio* (bioterrorist), *ugaidibio/ugaidi wa kibiolojia* (bioterrorism) *vita dhidi ya ugaidi* (war on terrorism), *mwenye imani kali ya kiislamu* (islamist), *mwanajihadi* (jihadist), *shambulizi* (attack), *shambulio la grenedi* (grenade attack), *mtoro* (fugitive), *mpinzani* (dissident), *teka nyara* (kidnap), *twaa kwa matumizi ya jeshi* (commandeer), *ushari* (aggression), *ujangili* (poaching), *ujasusi* (espionage), *kilipuzi* (explosive) and *zingira* (siege).

In order to facilitate effective discourses on the concepts in (19) above 'global' languages have mechanisms to ensure systematic and structured terminology development and dissemination. As Alberts (1997) aptly observes, word-formation principles for most Bantu and indeed all African languages need to be established. Such a model or knowledge of the underlying mechanisms, patterns and principles is essential for the training of terminologists. It is with this in mind that we propose an analysis of emerging structural patterns and conceptual metaphors in neologies such as the Kiswahili military terms in (19). In the next subsection we delve briefly into the general sources of military terminology.

### Sources of Military Terminology

From the foregoing it is evident that Kiswahili language has a growing military terminology. The terminology so far discussed and documented in this paper are from sources within and outside the language. Internal sources of military terminology include existing words from the language's general vocabulary. This means basic meaning of existing words such as *mzinga*, *sungusungu*, *kifaru* and *ndege* are expanded to elaborate novel military concepts or hardware. External sources include calques and loans from other local or international languages. Linguists have always held divergent opinions on the most suitable source. Conservative language purists prefer internal sources while avant-garde linguists advocate for more liberal ways of language modernization that embrace sources within and outside the language.

A number of military terminologies discussed are embedded in oral literary genres such as *hadithi* (oral narratives), *semi* (sayings), *maigizo* (plays), *ngomezzi* (drum literature), *mazungumzo* (dialogue) and *ushairi* (poetry). The most obvious examples include: *nyimbo za vita* (war songs), *visakale/migani* (legends), *tendi* (epics), *majigambo* (praise poetry), *ngano za ushujaa* (hero tales), *ngano za usuli* (aetiological tales) and *visasili* (myths). However, most of these terminologies are preserved by oral artists in their heads. Except for a few video and tape records, most of this folklore is neither written nor published. This portends a risk to the language's vital source of technical terminology. In addition, most of these terms are available in the various dialects of Kiswahili. This calls for research, documentation, evaluation and standardization in order to make them part of Kiswahili technical vocabulary.

War and military experiences such as peace keeping missions have not only contributed to the coinage of new terms and the spread of old ones to new geographical frontiers. Civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, the Republic of South Sudan, Somali, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda have resulted in displacement of millions of human populations across the region. For instance, Kenya is presently hosting one of the largest refugee camps in Daadab and Kakuma. The camps hold refugees from nearly all the war torn countries of the region, some of whom had no prior knowledge or understanding of Kiswahili. Part of the humanitarian assistance given to the refugees includes formal, non formal and informal teaching and learning of Kiswahili. Peacekeeping missions in Somali and the DRC are composed of troops of diverse nationalities. The missions have therefore provided a rich ground for teaching and learning Kiswahili while at the same time growing the language's military terminology. In addition, war activities attract a lot of media presence and coverage. Some of these reports and documentaries are made in Kiswahili thus contributing the development and dissemination of new terminologies.

The input of both classical and contemporary literature to the development of a language's vocabulary in general and technical terminology in particular cannot be gainsaid. For Kiswahili, classical poetry remains the most valuable source. This is partly because most of the classical poems not only cover a wide range of social issues but were also composed in different styles, registers and dialects of Kiswahili. As illustrated earlier in the works of poets such as Muyaka bin Hajj and Fumo Liyongo, poets have contributed immensely to the documentation of terminology that is currently being tapped into for various technical disciplines such as military science, medicine, ICT, Law and Linguistics to name a few. In the same vein, poetic justice has enabled contemporary poets and popular musicians to coin neologies that have gained currency in various disciplines.

There are several of Kiswahili loan words occasioned by global exchanges such as war and trade in ammunition. Words of this nature cannot be rendered otherwise because of their international nature or they represent standard phenomena. Military terms in international currency include the examples in (20) below:

- (20) radio (*redio*), radar (*rada*), *bomu* (bomb), *atomiki* (atomic), *kemikali* (chemical), *urani* (uranium), *nyuklia* (nuclear) *roketi* (rocket), *droni* (drone).

Some of the military terminologies are words springing from the soldier's colloquial speech (*Kiswahili cha Mitaani*), pidgin varieties of Kiswahili (*Kisetla* and *Ki-KAR*) and the underworld slang (Sheng by various gangs). Moreover, considering the secretive nature of military operations such terms are usually fluid, coded, highly perishable and thus short-lived. As Murray (1986) aptly observes members of the armed forces are especially prone to linguistic creativity. This is evident in their use of ephemeral vocabulary associated with specific wars, operations or even battles - terminology for particular weapons, technical jargon and more importantly, the intriguing slang that characterizes every war. Since crises characterise human societies and that 'each crisis creates its own vocabulary' (Mason in Murray, 1986:126) it makes sense that such terms be carefully scrutinised and documented. In the words of Silkett (1985:13) "few specialized vocabularies have been as similarly borrowed, copied, and altered as has the military vocabulary."

Popular mass media reports and advertisements are usually characterised by neologies including those pertaining to the military. Indeed new coinages characterise and are disseminated by the news media such as radio, television, newspapers and the internet with its attendant online resources. Other notable contributions are made by national defence forces' websites, literary works, journal publications, textbooks on military science, translated military hardware manuals, specialised glossaries and dictionaries.

Records of soldier's personal war memoirs are also an important source of military terminology. More often than not, such memoirs are authored by gallant and decorated soldiers who revive their war experiences in books or documentaries. Such publications are to be found in military libraries. Other records take the form of special glossaries of terms associated with a particular war or military operation. A good example is the *Glossary of Military Terms & Slang from the Vietnam War*

([http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML\\_docs/Resources/Glossary/Sixties\\_Term\\_Gloss](http://www2.iath.virginia.edu/sixties/HTML_docs/Resources/Glossary/Sixties_Term_Gloss)) and *Glossary of Civil War Terms* (<http://www.civilwar.org/education/history/glossary>). On the other hand war museums and national archives are full of artefacts, souvenirs, mementos and publications preserved for the present and future generations. All these collections can benefit empirical studies from diverse disciplines.

### Future Prospects for Kiswahili Terminology

The future of Kiswahili terminology is certainly bright. If today is anything to go by, Kiswahili is spoken by more people globally as a first and second language. Spatially, it is now found in more places around the world and is used in more contexts to discourse about more things and disciplines than ever before. It is for the latter reason that Kiswahili vocabulary is larger than ever before. With the institutionalisation of Kiswahili as an official and national language in Kenya and Tanzania, deliberate efforts are likely to be geared towards making all important documents available in the two languages.

By now, a number of Language for Special Purpose (LSP) and Language for General Purpose (LGP) dictionaries have been published both electronically and in print. They include *Kamusi Sanifu ya Kompyuta*, *Kamusi ya Lughha na Falsafa*, *Kamusi ya Historia*, *Kamusi ya Diplomasia*, *Kamusi ya Sheria*, *Kamusi ya Tiba*, *Kamusi Sanifu ya Kiswahili*, *Kamusi ya Uchumi na Biashara*, *English – Swahili Dictionary*, to name but a few. Such publications will inspire translation across disciplines and genres.

Ongoing efforts to modernise Kiswahili are a step in the right direction. For instance the elaboration of Kiswahili military terminology will go a long way in facilitating technical communication on modern warfare using up to date terminology. Discourses such as news reports, documentaries, joint military operations, missions, training and exchange programs are set to be done without contradictions, grey areas or even ambiguities. Similarly, activities such as translation and interpretation - especially technical reports, intelligence gathering and sharing will be done effectively.

As Algeo (1980) aptly noted, words in a language are like leaves. Every year old ones wither and fall away, and every year new ones sprout and thrive. Such is the case of Kiswahili, neologies and coinages will bequeath the language with novel terminology to elaborate new concepts. However, there are terms that will be unacceptable to the users – they will die off naturally. Others will be embraced and therefore gain currency. As languages absorb large numbers of loan words, other levels – sound, syntax - can be affected as well. These processes are already evident in Kiswahili today. They are likely to be more overt in the near future.

### The Way Forward

From the preceding arguments it is evident that attempts have been made to use Kiswahili words as technical military terminologies. However, a number of these terminologies have not been satisfactory. Some are recognizable words which in common speech do not bear the restricted meaning put upon them in the Military spheres. The examples in (21) below serve to illustrate this.

(21) *Mzinga* (canon, hive)

*Sungusungu* (black ant, vigilante, militia, home guard)

*Kifaru* (tank, rhinoceros)

*Kichwa cha kombora* (war head)

*Vita vya msituni* (guerrilla war)

*Mbele tembea* (quick match)

It is imperative that such terms need to be re-evaluated and standardised. When a term is used for a variety of concepts, it is said to lack precision. For such terms there is need to apply qualifying words for the purpose of concept precision. Wherever possible, new terms should be coined to replace those that are ambiguous, unsystematic, imprecise or opaque. In some instances it has seemed easier to deliberately adapt the English terms into Kiswahili to enhance transparency. Although attempts have been made to use both Kiswahili orthography and pronunciation, challenges still abound thus the need for standardization.

It has emerged that in some cases there is lack of a consistent terminology to explain some aspects of military content. Without consistent terminology, complexity dominates and it becomes increasingly difficult to communicate and discern what is going on. For a military operation, this can be fatal and highly disastrous. Consequently, there is an urgent need for financing national, regional and international institutions to research

and oversee the coinage of neologisms and standardization of the language. Such harmonization is likely to foster effective communication among military practitioners in Kiswahili.

Nevertheless, there is still room to raise the quality and quantity of Kiswahili terminology in general. This task can be achieved by collecting and documenting existing military terms; then analysing and systematizing them. The analysis and systematization should be done by identifying the emerging systems of concepts and then assigning terms to them. This is owing to the fact that the basis of any term is the concept underlying it.

## Conclusion

It is an indisputable fact that over the years, the Kiswahili register of the military and of warfare in particular has been growing steadily albeit informally through non-institutionalised strategies. As a result of continued use, some of these terminologies have eventually found space in the general purpose dictionaries such as *Kamusi ya Kiswahili Sanifu*. However, since the military and its attendant activities constitute a special lingo, it is only fair that specialised technical dictionaries be compiled to fill this need while harmonizing and standardizing terminology already in use. When finally compiled, such dictionaries will go a long way in ascertaining and documenting the often ephemeral vocabulary associated with specific wars, weapons, the technical jargon and more importantly the rich slang that inevitably characterizes every war and army unit.

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## APPENDIX

### Kiswahili Military Terminology

- A siasa kali – Radical
- Afisa Magereza – Prison Officer
- Afisa Mwanafunzi/Kadeti – Cadet
- Afisa/Ofisa - Officer
- Afwaji – Troop, group of armed people
- Ahadi ya mfungwa kutotoroka/kifungo cha nje - parole
- Ala, Uo - Scabbard
- Amagedoni - Armageddon
- Amiri Jeshi Mkuu – Commander in Chief
- Amiri Jeshi/Kamanda Mkuu - Commander-in-Chief
- Amrisha, Amuru - Command.
- Andaa askari kufanya jambo – Mobilise
- Andikisha jeshini kwa mujibu wa sheria - Conscription
- Angamiza/Hasiri – annihilate
- Askari – Soldier
- Askari Farasi – Cavalry
- Askari Jela – Warder
- Askari katika kikosi cha miguu - Infantry
- Askari wa miavuli – paratrooper
- Askari wa msituni/Mpiganaji wa kuvizia kwenye vita vya msituni - Guerrilla
- Askari wa Utawala - Administration Police

Askari walinzi wa mji, ngome, boma – Garrison  
Baji/Beji/Tepe - Badge  
Baruti - Gun Powder, Explosives  
Bastola/Pistola – Pistol  
Batalioni – Battalion  
Bayoneti – Bayonet  
Bazoka – Bazooka  
Bendera - flag, standard  
Bereti – beret  
Bohari – go-down, store, ware house  
Bombomu – Machine Gun  
Bomu – bomb  
Bomu Fungu - Cluster Bombs  
Bomu la kujitoka mhangano - Suicide bomb  
Bomu la Kutega – mine  
Brigedi - Brigade  
Brigedia – Brigadier  
Brigedia Jenerali - General Brigadier  
Bunduki – Gun/Rifle  
Buti - Boot  
Deraya – armour, amour plate  
Drili - Drill  
Droni - Drone  
Ekeifotiseveni - AK47  
Enye hadhi ya kijeshi - Paramilitary  
Esiemuji - SMG (Submachine Gun)  
Fataki - Fireworks, Crackers, Gun Powder  
Fulana isiopenya risasi - Bullet proof vests  
Funzwa siasa kali - Radicalization  
Gaidi – Terrorist  
Gaidi wa Kibiolojia/Gaidibio - Bioterrorist  
Generali - General  
Ghala/Silaha – Arsenal  
Gurunedi/Guruneti - Grenade  
Gwada la Kivita - Military Fatigue  
Gwanda - Military Fatigue (originally Calico Garment)  
Gwaride la Heshima – Guard of Honour  
Hami – Arm  
Hamisha - Evacuate  
Handaki - Fortress  
Haramia - Pirate  
Idara - Department

Ingilia - Invade  
Inspekta - Inspector  
Inspekta Mkuu – Inspector General  
Intelijensia - Intelligence  
Jasisi/Peleleza/Piga Reki - Reconnoitre  
Jasusi - Spy  
Jemadari - Marshal  
Jemadari Mkuu - Field Marshal  
Jenerali - General  
Jeshi - Army  
Jeshi la Anga – Air Force  
Jeshi la Majini - Navy  
Jeshi la Mgambo - Militia  
Jeshi la Miavuli - Paratroops  
Jeshi la Nchi Kavu - Army  
Jeshi Maalumu - Special Forces  
Jisalimishe/Salimu amri kwa masharti - Capitulate  
kada – Cadre  
Kamanda – Commander  
Kamandi ya Jeshi - Military Command  
Kambi - Camp  
Kambi ya Muda – Bivouac  
Kambi ya muundo maalumu ya jeshi - Barrack  
Kamishena - Commissioner  
Kanali - Colonel  
Kantini/Vyombo vya chakula/Maji vya askari - Canteen  
Kapteni - Captain  
Keki ya Manjano - Yellow Cake  
Kibindo - Pocket  
Kifaru – Military Tank, Rhinoceros  
Kigundua Mabomu - Mine Detector  
Kikosi - Troop  
Kikosi cha Askari wa Mizinga - Battery  
Kikwazo - Embargo  
Kilipuzi - Explosive  
King’ora – Alarm  
Kirungu/Kifimbo - Baton  
Kitengo cha Huduma ya Kawaida - General Service Unit (GSU)  
Kizinduzi/Tarumbeta ya kuamsha askari jeshini - Reveille  
Komando - Commando  
Kombania - Company; Squad, Troop  
Kombati – Combat

Kombeo, Kumbwewe, Teo - Sling  
Kombora - Missile  
Kombora la Patrioti – Patriot Missile  
Konstabo – Constable  
Koporo – Corporal  
Korokoroni - Guard Room  
Kujihami – Arm oneself, Self protection  
Kujilinda – Self-defence  
Kulinda Amani - Peace Keeping  
Kulinda Wanyama - Animal Protection  
Kundi la Waasi - Insurgent Group  
Kundi la Wanajeshi (agh wa kazi) - Corps  
Kupiga bunduki nyingi kwa pamoja kama saluti – Salvo  
Kuruta/ Kuruti/Askari mpya anayejiunga - Recruit  
Kutegua Mabomu - Mine Disposal  
Likizo/Livu - Furlough, Leave  
Luteni - Lieutenant  
Luteni Jenerali - Lieutenant General  
Luteni Kamanda - Lieutenant Commander  
Luteni Kanali - Lieutenant Colonel  
Luteni Usu – Second Lieutenant  
Maasi/mgomo wa kijeshi – Mutiny  
Magari ya Deraya – Armoured Vehicles  
Majeruhi - Casualties  
Majeshi - Armed Forces  
Majeshi ya Ulinzi - Defence Forces  
Makao makuu - Headquarters  
Mamluki - Mercenary  
Maneva/Luteka – Manoeuvre  
Manowari - Man-Of-War, Warship  
Mapambano/makabiliano - Confrontation  
Mapatano ya kusimamisha vita kwa muda - Armistice  
Mapinduzi - Revolution  
Mapinduzi ya Kijeshi - Coup de tat  
Mapurenda - Epaulette  
Marisawa - Pellets  
Mauaji ya Halaiki - Massacre  
Mauaji ya Kimbari - Ethnic Cleansing/Genocide  
Mbabe wa Vita - War Lord  
Mbele Tembea! - Quick March!  
Mchakamchaka – Warm up  
Mchokozi/Mshari - Aggressor

Mdenguaji - Sniper  
Medali - Medal  
Meja Jenerali – Major General  
Mfululizo wa kupiga bunduki (Rashasha) - Fusillade  
Mgeni - Alien  
Mizinga au Zana za Vita – Ordinance  
Mkuki – Spear  
Mkuu (wa Boma, Ngome, Kikosi, Kambi) - Commandant  
Mlenga Shabaha - Marksman  
Mlinzi – Sweeper  
Mnadhimu Mkuu wa majeshi - Chief of Staff  
Mnara – Tower  
Mpigana Vita/Mchokozi - Belligerent  
Mpinzani - Dissident  
Msafara - Procession  
Msamaha kwa makosa ya kisiasa/kiserikali - Amnesty  
Mshale - Arrow  
Mshindo wa makombora/bunduki nyingi – Volley  
Mtoro - Fugitive  
Mtu arukaye kwa parachuti – Parachutist  
Mtu mwenye siasa kali - Radical  
Mtu mwenye siasa kali sana - Extremist  
Mtutu – Muzzle  
Muumini Mkereketwa - Fundamentalist  
Mwanaanga/Rubani – Pilot  
Mwanajeshi – Soldier  
Mwanajeshi kwa mujibu wa sheria - Conscript  
Mwanajihadi – Jihadist  
Mwanamgambo - Militiaman  
Mwavuli/Parachuti – Parachute  
Mwenye imani kali ya kiislamu - Islamist  
Mwuaji kwa sababu za kisiasa/kidini - Assassin  
Mzinga – Cannon/Tank  
Mzinga wa Roketi - Rocket Launcher  
Ndege isiyokuwa na rubani - Drone  
Ngao - Shield  
Ngome/Husuni - Fort, Fortress  
Nguvu ya Atomiki – Atomic Energy  
Nishani – Medal  
Nishani Kubwa – Medallion  
Nyambizi (nyangumi+mbizi) – Submarine  
Nyuklia – Nuclear

Nyumba ya Walinzi - Guard House  
Ondoa majeshi/Kataza mambo ya kivita/Kijeshi - Demilitarize  
Oparesheni ya kijeshi - Military operation  
Panga – Machete  
Paredi/Gwaride - Parade  
Polisi wa Kutuliza Fujo - Antiriot Police  
Rada – Radar  
Rashasha – Machinegun  
Rejimenti - Regiment  
Rejimenti Sajini Meja – Regiment Sergeant Major  
Risasi – Bullet  
Risasi/Baruti zinazotumika katika bunduki - Ammunition  
Roketi – Rocket  
Ruhusu askari kwenda kwao baada ya vita - Demobilise  
Rutubisha madini ya urani - Uranium Enrichment  
Sajini meja - Sergeant Major  
Saluti - Salute  
Sare – Uniform  
Sehemu iliyotapakazwa mabomu ya kutega - Minefield  
Shambulizi - Attack  
Shambulizi - Attack  
Shambulizi la Grinedi - Grenade Attack  
Shika Doria - Take Positions  
Shirika - Organization  
Shirika la misaada ya kibinadamu - Humanitarian Aid Organization  
Siasa isiyo na kadiri - Extremism  
Siasa Kali - Radicalism  
Silaha - Weapon  
Silaha za Kemikali - Chemical Weapons  
Silaha za maangamizi/mauaji halaiki - Weapons of Mass Destruction  
Silaha za Nyuklia - Nuclear Weapons  
Simamisha - Halt  
Sime - Sword  
Singe - Bayonet  
Siosaidia upande wowote katika vita - Neutral  
Sitisha Mashambulio - Ceasefire  
Skadi – Scud  
Sungusungu – Vigilante, Militia, Home guard  
taji/Kirauni – Crown, Diadem  
Tako la Bunduki– Butt  
Tapo - Troupe  
Tawaza - Reward

Tekanyara (kuteka+nyara) – Hijack/Kidnap  
Tembea/Enda kama askari – March  
Tufe la Mzinga – Cannon-ball  
Twa (magari, nyumba) kwa matumizi ya jeshi – Commandeer  
Uanamaji/ Jeshi la Wanamaji - Navy  
Uchokozi/ushari – Aggression  
Ugaidi - Terrorism  
Ugaidibio/Ugaidi wa Kibiolojia - Bioterrorism)  
Uhalifu Dhidi ya Binadamu – Crimes against Humanity  
Uhalifu wa Kivita – War Crimes  
Uharamia – Piracy  
Uharibifu Mkubwa - Mass Destruction  
Uingizaji au Utoaji Magendo - Contraband  
Ujangili - Poaching  
Ujasusi - Espionage  
Ukaguzi wa Silaha – Weapons Inspection  
Ukanda wa risasi uvaliwao mabegani - Bandolier  
Ulinzi – Defence/Guard  
Umoja wa Mataifa - United Nations  
Upanga - Sword  
Upinde - Bow  
Ushari - Aggression  
Uta – Arrow  
Uvamizi/Mavizio - Ambush  
Vikwazo - Sanctions  
Vita - War  
Vita Baridi – Cold War  
Vita Dhidi ya Ugaidi – War on Terrorism  
Vita vya Msituni/vya askari wa msituni - guerrilla war/warfare  
Vita vya wenyewe kwa wenyewe – Civil War  
Vuguvugu – Movement  
Vuguvugu la Mapinduzi - Revolutionary Movement  
Vurugu ya Kikundi - Sectarian Violence  
Waasi – Rebels  
Walenzi wa Mpaka - Border Patrol  
Walenzi wa Msafara – Convoy  
Wanamgambo - Insurgent  
Wapiganaji - Militant  
Zingira/Zunguka/Husuru – Besiege

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