



Department of Linguistics
Seminar Series

THE VETERAN DIALECT

Discourses of Identity in the Liminal Space
between Institutions and Ideologies

17 April 2023

1600-1700 CST

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Foreign Languages Building

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The language of the United States military is a unique warrior code and operational lynchpin in the missions of each service.

As a result of intense ideological and linguistic inculcation, this entrenched semiotic/linguistic repertoire remains strongly influential even after service termination. In the liminal space between the military and civilian institutions, the veteran dialect that emerges is neither fully civilian nor fully military and therefore embodies elements of a social and discursive third space. This study initiates formal examination into this space to understand what sociolinguistic diacritics veterans retain from the military's ideological domain, why, and how these function in their post-service identities. A multi-modal methodology revealed both micro-distillments of institutional-level ideological tensions, revealing an enduring nexus between the institution and the individual, as well as a myriad of creative strategies to navigate the civilian communicative landscape. Ultimately, this study contributes new sociolinguistic awareness of veteran discourses of identity in the liminal space between institutions and more broadly showcases the reach of institutional discourses.