

Peer Review

Review of: "Why Native Language Secrecy No Longer Works in Modern Warfare: The Case of North Koreans in the Russo-Ukrainian War"

Zenobia Homan¹

1. War Studies, King's College London, London, United Kingdom

This is a very interesting article. I did not know about the Navajo code talkers and learned something new.

With that said, it is a missed opportunity to include some discussion about diversity, inclusion, and decolonisation! You also seem to base your discussion around a news report ('...reports suggest that Ukraine has utilized its native Hungarian-speaking personnel in the military to use their language as a code in the war against Russia' and 'Reports emerged in October 2024 that Russia had integrated North Korean personnel into frontline combat units'), so I would expect some analysis of news media, media bias, misinformation, and so forth to frame that.

You say that 'They suggested that the North Korean language could serve as a form of natural encryption' and then immediately follow up with '(... the) linguistic advantage is ultimately flawed'. This requires a lot more theoretical analysis, with examples from other fields and studies. You should look into Korean language research, linguistic research, etc.

On interpreters - I think it would be brilliant if you could collect some novel field data here and conduct some surveys or interviews on this issue of '400 interpreters are required to support the deployed forces'.

At one point, you write '... reports suggest that around 3,000 North Korean soldiers have been killed or injured (... and) around the same time, there were indications that North Korean deployments may have been withdrawn—possibly temporarily—for further retraining' and then immediately you jump to 'These reports suggest that Russia has not gained a linguistic advantage.' That is a presumptuous conclusion based on untriangulated news reports and demands much more nuance. This requires a

review of security studies frameworks and intelligence analyses, amongst other things. You also make statements such as 'It is reasonable to assume that military AI systems would be much more advanced'... which is something you could look into more and actually back up with some sources.

The article does also include a few obviously AI-generated elements, e.g., the typical '—'. (Outside of the experiment, of course, which was quite interesting!) Moreover, the bibliography could be more extensive and include further references to academic literature. For example, this sentence could do with several additional references to research: "...Basque by the U.S., Nubian by Egypt, and Oujiang in southeastern China during China's war against Vietnam."

Although I really enjoyed the topic, this article reads more like the set-up for a blog post than rigorous academic research. It requires some additional work.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.