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## **LEXICAL PECULIARITIES OF MODERN ENGLISH LANGUAGE MILITARY DISCOURSE**

**Summary.** *The article analyzes the definition of modern English language military discourse and outlines its lexical peculiarities. According to the scientific literature, military discourse is defined as a spoken or written act of communication used in formal or non-formal military contexts that describes any military act, ranks, warfare, organization, etc. Military-related texts possess a number of lexical peculiarities of modern English language military discourse. They include the following: military terms, abbreviations, neologisms, military aphorisms, proverbs, and sayings, phraseological units, slang words, and a number of figurative elements to trigger audience's emotions. The author explains all the characteristics providing their definitions and shows the usage within military-related texts. Thus, the military term being a stable lexical unit is assigned to describe the relevant concept in the conceptual and functional system of a military sphere. The article outlines the main approaches to military terms formations and explains the reasons why new terms appear. Also, the author describes military abbreviations, their types and gives the examples of frequently used abbreviations.*

*Special attention is drawn towards lexical tools like slang words, military aphorisms, proverbs, and sayings, phraseological units or idioms. The author explains that they form a special lexical layer that performs other functions excepts of transfer of information. These functions include: relief of psychological tension, influencing people's feelings and emotions making information subjective, and enhancing patriotic feelings of the country describing the course of military conflict in the news reports when "we-attitude" words is used. Also, the author reveals the use of extralinguistic components of military-related texts as they are used to draw*

*attention of audience to some specific pieces of information and to refocus their efforts with a view to bring change of mind.*

**Key words:** *military discourse, military term, abbreviation, neologism, slang, extralinguistic component.*

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## ЛЕКСИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ СУЧАСНОГО АНГЛОМОВНОГО ВІЙСЬКОВОГО ДИСКУРСУ

**Анотація.** У статті проаналізовано визначення сучасного англомовного військового дискурсу та описано його головні лексичні особливості. На основі аналізу наукової літератури військовий дискурс визначено як усний чи письмовий комунікативний акт, використовуваний для реалізації формального чи неформального спілкування у військовому контексті. Такий дискурс описує військові дії, звання, зброю, тактику ведення війни, організацію військових формувань тощо. Текстам військової тематики властиві певні лексичні особливості. До них належать: військові терміни, абрєвіатури, неологізми, військові афоризми, прислів'я та цитати, фразеологічні одиниці, сленг, а також значна кількість метафоричних елементів, використаних для впливу на емоції аудиторії. Автор пояснює всі ці характеристики, дає їм визначення, а також показує особливості їх уживання в текстах військової тематики. Таким чином, військовий термін – це стала лексична одиниця, яка описує відповідне поняття в межах концептуальної та функціональної систем військової сфери. У статті вичленено головні підходи до формування військових термінів, а також пояснено причини появи нових термінів у військовому дискурсі.

Особливу увагу приділено таким лексичним засобам, як сленг, військові афоризми, прислів'я, цитати, фразеологічні одиниці чи ідіоми. Автор пояснює, що вони формують спеціальний лексичний пласт та виконують додаткові функції, окрім передачі інформації, а саме: зняття психологічної напруги, вплив на почуття та емоції аудиторії через створення суб'єктивних повідомлень, а також підвищення патріотизму в країні завдяки аналізу перебігу конфлікту чи війни з використанням «ми-установки». Також автор розкриває екстралінгвістичні компоненти текстів військової тематики, оскільки вони використовуються для того, щоб привернути увагу читача до окремих елементів повідомлення та змінити його думку щодо певних питань.

**Ключові слова:** *військовий дискурс, військовий термін, абрєвіатура, неологізм, сленг, екстралінгвістичний компонент.*

**Introduction.** The military has become one of the fields of human activity and it is not a surprise we are observing rapid developments of military discourse in the society. Besides, the existing security threats bring people's attention to military sphere and they get to know a number of military lexical units like NATO, missile, anti-terrorist operation, militants, Armed Forces, etc. We widely use military abbreviations and military slang words and clearly understand them while watching military-related news reports. The objective spread of military discourse and interest of audience to this topic make us explain the lexis related to the military sphere, to study lexical peculiarities of modern English language military discourse in details and to describe their usage in different texts devoted to war, armed conflict, army procurement documents or reports from Chief of Staff.

**An analysis of recent research.** Military discourse being a complicated communication phenomenon attracts more attention from scientists of different fields like philology, psychology, military history, pedagogics, and military affairs. A number of scientists (A. Boiko, L. Mosiyevych, I. Kraft and others) defined the category of military discourse. Some philologists studied general lexical peculiarities of military discourse (K. Tatarenko and A. Mammadzade). Neologisms was the topic of investigation of V. Potalui, Ye. Shirshikova, and M. Hanaqtan; borrowings in military texts were studied by V. Chandra Sekhar Rao. M. Frane, and I. Fabijanić revealed the problem of military abbreviations and their typology. A. Prokopenko, I. Chuprina, Sh. Razakova, and A. Wilson analyzed the military terms and their usage in different types of texts. Some aspects of translation of military discourse were studied by O. Kramarenko, O. Bogdanova, L. Mosiyevych, A. Prokopenko, I. Chuprina, and Sh. Razakova.

But at the same time there are not many articles devoted to detailed generalized analysis of lexis of modern English language discourse, demonstrating examples of all the groups of lexical units. And, taking this into consideration, the relevance of the study leads to specifies **the purpose of the study** that is to analyze the definition of modern English language military discourse and outline its lexical peculiarities.

**Research results and discussion.** Military discourse is explained by L. Mosiyevych as a “spoken or written act of communication used in formal or non-formal military contexts that relates to, deals with or describes any military act, ranks, warfare, organization, etc. The lexicon of military discourse may also be distinguished between the peaceful nature of our weapons or military operations and the catastrophic and cruel nature of theirs.” (Mosiyevych, 2017, p. 112). The analysis of scientific literature on the problem being studied (**Potaluy & Shirshikova, 2016**, Tatarenko, 2015, Chandra Sekhar Rao, 2018, Kramarenko & Bogdanova, 2020, Mammadzade, 2013) and military-related texts give us the possibility to recognize a number of lexical peculiarities of modern English language military discourse. They include military terms, abbreviations, neologisms, military aphorisms, proverbs, and sayings, phraseological units, slang words, and a number of figurative elements to trigger audience's emotions. Further let's move to the description of these features in details.

The military term is defined as a stable unit of synthetics of an analytical nomination assigned to describe the relevant concept in the conceptual and functional system of a military sphere in the meaning regulated by its definition (Razakova, 2018). Military terminology belongs to the peripheral layers vocabulary of a particular language; however, it definitely differs from other terminology because it has common features with a basic vocabulary (Prokopenko & Chuprina, 2018). Military terms are complex, extremely dynamic and they are the most flexible part of the military discourse.

Some philologists (Prokopenko & Chuprina, 2018) differentiate military terms into two groups:

- 1) military terminology, denoting a number of concepts that are directly related to military affairs, armed forces, methods of warfare, etc.;
- 2) military-technical terminology, which includes scientific and technical terms.

The use of military terms that verbalize specific military concepts is very significant for the modern military discourse as it helps avoid unnecessary linguistic redundancies and misunderstanding by the audience that does not possess special knowledge and skills in the field of military affairs (Kramarenko & Bogdanova, 2020).

Military terms are characterized by frequently used approaches to their formation that are realized according to word-building principles. These approaches are the following:

- word compounds mean are lexemes that consist of more than one stem (*high-altitude bombing, night-vision goggles, open-source intelligence, vehicle-borne improvised explosive device*);
- affixation is the process of adding an affix to a word to create a new word with a different meaning (*maneuverability, bombardment, fortification, surrender*);
- noun phrases consist of a main noun called the head and any any dependent words to make new terms (*campaign plan, information operations, target area, search and rescue region*);
- conversed words are those formed by means of zero derivation involving the transfer of a word from one part of speech to another without any change in form (*to officer, to battle, to army, to war*).

Also, some findings show that the formation of new military terms can be because of the emergence of new notions – weapons, equipment, vehicles as well as the development of new methods of warfare or the reorganization of armed forces (Razakova, 2018). To support this idea, it is important to mention the idea of I. Kraft distinguishing the separate type of military discourse – military innovation discourse (Kraft, 2019). Thus, military innovation, in a communication-oriented view, is a particular phenomenon or category in which participants agree on a shared understanding about the nature, the content and the value of a novel military idea. When a military innovation is approved and demonstrated in community and by military authorities, we obtain its official name and, accordingly, a new term – neologism.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, a neologism is a newly coined word that may be in the process of entering common use, but has not yet been accepted into mainstream language. Some neologisms are words which are made-up or invented by the speaker himself/herself often for a certain purpose. M. Hanaqtaḥ (2016) thinks that in most cases these neologisms are not found in dictionaries because they are new. Usually, they are wide used in military-related mass media texts. The examples of such neologism are the following: *backseater* (a navigator who accompanies the pilot of an aircraft), *huffer cart* (air compressor that hooks up to the side of an aircraft, and provides compressed air for engine starting), *smart gun* (a conceptual firearm that can detect its user), *e-solution* (electronic solution and electronic communication), *clicktivism* (form of digital protest like signing and sending e-mails to politicians, corporate CEOs, and chiefs). Also, some scientists prove that neologisms appear in military discourse to reach linguistic economy that actually means the shortening of complicated names of objects and actions to one word or phrase (Potaluy & Shirshikova, 2016).

Abbreviations meaning shortened form of a written word or phrase is one more lexical peculiarity of modern English language military discourse that include initialism (abbreviation formed from the first letter – the initial – of each of the words in a term or noun phrase) and acronyms (abbreviation formed from using syllables). The examples of initials are: *AAA* (Anti-Aircraft Artillery), *GPS* (Global Positioning System), *HQ* (Headquarters), *ZF* (Zone of Fire). The examples of acronyms used in military discourse texts are: *DEPSECDEF* (Deputy Secretary of Defense), *ENSIT* (Enemy Situation), *SITREP* (Situation Report), *SOCACOM* (Special Operations Command-Atlantic Command). It is necessary to add many abbreviated words that are essentially used as “codes” to communicate effectively in battle situations, hostile environments, and training (Frane & Fabijanić, 2013, p. 61).

Also, modern English language military discourse is rich in borrowing from other languages (maneuver, reconnaissance, lieutenant, sergeant, enemy, ambush, guard, etc.). According to V. Chandra Sekhar Rao (2018), the main reason for borrowing is to provide a word from the source language variety when there is no suitable existing word in the target language. Besides, borrowings are used to describe local things or proper names such as *Stanytsia Luhanska*, *Donbas*, *Security Service of Ukraine*, *Buk missile warhead*, *Ukraine's Strategy for the Economic Development of Donetsk and Luhansk Oblasts*, *Verkhovna Rada*, *KrAZ-6322*, *T-84*, *Operational Command South*.

A. Wilson (2008) denotes that military discourse uses many specific words that lead to the relief of psychological tension through humor. Such words are actually military terms but have humorous meaning. For example, *unwelcome visit used for invasion*, *sparrow* – for air-to-air missile, *big voice* – for loud speaker at the military base, *fruit salad* – for display of medals and ribbons on a dress uniform. Such words are closely connected with military slang that means lexical layer operating beyond the formal discourse and possessing marked emotional assessments. Military slang

words are used to describe certain lexical categories that form daily communication of the military. These categories concern:

1) Interpersonal relations like routine interrelations within military team; relations between servicemen depending on their rank, position, arms and task force; attitudes of civilian population to the military;

2) Activities of unit personnel such as daily activities and routine; combat operation activities and training; leisure time;

3) A military man and his/her surrounding that covers meals, uniform, equipment, vehicle, health condition, psychological state.

The examples of English language military slang words can be the following: *boot (recruit still in boot camp)*, *snake eater (Special Forces soldier)*, *sky blossom (deployed parachute)*, *rack time (sleeping)*, *rotor head (helicopter pilot)*.

Military aphorisms, proverbs, and sayings are other type of lexical features of military discourse. Often such lexical units are used in military-related speeches of politicians or mass media tests. The examples include: *good beginning is half a battle*, *in time of war the laws are silent*, ***boots on the ground***.

A. Mammadzade (2013) insists that phraseological units or idioms are considered a lexical characteristic of modern English language military discourse as well. According to the dictionary, idiom is a fixed lexical composition and grammatical structure that has figurative meaning and cannot be translated by decoding all the component parts. The analysis of military-related texts showed that the following phraseological units are used: *axe to grind (concerns the state when one has a grievance, a resentment and wants to get revenge or sort it out)*, *bite the bullet (deals with the situation that one has to accept or face something unpleasant because it cannot be avoided)*, *drop a bombshell (means to announce something that changes a situation drastically and unexpectedly)*, *fight fire with fire (means that one fights something or someone using a very similar or the same way)*.

Orders are integral feature of military discourse and they mean commands proceeding from a military superior. In other words, order is a binding instruction given by a senior rank officer to a soldier or junior rank officer in a military context. The examples of military orders are: *Stand and ease! Stand Still! Halt! March! Squad – Two! Fire! Reload! Rifle exercises, by numbers, change arms – One!*

Military discourse includes the statements about war, combat operations, armed conflicts and activities in trouble spots of global and local tension. Military discourse also concerns war news reports as instrument transferring operative, laconic and accurate information. This type of discourse is used to inform the community but it does not exclude emotional and manipulative messages (Boiko, 2019). Obviously, that only few reports inform objectively. Very often military-related texts become an instrument of propaganda or misinformation. The influence upon the audience through hidden manipulations, changing the information is a hybrid characteristic of modern English language military discourse and it reflects complicated political and military realities like interrelations of conflict participants and its observers at different stages. To demonstrate this impact in military discourse texts the authors use a number of techniques.

First of all, military discourse differentiates lexically “we-group” and “they-group” that brings the demonstration of opposite parties in texts: friend – foe, we – our enemy, Armed Forces – militants, terrorists, separatists. K. Tatarenko (2015) emphasizes that mass media tend to create and support negative image of “they-group” and enhance the positive image impact of “we-group”.

*It's a betrayal of the most sacred duty we bear as a nation to protect and equip our troops when we send them into harm's way. It's a betrayal of every single American family with a loved one serving in Afghanistan or anywhere overseas.* (BBC, April 16, 2021)

*The reduction of troops on our border proportionally reduces tension.* (Reuters, April 22, 2021)

*An uptick in shelling along the line of control separating Ukrainian forces from Russia-backed fighters in eastern Ukraine.* (RadioLiberty, April 7, 2021)

Also, when we read military discourse texts or watch military-related news reports some extralinguistic components of message play a significant role for the audience. These components include title, illustrations, text format, and captions. Other visual tools concern the usage of different fonts, highlighting, animation elements in electronic messages or playing with intonation in oral reports, and their repetition in a certain order to have the greatest impact (Makarov, 2003, p. 54–58). Such components are used to draw attention of audience to some specific pieces of information and to refocus their efforts with a view to bring change of mind.

**Conclusions.** Military discourse is specific way of spoken or written communication used in formal or non-formal military context. Modern English language military discourse is characterized by a number of lexical peculiarities such as military terms, abbreviations, neologisms, military aphorisms, proverbs, and sayings, phraseological units, slang words, and a number of figurative elements to trigger audience's emotions. Each of the peculiarities mentioned above serves as a separate tool to transfer military-related messages and form oral and written texts related to military affairs, armed conflicts, weapons, equipment, and military innovations. Some peculiarities can be used to impact the emotions of audience and change their views and attitudes to situations connected with war or military conflict. Further we are to study grammatical peculiarities of modern English language military discourse.

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