Problems of Understanding the Military Terminology of the English Language

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Abstract

The article is devoted to consideration of consubstantial military terms, problems of understanding of the English military terminology, military conflicts in a discourse of the modern press, and some features of language of mass media in description of military operations and counter-terrorist operations.

Keywords: military terminology; mass media; counter-terrorist operations; .

The frequent use of terms outside the scientific context allows us to suggest that a certain part of the terms used by the media are consubstantial. They appear as a result of borrowing from the general literary speech (terminologization), or in the course of language development the terms become everyday words as new technical inventions enter our lives (determinologization).

So, having seen the words *air raid, surface-to-air missile, friendly fire, carpet bombing, germ warfare, APC (armored personnel carrier)* in the text of a newspaper article, one can immediately conclude that the author has used military terminology. Meanwhile, these words can be found in the general vocabulary of Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English and have interpretations that are similar in meaning to the definitions contained in the Campaign Dictionary of Military Terms.

Consubstantial terms are given the following definition: "In any terminology (subject area of special lexis) there are certain number of lexical units that are found in both every day and professional speech - consubstantial" terms and they cause a number of difficulties in extracting terminological lexis from the vocabulary language"[1].

Speaking about the terminology studies in various subsystems of the language from the point of view of the presence of consubstantial terms in these terminological systems, it is necessary to mention the work of I.Yu. Berezhanskaya "Consubstantial terms in the linguistic terminology of the English and Russian languages (comparative analysis)", in which the author comes to the following conclusions :

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[1] Grinev S.V. Introduction to Terminology. - M .: Mosk. Lyceum, 1993. C.27 (Grinev S.B. Introduction into terminology. - M: Moscow lyceum, 1993. P. 27)

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"The concept of "consubstantial term" is associated with two oppositely directed processes: 1) specialization of a common word; 2) term determinism"[2].

O.S. Akhmanova, speaking of linguistic terminology, comes to the conclusion that "the coexistence of the same words used in the meta-language and in the object-language ... It is impossible to exclude the above that in a very significant part of the metalanguage and object-language the same words, such as, for example, *"word", "sound", "melody", "expression"*, etc. is simply used"[3].

Thus, analyzing the findings of research by various authors, it can be assumed that any terminological system may contain consubstantial terms. In the framework of the reviewed work, the system of military terms was considered from the point of view of the presence of consubstantial terms in it. The selection of lexemes for analysis was on the vocabularies of two dictionaries: special, which is the dictionary of military terms from the publishing house Macmillan Dictionary of Military Terms (2004), and commonly used, which was taken as the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2005).

The analysis of the lexical compatibility of consubstantial terms of military vocabulary was one of the interesting points in this study. We will consider this point on the example of the word *Battle*. There are several variants of a given word in the dictionary of general vocabulary "Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English": *battledress, battlefield, battlements, battleship*.

The dictionary of military terms contains a number of new terms with the root battle: *battle casualty replacement, battle damage assessment, battle fatigue, battle group, battle handover point, battle honor*.

Common verbs that are part of military vocabulary, as a rule, acquire specific meanings: *to detail (for duty)* назначать (в наряд); *to develop (a position)* вскрывать, разведывать (оборону); *to dress* равняться; *to find a guard* выделять (караул); *to furnish (a patrol)* выделять (дозор); *to mount (an attack)* переходить в наступление; *to negotiate (an obstacle)* преодолевать (препятствие); *to rotate (personnel)* чередовать (личный состав); *to stage (an attack)* предпринимать (наступление); *to turn (a position)* обходить (оборону). The preliminary studies to make precisions in such meanings is especially important, since it is not always possible to understand the meaning of these phrases outside the military context.

Exploring the military terminology of the English language, one has to mention about the problems of understanding and translation. These problems can be both

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[2] Berejenskaya I.U. Consubstantial terms in linguistic terminology of English and Russian languages (comparative analysis): Dissertation of the candidate of philological sciences. – M., 2005. P. 33)
[3] Akhmanova O.S. Dictionary of linguistic terms. – M.: Soviet Encyclopedia, 1966. P. 4

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typical for the translation of any terms in general, for instance, the absence of similar notions and realis or inconsistency and incomplete correspondence of the term, as well as specific ones - for instance, different systems of military ranks and differences in organizational and staff structures of armies in different states. In some cases, the choice of the correct method of translating a term can play a decisive role, e.g. the "*general staff*" cannot be translated literally "генеральный штаб", because in the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation the general headquarters is the governing body, but in the US Army it is a common part of the headquarters in the composition of the headquarters of the ground forces, called the Army Staff. The word "*Army*" itself, despite its apparent simplicity, is more often translated not as "*Army*", but as *Ground forces*.

The translation of terms consisting of several roots of a compound word is not so easy, since in this case the semantic connections of phrase units are not always easily determined, for instance, "*offensive operation*". Here, instead of the most obvious translation option "ограниченная наступательная операция", there can be the option "наступательная операция с ограниченной целью". Another example: at first glance, the military rank of "*first lieutenant*" in the Russian army corresponds to the rank of "старший лейтенант" because the next rank in seniority is "*captain*" (капитан). However, this is not entirely true because in the American army there are only the ranks of "*first lieutenant*" and "*second lieutenant*", and in the Russian army there are "*junior lieutenant*" (младший лейтенант), "*lieutenant*" (лейтенант) and "*senior lieutenant*" (старший лейтенант). Therefore, the "*senior lieutenant*" is not a "*first lieutenant*", but a "*senior lieutenant*", and, conversely, a "*first lieutenant*" is literally translated as "первый лейтенант".

Summarizing the problems of understanding and translating military terms, one can single out the following points:

• **Lack of similar notions and realis**. Possible translations of such terms: a) description of the meaning *attack problem - тактическая задача по ведению наступательного боя* b) literal translation *tactical air command - тактическое воздушное командование* c) partial and full transliteration *master sergeant* – старший сержант d) transcription *commander - командир* e) transcription and translation *warrant officer - уорент офицер (или мичман во флоте)*.

• **Inconsistency or incomplete correspondence of the term**, especially in the literal translation. *Armored cavalry* is sometimes translated as *бронекавалерийский* despite the fact that the correct translation is *intelligence (разведывательный)*. Military Academy corresponds to the Russian concept of a *военное училище* (military school), not a military academy (*военная академия*).

• **A large number of abbreviations** (abbreviations and acronyms)

• **The short term existence of certain terms**, i.e. each new military operation generates new words and leads to the disappearance of old ones, this is due, as a rule, to the development of technology on the one hand, and a change in the political situation on the other. An example is the military terms of *World War I* and *World War II*.

• **Different rank systems** - in most cases it is not possible not only to find a match, but the translation itself is possible only by transcription or transliteration. As an example, there are several tables of military ranks of the armies of Great Britain and the United States in the dictionary of military terms; there are practically no correspondences with Russian analogies.

• **Different organizational structures**. The word *troop,* which is related with the army of Great Britain should be understood as a platoon and for the US army this will correspond to the notion a reconnaissance or intelligence company. Squadron for the British Army should be understood as a company, and for the US Army - the reconnaissance battalion.

• **A large number of slang expressions.**

Interesting is the fact that some elements of military slang go beyond even military vocabulary and are used by the media in other contexts, for example: The article of *The Economist* from April 9, 2009 was published under the headline of *Flu and the Global Economy The Butcher's Bill*; The website www.geneveith.com on February 21, 2008 published an article entitled *The Butcher's Bill of Atheism*.

Speaking about the understanding of word combinations, it should be noted that word combinations, in which the relations between the components are unclear and of particular difficulty for understanding. For example, *amphibious tank fire support* "поддержка десанта огнем плавающих танков" or "поддержка огнем десантных плавающих танков"; *tank target* "танк (мишень)» or «цель огня танков"; *aircraft defense* "противовоздушная оборона" or "оборона (защита) самолета (бомбардировщика)".

It is also necessary to note the existence of phrases that have arisen in connection with the need for secretive control of troops, for example, *My feet are dry*, "лечу над сушей"; *No joy* "цель не обнаружена", etc. Of course, their use provides only relative secrecy. However, without prior acquaintance with them, it is often impossible to derive the general meaning from the meaning of the composite components. In this sense, these are absolutely idiomatic units, which seem to be characteristic only for military vocabulary.

The complexity of mutual understanding at the level of military terms has led to the creation of a "Glossary of terms for Russia-NATO cooperation," which aims to provide consistent terminology for the Russia-NATO Council to work together.

The media plays a considerable role in shaping public opinion and the subjective perception of certain political and military events. Audiovisual media, primarily radio and television, have the most massive and powerful political influence on society.

Analyzing the use of military terminology in the language of the media, it is interesting to observe how the press, covering both military events and other actions of a similar nature - for example, in the sphere of interethnic relations - can or cannot use military terminology, replacing military terms with other lexical means.

Here it is appropriate to say about the role of the press in the formation of public opinion, that is, ultimately, in the manipulation of public consciousness. Description of this or that event or its actors largely depends on the understanding and perception of the situation by the readers. In 2004, after the tragic events in Beslan, President Vladimir Putin expressed his negative attitude towards the use of the word "*rebels*" (повстанцы, мятежники) by many Western media outlets regarding the perpetrators of a terrorist act. (RIA "Novosti" (News) on September 24, 2004 published an article "*Putin notes the importance of international unity in the interpretation of the concept of terrorism*".

This is not a unique example. The same event depending on the purpose of the article, can be called "*riot*" (insurrection, rebellion), "*struggle against oppressors*", "*turmoil*" or "*urban unrest*" (unrest in the city). Different authors could name the same actors as "*terrorist*", "*rebel*", "*freedom fighter*", "*national patriot*" (patriot). One can also compare the phrase "*a 15-year-old Palestinian boy is killed by IDF*" with another option as "*a Palestinian youth is shot by IDF*", an example of which is given in the article "*The Language War*" by Lewis Glinert.

This phenomenon in linguistics is by no means new. It is analyzed in great detail by the authoritative researcher D. Crystal in the book "*The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language*" and he names it "doublespeak", or "*a language that makes the bad seem good and makes the negative one positive*".

E. Yakovleva in the article "*Forward to the past*" speaks of cases when "accuracy of word usage is tied to ideology and politics," and cites a number of examples: "Indeed, "*air support*" does not sound as scary as" *bombing* ", "*Unlawful or abitrary deprivation of life*" is not as scary as "*killing*", and the expression "*an effective nuclear weapon that eliminates the enemy with a minimum degree of damage*" seems scientific and even noble compared to the term "*neutron bomb*".

Different politicians may call the same phenomenon differently, based on their goals. Thus, the Barack Obama administration refused to use the term "*global war on terrorism*" (global war on terror), since it does not adequately reflect the nature of the terrorist threat against the United States. The concept of "*the war against terrorism*"

was actively used by the administration of President George W. Bush and, even before his departure from the White House, critics began talking about the incorrectness of the term. After taking over the presidency by Obama a large-scale revision of the anti-terrorism policy began in the United States and in March of this year the Pentagon ordered its employees to use the new term "*Overseas Contingency Operation*" instead of the old controversial term. This change of lexicon is explained by the fact that the word "*war*" was associated with the conflict between the nation-states and the term terrorism, of course, was not necessarily a derivative of the relations of the nation-states.

In general, influence of speech in relation to political discourse is defined as a manipulative verbal organization of information flows in the sphere of power, which is carried out by a text sender (politician) in regard to a text recipient (mass consciousness) in order to change his attitude and behavior. "The mechanisms of speech influence propose the use in the political discourse of such means as deterrence, inducement and activation of the addressee's responsibility. The pragmatic mechanisms take the role of linguistic devices to make an impact on consciousness, on the process of decision making by a person and are implemented at the lexical, grammatical and stylistic levels of the language "[4].

There is another interesting fact: at the beginning of military actions in Iraq, this military operation was titled as Operation Iraqi Freedom, that is, Operation for Iraqi Freedom. In this case, we can say that even the name of the military operation itself is a euphemism.

The existence of a huge number of euphemisms found its reflected even in the speeches of the famous American comedian George Carlin: she considers the term *shell shock*, which was widely used during the First World War to describe the state of severe stress, mental trauma resulting from participation in military actions. During the Second World War this state was called *battle fatigue*. The word *fatigue* itself produces a less vivid impression than the word *shock*, and it "masks" the state and "softens" the reality. During the military actions in Korea in 1950, a new phrase appeared - *operational exhaustion*, which "depersonalizes" the phenomenon itself, and it was called a term that sounds more like a description of the state of a machine or mechanism, rather than a person. Finally, during the Vietnam War the term *post traumatic stress disorder* appeared, which already so "softened" the meaning of this phenomenon and "masked"

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[4] Комисарова Т.С. Механизмы речевого воздействия и их реализация в политическом дискурсе :на материале речей Г. Шрёдера. Дис. канд.филол. наук.- Орел, 2008. С.157   (Komissarova T.S. Mechanisms of speech influence and their realization in political discourse: on the materials of the speeches by G. Schroeder. Dissertation of candidate of philological sciences. – Oryol, 2008. P. 157)

the main reason of this condition that it didn't have any connection with military actions as if expresses household trauma and its consequences.

In 1991, an experiment to study the effect of euphemisms on the perception of information about the victims of the fighting in Iraq among civilians was conducted in the United States. The survey showed that only 21% of readers were "very concerned" about the number of victims when the term "*collateral damage"* was used in the text, while the phrase "*civilian casualties"* (потери среди гражданского населения) caused acute reaction in 49% of respondents.

Thus, in the course of the study we came to a number of conclusions. Military terminology is an open terminological system and is developing intensively, reflecting the development of military science. Due to the versatility of military knowledge, it has enormous size and intersectoral, interdisciplinary character.

The basis of the military terminology of the English language consist of single and multicomponent nominative units, represented mainly by substantive compounds having definitive relationship.

Military terminology haven't autonomy in the composition of general literary vocabulary, the boundaries between these layers are permeable and open to move to either side, i.e. non-terminological vocabulary can be used as a basis for creating new terminological units, but military terms can go beyond the framework of specific terminological system for various reasons and function in general literary vocabulary.

The frequent use of military terms outside the special context allows to state that a certain part of the terms used by the media are consubstantial. The existence of such terms, on the one hand, helps in understanding military texts and, on the other hand, causes additional difficulties, since it can cause a misunderstanding of the meaning in the text due to differences in definitions given in the general vocabulary and terminological vocabulary.

An important feature of the military terminology used by the media is a high degree of metaphors. The considerable role of metaphor in structuring and functioning of military terms is due to a whole complex of factors, among which the following can be singled out: media texts about military conflicts and military actions, as a rule, have an emphatic function, i.e. make emotional and psychological impact on the reader, according to which the relevant terms are selected.

The use of military terminology in the media can act as a means of manipulating with public consciousness aiming at formation of a certain public opinion on resonant events in the country and the world. In many cases, certain terms are replaced by euphemisms, which allow positioning any event in a "favorable" perspective, softening, masking information and, in some cases, misleading readers and spectators.

Focusing on the study of the terminology of a particular sphere, one can trace some processes, which are characteristic to the terminology as a whole. Therefore, the experience of comprehensive description of English military terminology can be used to further study this terminology in different languages, as well as to study the terminology of other fields of activity. It is worth noting that the work on studying the terminology, in fact, is a constantly ongoing process and the dictionaries fix the state of terminology at a specific point of time only. The process of formation of modern military terminology is far from completeness, it is necessary to continue studies on the emergence and development of military terms, solving the problems of their standardization, unification and codification.

As the perspective of research, we consider it important to note the diatopic description of the system of military terms. It is obvious that the revealing the features of national terminological systems can be very effective due to the fact that each of the parties has its own individual military experience, which could not but affect, at least, such phenomena as slangization and metaphorization.

Some aspects of study, as well as its results and conclusions are reflected in the following publications:

1. Чеботарева В.В. Особенности функционирования английских военных терминов в языке средств массовой информации// Вестник Московского университета. № 2/2008. – С. 183-189.

(Chebotareva V.V. Features of the functioning of the English military terms in the language of the media // Moscow University Bulletin. No. 2/2008. - p. 183-189).

2. Чеботарева В.В. Английский военный термин в языке и речи // Сборник научных и научно-методических трудов кафедры теории преподавания иностранных языков МГУ / под общ. ред. Е.И.Энгель. М: МАКС Пресс, 2008. Вып. 5. С. 90-96.

(Chebotareva V.V. English military term in language and speech // Collection of scientific and methodological works of the Department of Theory of Teaching Foreign Languages of Moscow State University / ed. ed. E.I. Engel. M: MAX Press, 2008. Vol. 5. S. 90-96).

3. Чеботарева В.В. Военная терминология английского языка в средствах массовой информации // Сборник научных и научно-методических трудов кафедры теории преподавания иностранных языков МГУ/под общ. ред. Е.И.Энгель. М: МАКС Пресс, 2007. Вып. 4. С. 101-104

(Chebotareva V.V. Military terminology of the English language in the mass media // Collection of scientific and methodological works of the Department of Theory of Teaching Foreign Languages of Moscow State University / ed. ed. E.I. Engel. M: MAX Press, 2007. Vol. 4. pp. 101-104.

4. Чеботарева В.В. Актуальные проблемы перевода текстов военной тематики // Сборник научных и научно-методических работ. Преподавание иностранных языков: теория и практика. Факультет иностранных языков МГУ / под общ. ред. Е.И.Энгель. М: 2005. Вып. 2. С. 56-59

(Chebotareva V.V. Actual problems of translating military texts // Collection of scientific and methodological works. Teaching foreign languages: theory and practice. Faculty of Foreign Languages of Moscow State University / under total. ed. E.I. Engel. M: 2005. Vol. 2. pp. 56-59).