

HOW MILITARY TERMS WERE RESEARCHED GLOBALLY: A REVIEW OF STRUCTURAL, SEMANTIC AND DISCOURSE APPROACHES

Nosirova Muborak Xaitbayevna,

Qo'qon Davlat Universiteti 2-bosqich tayanch doktoranti

Abstract. *Military terminology has been studied across many languages and academic traditions, producing a large but scattered body of research. This paper reviews eleven doctoral and thesis-level studies from Russian, Arabic, English, and Tajik contexts. It traces how the field has moved from structural-semantic description toward cognitive, sociolinguistic, and discourse-oriented approaches. The review identifies key findings in each area and highlights persistent gaps, particularly the lack of cross-linguistic comparison and the underrepresentation of non-European languages.*

Keywords: *military terminology, structural-semantic analysis, abbreviation, military discourse, translation.*

Аннотация. *Военная терминология изучалась на протяжении многих языков и академических традиций, создавая большой, но разрозненный корпус исследований. В данной работе рассматриваются одиннадцать докторских и диссертационных исследований из русского, арабского, английского и таджикского контекстов. Работа прослеживает, как эта область переместилась от структурно-семантического описания к когнитивным, социолингвистическим и дискурсивно-ориентированным подходам. Обзор выявляет ключевые выводы в каждой области и подчеркивает устойчивые пробелы, в частности отсутствие кросс-лингвистического сравнения и недостаточное представление неевропейских языков.*

Ключевые слова: *военная терминология, структурно-семантический анализ, аббревиация, военный дискурс, перевод.*

Annotatsiya. *Harbiy terminologiya turli tillar va ilmiy an'analar doirasida o'rganilib kelinib, natijada katta, ammo ma'lum darajada chegaralangan tadqiqotlar korpusi shakllangan. Ushbu maqolada rus, arab, ingliz va tojik ilmiy kontekstlarida amalga oshirilgan o'n birta doktorlik hamda dissertatsiya tadqiqotlari tahlil qilinadi. Maqolada mazkur sohaning rivojlanish jarayoni, ya'ni struktur-semantik tahlildan kognitiv, sotsiolingvistik hamda diskursga yo'naltirilgan yondashuvlarga o'tishi ko'rib chiqiladi. Olib borilgan sharh har bir yo'nalish doirasidagi asosiy natijalarni aniqlash imkonini beradi hamda mavjud muammolarni, xususan, kross-lingvistik taqqoslashning yetarli darajada rivojlanmaganligi va noyevropa tillarining kam tadqiq etilganligini ta'kidlaydi.*

Kalit so'zlar: *harbiy terminologiya, struktur-semantik tahlil, qisqartmalar (abbreviatsiya), harbiy diskurs, tarjima.*

Introduction. Military language is not like other specialized vocabularies. It is at the same time a technical sublanguage, a political instrument, and a record of cultural identity. The words used in armed forces and defense institutions carry ideological meaning, reflect doctrinal thinking, and shape how both soldiers and civilians understand conflict. This is why military terminology has attracted scholarly attention across so many different traditions.

Over the past few decades, researchers have approached military terminology from many angles — structural, semantic, cognitive, translational, and discursive. Some have classified terms by their morphological structure. Others have traced how meanings change across registers or languages. Still others have asked what military language does politically and socially, beyond its purely technical functions. Despite all this activity, the

field still lacks a single overview that brings these approaches together. Research has mostly developed within national and linguistic boundaries, and genuinely cross-linguistic studies remain rare. This paper tries to fill that gap by reviewing eleven significant works produced in different countries and linguistic contexts, identifying patterns that only become visible when they are read side by side.

Materials and Methods. This study is based on a structured review of eleven research works — doctoral dissertations and one postgraduate thesis — produced roughly between 2000 and 2020. The sources were written in Russian, Arabic, and English, and they cover military terminology in English, Russian, French, Arabic, and Tajik. Three criteria guided the selection: direct focus on military terminology or a related sublanguage; methodological rigor through corpus construction, classification, or empirical testing; and thematic diversity across structural, semantic, cognitive, translational, and discourse perspectives.

The sources are Sh.B. Karimov's study on aviation terminology in Tajik and English; N.S. Andrianova's investigation on French-origin military terms in Russian; M.N. Latu's analysis on cognitive-frame modeling of English military terminology; V.V. Chebotareva's examination on English military terms from sociocultural angles; Y.G. Kocharyan's study on abbreviation in English military lexis; S.M. Al-Harabsheh's thesis on translating military terms from English into Arabic; V.Y. Dubovsky's typological analysis on abbreviated forms in English and Russian military sociolects; E.N. Ozhogin's work on abbreviations in the military sublanguage; I.A. Zavgorodny's contrastive study on abbreviations in English military terminology and jargon; X.A. Saidov's comparative analysis on military vocabulary in Tajik and English; and S.A. Kiseleva's investigation on euphemism in English military-political discourse. Each source was analyzed for its theoretical framework, methodology, main findings, and acknowledged limitations. After this, the sources were grouped thematically into five categories: structural-derivational analysis, semantic and cognitive approaches, abbreviation studies, translation research, and discourse and sociolinguistic analysis. These categories follow a rough chronological progression in the field, though they naturally overlap in places.

Results. The oldest strand of military terminology research focuses on word-formation. Sh.B. Karimov's work on aviation terminology assembles a corpus of over 2,000 units and shows that in English, Greco-Latin affixes predominate — prefixes like anti-, inter-, and trans- and suffixes like -ation and -ment are widely productive. Compounding is also central, allowing complex operational concepts to be named efficiently. Saidov extends this to a cross-linguistic comparison, showing that English structural patterns enter Tadjik mainly through calquing and partial phonological adaptation, since the full structural complexity of English terms usually cannot be replicated directly in the receiving language. Both studies also identify multi-word terms — noun phrases and complex nominal groups — as characteristic of military registers,

noting that these resist simple morphological analysis and require attention to syntax and semantic compositionality.

A second line of research asks how military terms acquire and transform their meanings. M.N. Latu's doctoral work is the most theoretically developed contribution here. He constructs a cognitive-frame model of the English military field "Military Action," organized into 69 subframes and 187 slots. His key point is that terms do not have fixed, isolated meanings — they derive meaning from their position within a larger knowledge schema. This has direct consequences for translation: you cannot translate a term properly without understanding the conceptual framework it belongs to. Latu also shows that English military terminology is strongly metaphorical, with spatial and mechanical metaphors used as cognitive tools for naming new military realities.

V.V. Chebotareva looked at how military terms shift meaning as they move between professional and public discourse. Specialized terms lose precision and gain evaluative connotations in media language — a process called determinologization. The reverse also happens: ordinary words can acquire specific technical meanings when they enter military institutional contexts. N.S Andrianova added a historical dimension, tracing how French military loanwords in Russian narrowed, widened, or shifted in meaning from the eighteenth century onward. Her findings are relevant far beyond the French-Russian case. They show that semantic integration of borrowed terms is always gradual and never predictable. Together, these studies demonstrate that the boundary between military terminology and general vocabulary is not fixed but constantly moving.

Four of the reviewed works deal with abbreviation, which has developed into a subfield in its own right. Yu. G. Kocharyan distinguishes syllabic, initial, and mixed structural types, and draws an important line between terminological abbreviations — stable, standardized, functionally precise — and jargon abbreviations, which are more variable and change more quickly. V.Y. Dubovskiy compares English and Russian military sociolects and finds that, despite structural differences between the languages, abbreviation is driven by the same needs in both: economy, speed, information density, and group identity marking. This suggests that abbreviation in military language responds more to the practical demands of military communication than to language-internal features. Ozhogin proposes an algorithm for the cognitive process of expanding abbreviations during translation, while Zavgorodniy refines the structural classification and shows that different abbreviation types vary in lexical stability and semantic transparency — differences that matter for how they should be handled in translation.

Al-Harashsh's empirical study of English-to-Arabic military translation shows clearly that literal translation strategies are not adequate for military texts. They produce syntactic errors — subject-verb agreement failures, incorrect case assignment — that can compromise the accuracy of the translated text. He also demonstrates that translation quality is significantly predicted by the translator's education, experience, and familiarity

with military terminology. This argues for specialized training that goes well beyond general language competence. His findings are broadly applicable: the challenges he identifies — asymmetry between terminological systems, the limits of one-to-one substitution, the importance of domain knowledge — are likely to appear in any translation context where the source and target languages have developed their military vocabularies under different historical and institutional conditions.

The most recent tendency in the field is to treat military language as a social and political practice, not just a technical system. Kiseleva's study of euphemism in English military-political discourse identifies a cluster of related strategies: euphemism, doublespeak, newspeak, and unspeak. Terms like "collateral damage" or "stability operations" are analyzed as instances of unspeak — they encode a political position while appearing descriptively neutral. V.Y. Dubovsky's sociolinguistic work adds that abbreviations and jargon expressions also serve internal social functions. They mark membership, signal competence, and build solidarity within military communities. This dimension is often absent from formal terminological studies but is essential for understanding military language as a living practice.

Discussion. Reading the eleven studies together reveals a clear trajectory. Early research concentrated on formal description — classifying terms by formation type and building inventories. This structural tradition remains valuable and has not been replaced. Over time, however, the field broadened significantly. The semantic turn, visible in Latu's frame-semantic model and Chebotareva's account of terminological dynamism, brought a richer understanding of how terms carry meaning as nodes in knowledge structures rather than isolated labels. The discourse turn, best illustrated by Kiseleva's work, showed that military terminology is also an ideological resource — a set of tools through which power is exercised, conflict is legitimized, and public understanding is shaped.

The diversity of methods across the reviewed studies is, in principle, a strength. But it also makes synthesis difficult. The field lacks shared standards for corpus construction, term selection, and analytical categorization. This makes it hard to compare findings or build on them cumulatively. A recurring theme is the acknowledgment of gaps: the absence of international standardization bodies like NATO and ICAO from structural analyses; the limited corpus size in translation studies; the neglect of cognitive motivations for abbreviation; the need for more attention to how English military terminology functions internationally. These acknowledged limitations forms a natural agenda for future work. Perhaps the most significant gap across the literature is the lack of genuine multilingual comparison. Most studies focus on one or two languages, and comparative work involving three or more typologically distinct languages remains rare. Yet this kind of comparison is exactly what the field needs. Without it, it is difficult to say which features of military terminology are universal and which are shaped by the specific history, culture, or structure of a particular language. It is also hard to understand how terminology

moves across the complex institutional and cultural networks involved in multilateral military cooperation.

Conclusion. Military terminology has been studied globally through a growing range of approaches. The eleven reviewed studies collectively show that it is a rich and socially significant domain that rewards analysis at multiple levels. The structural tradition has documented how military vocabularies are built and organized. The semantic and cognitive tradition has shown how terms get their meanings and how those meanings shift across time and context. The translation tradition has demonstrated how difficult and specialized the transfer of military terms across languages really is. And the discourse tradition has revealed how military language actively shapes public understanding of conflict, rather than simply reflecting it.

Together, these strands suggest that military terminology research is not a narrow technical exercise. It has real intellectual depth and practical consequences for translators, terminologists, and communication specialists alike. Future work should pursue broader multilingual comparison, develop more shared methodological standards, and pay greater attention to non-European language contexts. The field has made genuine progress, but the picture it has built is still incomplete. Completing it will require collaboration across linguistic traditions and an openness to the many different approaches that scholars around the world have developed.

References:

1. Karimov S.B. Structural-semantic analysis of aviation terms in Tajik and English: Doctoral dissertation. – Dushanbe, 2014
2. Andrianova N.S. Military and scientific-technical terminology of French origin in contemporary Russian: Doctoral dissertation. – Kazan, 2009
3. Latu M.N. English military terminology in its historical development: Structural-semantic and cognitive-frame aspects: Doctoral dissertation. – Moscow, 2009
4. Chebotareva V.V. English military terminology in linguistic and sociocultural aspects: Doctoral dissertation. – Moscow, 2012
5. Kocharyan Y.G. Abbreviation in English military lexis: Doctoral dissertation. – Moscow, 2007
6. Al-Harabsheh S.M. The challenges of translating military terms from English into Arabic. – Amman, 2019
7. Dubovsky V.Y. Typological features of structurally reduced formations in English and Russian military sociolects: Doctoral dissertation. – Moscow, 2003
8. Ozhogin E.N. Abbreviations in the military sublanguage: Doctoral dissertation. – Moscow, 1999
9. Zavgorodny I.A. Abbreviations in English military terminology and jargon: Doctoral dissertation. – Moscow, 2002
10. Saidov K.A. Comparative analysis of military lexis in Tajik and English: Doctoral dissertation. – Dushanbe, 2006
11. Kiseleva S.A. The functioning of euphemisms in contemporary English military-political discourse: Structural-semantic and pragmatic aspects: Doctoral dissertation. – Moscow, 2015