

UDC 811.161.2:070:06

DOI <https://doi.org/10.32782/2522-4077-2023-205-16>

## LEXICO-SEMANTIC FEATURES OF THE REPRESENTATION OF THE WAR IN UKRAINE BY MASS MEDIA (BASED ON BBC AND CNN NEWS)

## ЛЕКСИКО-СЕМАНТИЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ ВІЙНИ В УКРАЇНІ ЗАСОБАМИ МАСОВОЇ ІНФОРМАЦІЇ (НА МАТЕРІАЛІ НОВИН BBC ТА CNN)

Leleka T.O.,

*orcid.org/0000-0002-6134-4435*

*Scopus-Author ID: 5828605600*

*PhD in Philology, Associate Professor,*

*Senior Lecturer at the Department of Translation, Applied and General Linguistics*

*Volodymyr Vynnychenko Central Ukrainian State University*

In the modern society mass media cover the various events, including military conflicts. The politicians, journalists and ordinary citizens often use military vocabulary, and this phenomenon is no longer limited to the description of the special area, this type of vocabulary has entered into everyday use.

The purpose of the study is the analysis and classification of the military vocabulary in the context of the English-language news describing military events in Ukraine.

The article analyzes the lexical units that verbalize the events of wartime. The object of the research is the news texts on military topics. The article characterizes the groups of the lexical units identified by the continuous sampling method from the BBC and CNN news, namely the material about the war in Ukraine. The brief overview of the linguistic research on the language of war has been given. The impact of non-linguistic factors on the lexical structure of the language has been shown. The examples of the most popular Ukrainian neologisms in the English language, which appeared during 2022–2023 against the background of military operations, have been considered.

The following thematic groups are highlighted: the phenomena of the Ukrainian realities; the names of combat weapons; the description of combat operations; the daily life of the Ukrainian refugees; the diplomatic front; volunteering; information front; the words and phrases glorifying Ukraine.

The largest group consists of the words describing the realities of the Ukrainian wartime, as well as the lexical units that name the different types of weapons. The third place among the analyzed vocabulary is occupied by the units connected with the life of the Ukrainian refugees. In the course of the study, it became clear that in the English-language news, the units to denote weapons began to appear more and more often, and such vocabulary has taken the second place in the analyzed mass media texts.

The study proves the connection between language and society. The historical stages of the society development are reflected in the lexical system. The language of mass media reacts quite quickly to the lexical innovations. The English-language mass media have a separate section for the news that reflects the war in Ukraine and it is characterized by the high intensity of the military vocabulary, which includes both military terms and common words. The neologisms that arose in the Ukrainian language are also reflected in the language of the foreign mass media. This indicates the interest of the world community in the problem in Ukraine.

**Key words:** language of war, vocabulary, neologism, military vocabulary, language of mass media.

У сучасному суспільстві засоби масової інформації висвітлюють різноманітні події, у тому числі й військові конфлікти. Політики, журналісти й пересічні громадяни часто використовують військову лексику, уживання якої вже не обмежується спеціальною сферою використання, вона ввійшла в повсякденний ужиток.

Метою дослідження є аналіз і класифікація військової лексики в контексті англійських новин, що описують військові події в Україні.

У статті проаналізовано лексичні одиниці, які вербалізують події воєнного часу. Об'єктом дослідження стали новинні тексти військової тематики. Проаналізовано групи лексичних одиниць, виявлені методом суцільної вибірки з новин BBC та CNN, а саме рубрики про війну в Україні. Подано короткий огляд лінгвістичних досліджень мови війни. Охарактеризовано вплив позамовних факторів на лексичну структуру

мови. Розглянуто приклади найпопулярніших українських неологізмів в англійській мові, які з'явилися протягом 2022–2023 років на тлі військових дій.

Виявлено такі тематичні групи: явища українських реалій, назви бойової зброї; опис бойових дій; побут українських біженців; дипломатичний фронт; волонтерство; інформаційний фронт; назви військових; словосполучення, що прославляють Україну.

Найбільшу групу становлять слова, що описують реалії українського воєнного часу, а також лексичні одиниці, які називають різні види зброї. Третє місце серед аналізованої лексики посідають слова, пов'язані із життям українських біженців.

У ході дослідження з'ясувалося, що в англійській мові новинах усе частіше стали з'являтися одиниці для позначення зброї, використання якої в ЗМІ посідає друге місце в проаналізованих текстах.

Дослідження доводить зв'язок між мовою та суспільством. Історичні етапи розвитку суспільства відображаються в лексичній системі мови. Мова ЗМІ досить швидко реагує на інновації в лексичній системі мови. Англійські ЗМІ мають окремий розділ для новин, які відображають війну в Україні та характеризуються високою насиченістю військової лексики, що включає як військові терміни, так і загальноживані слова. Неологізми, які виникли в українській мові, також відображені в мові іноземних засобів масової інформації. Це свідчить про інтерес світової спільноти до проблеми в Україні.

**Ключові слова:** мова війни, лексичний склад, неологізм, військова лексика, мова засобів масової інформації.

**Statement and substantiation of the problem relevance.** Mass media react very quickly to the changes in society. Lexical transformations and innovations are also reflected in the language of mass media. The events related to the war in Ukraine are constantly covered in European newspapers and magazines. The appearance of new lexical units which are associated with the military events deserves special attention [3, p. 7]. The study of such a layer of vocabulary is quite relevant, since the language of the media is saturated with the articles about the war, in which the military vocabulary occupies the significant place.

The integral part of human history is war, which has a powerful impact on language; it changes its lexical structure, and promotes the emergence of the new words [5, p. 82]. English is the national language of most countries in the world. It, like any other, reflects the life of its speakers in all the aspects of its development, reflects events, moods and trends of society. Since the war launched by Russia against Ukraine has global consequences for the world in all the spheres of life: political, economic, social; it was also reflected in the lexical system of the English language, which led to the constant appearance of the neologisms in it that requires the linguistic study.

The relevance of the research is determined by the role of socio-political and military events in changing the scope, content and actualization of the special military vocabulary. Turning to the analyzed vocabulary is relevant today due to its exceptional and unprecedented use in the English and Ukrainian mass media, which regularly focus on the descriptions of the military conflicts. The military vocabulary is constantly used in various contexts and it is in the state of the intensive development.

Today, the news is most often distributed via the Internet. This is one of the most effective ways of communication. The World Wide Web promotes the consolidation of different groups of people and provides the enormous opportunities for the dissemination of information [6]. It should be noted that during the full-scale war, we observe the extremely rapid process of emergence and consolidation of the new vocabulary, compared to peacetime.

Moreover, the interest of the world community in the situation in Ukraine is quite large, so this influenced the fact that the news about the war in Ukraine has been formed into a separate group, the peculiarities of which are worth investigating.

**Analysis of recent research and publications.** The military nominative units as a peculiar layer of the special vocabulary help organize the knowledge about the military events and actions related to them, systematizing, outlining and broadcasting them, creating the prerequisites for preserving and accumulating the new knowledge based on existing ones [12].

Many researchers turned to the study of the military vocabulary [1; 2; 4], the specifics of its functioning [10; 12] and updates [3; 5; 6] highlighting previously unresolved parts of the overall problem.

Many issues remain outside the scope of attention, which, as a result of the growing demands of society, is of fundamental importance.

The media discourse in general, in particular the culture of newspaper language publications, became the subject of the research by many Ukrainian linguists: O. Boiko, V. Zelenin, L. Udovichenko and others. The lexical features of idioms that cover the events in Ukraine are a significant producer of the innovations in the mass media language, as the new conflicts, local wars, and the fight against terrorism are in the center of society's attention today. Undoubtedly, nowadays military vocabulary is particularly noticeable in various areas of social life, and therefore some aspects of its research are gaining the significant relevance: the translation of military vocabulary (V. Balabin), the development of the structure of military vocabulary (M. Navalna, Yu. Raluzhanska), the research of military terminology (Ya. Yarenko). The innovative vocabulary of the military area in 2023 remains insufficiently studied, which necessitates its analysis in the dynamic synchrony. Scientists S. Zupan, M. Štefanič and others devoted their works to the problems of military neologisms. Media discourse in general, in particular the culture of newspaper language publications, became the subject of the research by many linguists: V. Zhalai, Z. Shaftalovich and others.

**The purpose of the article.** The purpose of the article is to identify the lexical features of the mass media covering the war in Ukraine in news material of BBC and CNN.

The defined goal requires solving the following tasks:

- to identify the main groups of lexical units in the language of military-related mass media;
- to analyze the peculiarities of the use of military vocabulary and terms in journalistic discourse;
- to characterize the lexical features of the denoting the war in Ukraine by mass media.

The object of the research is news texts connected with the war in Ukraine.

The subject of the study is the peculiarities of the use of lexical units connected with the war in the language of mass media.

For the analysis of the lexical units, the research uses both general scientific and linguistic research methods. For the scientific interpretation of the factual material, such general scientific methods were used as observation of the language material, analysis and synthesis (substantiation of the theoretical propositions), the comparison of lexemes. The research used the descriptive method (to systematize actual material), the methods of component (to study the structure of lexical meanings), linguistic and stylistic (to clarify the stylistic functions of the military terms) analysis; as well as the method of the contextual analysis, which made it possible to study the lexical units in the textual environment and helped outline their stylistic purpose in the view of the structure and content. To achieve the goal, the method of continuous sampling of the lexical items describing the events of the war in Ukraine was used.

**The main material of the study.** The military terminology is implemented with the help of lexical units that name concepts and phenomena in the field of military affairs, as a whole it represents a dynamically developing system – the terminology system that is logical, structured and belongs to the system of knowledge about the preparation and conduct of the military operations. Similarly, the military terminology is represents with the elements of the broader concept of the military vocabulary, since the words related to the military area may not always correspond to the definition of terms (for example, evaluative, diminutive, stylistically marked constituents, nominations), but they belong to the military vocabulary [2].

The focus of our research is the special vocabulary that functions in the military area of the Ukrainian society. We interpret the military terminology as an ordered set of the military language terms that reflect the conceptual apparatus of military science and are related to the forms and methods of waging war, to issues of the strategic use of the armed forces, as well as the operational-tactical use of the units and parts, from their organization, armament and technical equipment [4].

All the lexical items that describe military events in Ukraine can be divided into some groups:

**1. The phenomena of the Ukrainian reality:**

*Armed forces of Ukraine* – Збройні сили (України), *warfare* – військова справа, *військовий*, *martial law* – воєнний стан, *casualties* – жертви, *territorial defence* – територіальна оборона,

*full-scale invasion* – повномасштабне вторгнення, *curfew* – комендантська година, *(bomb) shelter* – бомбосховище, безпечне місце, *shelling* – обстріли, *strategic assets* – стратегічні об'єкти, *Air raid siren* – повітряна тривога, *genocide* – геноцид, *invaders* – окупанти, загарбники, *ghost of Kyiv* – привид Києва etc.

### **2. Military weapon and gear:**

*arms, weapon* – зброя, *ammunition* – боєприпаси, *patroni, javelin* – джавелін, *bayraktar* – байрактар, *surface-to-air missile* – зенітно-ракетний комплекс, *fighter jet* – винищувач, *anti-tank missile system* – протитанковий ракетний комплекс, *air defence system* – система протиповітряної оборони (ППО), *drone* – дрон, *rocket launcher* – ракетна установка, *missile* – ракета, *cluster bombs* – касетні бомби, *armored combat vehicles* – бойові броньовані машини, *thermal imager* – тепловізор, *bulletproof vest* – куленепробивний жилет etc.

### **3. Military actions:**

*go behind enemy lines* – відправлятися в тил ворога, *hold/lose a position* – утримувати/утрачати позиції, *get the knock* – зазнати поразки, *fire/launch a missile* – стріляти/запускати ракету, *cease the fire* – припинити вогонь, *declare a ceasefire* – оголосити про припинення вогню, *hold someone in captivity* – тримати в полоні, *exchange of prisoners of war* – обмінятися військовополоненими, *withdrawal of troops* – вивід військ, *hold the line* – тримати оборону, *mine/demine* – мінувати/розміновувати, *destroy infrastructure* – руйнувати інфраструктуру, *shoot down the ship* – збити корабель, *take/regain control over* – взяти/відновити контроль над etc.

### **4. Life of Ukrainian refugees:**

*flee abroad* – тікати за кордон, *flee empty-handed* – тікати без речей, *aid* – допомоги, *temporary protection* – тимчасовий захист, *refugee status* – статус біженця, *internally displaced person (IDP)* – тимчасово переміщена особа, *obtained the status* – отримати статус, *social benefits* – соціальні виплати, *checkpoint* – блокпост, контрольний-пропускний пункт, *refugee camp* – табір для біженців, *reception point* – пункт прийому біженців, *apply for asylum* – просити притулок, *support Ukraine remotely* – підтримувати Україну дистанційно, *be given food and medical care* – отримувати їжу й медичну допомогу etc.

### **5. Diplomatic front:**

*ambassador* – посол, *ally* – союзник, *enemy* – ворог, *aggressor country* – країна-агресор, *sanctions* – санкції, *negotiation* – переговори, *collaboration* – співпраця, *implement* – запровадити, *humanitarian corridor* – гуманітарний коридор, *jeopardize* – ставити під загрозу, *violation of international law* – порушення міжнародного права, *war crime* – воєнний злочин, *peace agreement* – мирна угода, *high treason* – державна зрада, *entry ban* – заборона на в'їзд, *international conventions* – міжнародні конвенції, *aid package* – пакет допомоги etc.

### **6. Volunteering:**

*volunteer centre* – волонтерський центр, *humanitarian aid* – гуманітарна допомога, *fund raising* – збір коштів, *to donate* – пожертвувати (кошти), *to weave camouflage net* – плести маскувальну сітку, *provide psychological assistance* – надавати психологічну допомогу, *humanitarian assembly* – гуманітарний збір, *cooking for evacuees* – готування їжі для евакуйованих, *volunteer drivers* – водії-волонтери, *deliver to the front line* – доставити на передову etc.

### **7. Information front:**

*propaganda* – пропаганда, *manipulation and speculation* – маніпуляція та спекуляція, *provocation* – провокація, *to spread the truth* – поширювати правду, *fake* – фейк, неправдива інформація, *deepfake* – дінфейк (підробка фото/відео), *cyberwarfare* – кібервійна, *cyber attacks* – кібератаки, *information leakage* – витік інформації, *information hygiene* – інформаційна гігієна, *hacking* – злам, хакерство, *jugglery* – перекручення фактів etc.

### **8. The names of the military people:**

*infantry* – піхота, *artillery* – артилерія, *mercenaries* – найманці, *troops* – армія, *saboteur* – диверсант, *conscript* – призовник, *captive* – полонений etc.

**9. Phrases glorifying Ukraine:**

*Glory to Ukraine! – Слава Україні! Glory to the heroes! – Героям слава! Glory to the Nation! – Слава нації! Death to the enemies! – Смерть ворогам! Good evening, we are from Ukraine – Доброго вечора, ми з України! Stand with Ukraine – бути з Україною, Be brave like Ukraine – Будь сміливим, як Україна.*

The largest group consists of the words describing Ukrainian wartime realities, as well as lexical units that name different types of weapons.

The third place among the analyzed lexicon is occupied by the units denoting the life of the Ukrainian refugees (Table 1).

Table 1

**The groups of the military vocabulary**

The name of the group	The number of units, %
The phenomena of the Ukrainian reality:	20
Military weapon and gear	17
Life of the Ukrainian refugees	14
Military actions	12
Volunteering	11
Diplomatic front	10
Phrases glorifying Ukraine	9
The names of the military people	7

Among the lexical units, the neologisms that originated in the Ukrainian language and are known all over the world have been found. The most expressive neologisms related to the topic of the war turned out to be those that characterize and describe the enemy [11]. They make up the largest share among the selected lexical innovations. In our opinion, this is due to their creation as the psychological effect. One of the most popular neologisms was the word *rushism* (паууизм):

“...there will be our flag, and this atrocity – **rashism**, which repeats what the Nazis did, will remain nowhere...” (7).

“Save Ukraine People from **Rashism!**” (8).

Another example is the lexical unit *rushist* (паууист) related to the previous neologism:

“Orcs and **Rashists** go home!!” (7).

“The judgment day for the **rashists** will surely come...” (7).

“... And many people work for the **rashists**” (8).

“... before the Russian occupiers left Kyiv, told about the war crimes of **rashists**, which he saw with his own eyes” (8).

The word *orcs* (орку) became a bright neologism: the lexical innovation was created by the analogy with the monsters that appear in fiction.

The word *Gauleiter*, which was used for Nazi officials during World War II, has taken on a new meaning in the context of the ongoing full-scale war. Now it is used contemptuously for collaborators who are appointed as leaders of the occupied territories of Ukraine:

“Crimean partisans shared documents in which the **Gauleiter** of the temporarily occupied Crimea, Serhii Aksyonov, ...” (7).

“... in Mykhailivka, Zaporizhzhia region, the car of the local Russian **Gauleiter** Ivan Sushko exploded. He also died in the hospital” (8).

The neologisms *Chornobaivka* (Чорнобаївка) and *to chornobaite* (чорнобаїти) deserve attention. Both lexical innovations appeared in English slang as the loanwords from Ukrainian:

“Russian confirmed Mordvichev was still alive. On 19 March, the next day, Ukraine again attacked Russian forces at **Chornobaivka**” (7).

“... disgraced themselves at Solovyov's show because of **Chornobaivka**” (8).

“... that after the work of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in **Chernobaivka**, through Kherson...” (8).

The new phrase *tractor troops* (*тракторні війська*) also attracts attention. This is the name given to the Ukrainian farmers who used their tractors to tow the Russian tanks and other weapons from the battlefield:

“... drove a bomb-laden **tractor** into the **military** outpost in Dogubeyazit, ...” (7).

As we can see, the English lexical innovations that arose against the background of the Ukrainian war were formed mainly by adding new meaning to the existing words. Almost all of them are the loanwords from the Ukrainian language [9]. The spread of such neologisms in the English-speaking world indicates the popularization of the Ukrainian discourse not only at the level of language, but also of thinking. The distinctive feature of the studied vocabulary is the emotional and evaluative connotation.

The connection between language and extralinguistic factors is traced throughout the human history, which is especially vividly reflected in the mass media discourse [1, p. 34]. The powerful influence of the military activity on the language in the modern world is undeniable, as the vocabulary of war, which encompasses not only military technology and strategy, but also psychological states, disputes and emotions, is rapidly filling all the media [10].

The neologisms, which were formed in the Ukrainian language during the war, gained such popularity and spread that they began to be actively recorded by English-language media resources.

**Conclusions and prospects for further researches of directions.** Summarizing various interpretations of the military vocabulary, we understand it as the set of the military terms, conceptually and functionally related to the field of military specialized area, common to all the troops and to all the categories of personnel. In other words, the military vocabulary includes the words and phrases denoting military concepts, the words directly related to the military actions, as well as scientific and technical terms used with the military concepts.

It was found out that in English-language news reports the units for the designation of the phenomena of the war began to appear more and more often.

The study proves the connection between language and society. The historical stages are reflected in the lexical system of the language. The language of mass media reacts quite quickly to the innovations in reality. English-language mass media have a separate section for news that reflects the war in Ukraine and is characterized by the high saturation of the military vocabulary, which includes both military terms and commonly used military-related words. The neologisms that appeared in the Ukrainian language are also reflected in the language of foreign mass media. This indicates the interest of the world community in the problem in Ukraine.

The prospects for the further research are related to the various linguistic aspects of the description of the different historical events in the Ukrainian and foreign mass media.

#### REFERENCES:

1. Балабін В.В. Основи військового перекладу (англ. мова) : підручник. Київ : Логос, 2008. 587 с.
2. Бойко О. Абетка повномасштабної війни: які слова ввійшли в ужиток і чому. 2022. URL: <https://chytomo.com/abetka-povnomasshtabnoi-vijny-iaki-slova-vvijshly-v-uzhytok-i-chomu/> (дата звернення: 12.06.2023).
3. Жалай В.Я. Новітні тенденції функціонування української військової терміносистеми. *Лінгвістика XXI століття: нові дослідження і перспективи* : зб. наук. праць. Київ : НАН України, 2018. С. 5–43.
4. Зеленін В.В. По той бік правди: НЛП як зброя інформаційно-пропагандистської війни. Київ : Люта справа, 2015. Т. 1. 384 с.
5. Удовіченко Л.Г. Українська військова лексика: діахронія мовознавчих студій лінгвістичні дослідження. *Збірник наукових праць ХНПУ ім. Г.С. Сковороди*. 2020. Вип. 52. С. 81–90.
6. Яремко Я.П. Нариси з історії української військової термінології : монографія. Дрогобич : Посвіт, 2013. 411 с.
7. BBC News. URL: <https://www.bbc.com/news> (дата звернення: 17.06.2023).
8. CNN: Breaking News, Latest News and Videos. URL: <https://edition.cnn.com/> (дата звернення: 15.06.2023).

9. Mansur Mirovalev ‘Orcs’ and ‘Rashists’: Ukraine’s new language of war. 2022. URL: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/3/orcs-and-rashists-ukraines-new-language-of-war> (дата звернення: 13.06.2023).
10. Навальна М., Калужинська Ю. Актуалізація лексем на позначення військових дій, процесів та станів. *Психолінгвістика*. Переяслав-Хмельницький, 2018. № 24 (2). С. 218–235. URL: <https://doi.org/10.31470/2309-1797-2018-24-2-218-235> (дата звернення: 13.06.2023).
11. Sheftalovich Zoya The Rashists from Mordor vs. the Tractor Troops: Ukraine’s new language of war. An English-language guide to Ukrainian slang. *Politico*. 2023. June 24. № 35. URL: <https://www.politico.eu/article/rashists-mordor-tractor-troops-ukraines-new-language-of-war/> (дата звернення: 24.06.2023).
12. Zupan S., Štefanič M. Military jargon in the Slovenian translation of Hostile Waters. *ELOPE English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*. 2014. № 11 (1). P. 165. URL: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276464407\\_Military\\_Jargon\\_in\\_the\\_Slovenian\\_Translation\\_of\\_Hostile\\_Waters](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276464407_Military_Jargon_in_the_Slovenian_Translation_of_Hostile_Waters) (дата звернення: 14.06.2023).