The techniques of English-Ukrainian translation of military discourse

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The article examines the peculiarities of the English military discourse in the translation aspect. The object of the paper are the English military lexical units, the subject are the semantic, structural peculiarities of military vocabulary and its translation techniques from English into Ukrainian. The goal of the paper is to study the translation techniques of the English military lexical units.

As nations come to depend more and more on each other for their mutual safety, constant international communication becomes an urgent requirement for the armed forces charged with the defense of the peoples all across the world. One of the fields of human activity with an ever-enlarging community is the military (Kiš, 2014, p. 124). In order to mobilize and sustain support for a war, or to undermine an adversary, political and military systems employ certain types of language (Freistein, 2011, p. 161).

Discourse is complex phenomenon and has been studied by T. A. van Dijk, Z. Harris, etc. The term discourse applies to both spoken and written language, in fact to any sample of language used for any purpose. In another words discourse is 'any coherent succession of sentences, spoken or written' (Matthews, 2005, p. 100). The study of discourse is the study of any aspect of language use (Fasold, 1990, p. 65). Sometimes discourse is used in more general way to denote a type of discourse, a range of discourses, or a class of discourse genres, for instance, medical, political, etc. (Dijk, 1991, p. 34).

Military discourse is interpreted here 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 and political discourse may also distinguish between the peaceful nature of our weapons or military operations and the catastrophic and cruel nature of theirs. We tend to speak of the weapons in non-nuclear terms (Chilton, 1985, p. 67; Geis, 1987, p. 56). The military has many abbreviated words that are essentially used as "codes" to communicate effectively in battle situations, hostile environments, and training (Frane, 2013, p. 61). The military is generally widely studied by historians, sociologists, national-security specialists. However, linguistic research is rare in the military environment (Disler, 2008, p. 5).

It is worth noting Translation Studies has not shown intense interest in analyzing the translation of military texts. The problem of military discourse translation is quite urgent precisely in Ukraine due to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and internalization and global character of some military trainings and operations. Over the past century military terminology has been accompanying the social changes and technological progress which are constantly transforming the armed forces, their capabilities and roles in their countries. The military field requires knowledge of world military structures. Therefore, proficient translation in this field is quite important. A translator should be aware of the organizational structure of the armies of the relevant foreign states, their strategy and tactics, armaments and defense technique.

Two principal issues should be taken into consideration during the translation process. First of all, all military texts abound in specific military and technical terms, abbreviations. Secondly, those terms generate some idioms which cause a lot of difficulties. It is worth noting that a translator can face with one more problem during the English-Ukrainian translation: the translation of so-called "a translator's false friends", or interlingual homonyms, in two languages they look or sound similar but have different meaning: e.g. *ammunition* – "боєприпаси", not "амуніція" (accoutrements); *barracks* – "казарми", not "бараки" (in Ukrainian it means "a temporary dilapidated shelter", in English – "the general housing units military personnel live in"); *intelligence officer* – "розвідник", not "інтелігентний офіцер", *accurate fire* – "влучна стрільба" (Торська – Черник, p. 47), not "акуратна", *company* – "рота" but not "компанія" .

Some terms and definitions can have a huge variety of interpretations, depending on the context. For example, in the case of the words *unit* and *command*. E.g. Unit: 1) any military element whose structure is prescribed by a competent authority; 2) an organization title or a subdivision of a group in a task force, etc. Command: 1) the authority that a commander in armed forces exercises over subordinates by virtue of rank; 2) an order given by a commander; 3) a unit/units, an organization or an area under the command of an individual, etc).

The term *security* means "guard", "guarantee", "service", "safety", "secret". The term *battalion* means "battalion" when it's infantry and "division" when artillery.

A translator should be aware of the meaning shifts in singular and plural forms in the English language: *defence* – actions that you take to protect something or somebody that is being attacked; *defences* – the particular structures, weapons, and people that are used for protecting a place (Bowyer, 2004, p. 45).

One more interesting example refers to the word "піхота" (Ukr.) which is translated as "infantry" but the Ukrainian phrase "протипіхотна міна" has nothing in common with "infantry" and is translated as *anti-personnel mine*:

"…Зокрема, на полі бою були знайдені елементи екіпірування бойовиків російського виробництва, автомати та набої до них, гранати, **протипіхотна міна**, які були завезені до окупованих східних територій України з російських військових складів / Other signs of Russian involvement in the war in eastern Ukraine were pieces of Russian-produced military gear, rifles, ammunition, grenades and **anti-personnel mine** brought to Ukraine from Russian military warehouses" (ukraineunderattack.org).

The problem of military ranks translation is quite relevant for today, because sometimes there is a lack of correspondences in the Ukrainian and British (American) armies. The European integration of Ukraine, the cooperation with foreign military forces caused the reorganization and restructure of the Ukrainian ranks: e.g. replacement of "junior lieutenant" with "cornet", the introduction of "brigadier general".

The military words in Ukrainian and English have some ways of formation and are carried out in accordance with the rules of word-building:

a) affixation (Eng. *maneuverability, missilery*; Ukr. *штурмовик; агресор; агресія; позашляховик; протимінна діяльність, безпілотники*). Speaking about the last example it's interesting to notice that it is translated into English without the equivalent English prefix –anti: "…Тиждень тому ми обговорили рекомендації щодо подальших кроків
у розвитку **протимінної діяльності** в Україні, які були наведені у проекті Звіту
оціночної місії ООН / A week ago we discussed the recommendations on further **mine action** development in Ukraine, which were included in the draft report of the United Nations Evaluation Mission" (http://www.mil.gov.ua);

b) word-compounding (Eng. *warhead, Airborne, nuclear-powered*; Ukr. *загальновійськовий, головнокомандувач*). As a rule the Ukrainian compoundings don't have the same structure in the English translation: e.g. *гранатомети – grenade launchers*;

c)   conversion (*to mortar, to officer*) (for the Ukrainian language it's not typical);

d)   abbreviation (Eng. *radar, FRBA*; Ukr. *ATO, ВСУ*);

e)   borrowings from other languages (in the English language: *maneuver, coup d'état, aide de camp*; for the Ukrainian language it's not typical).

Sometimes the military words formation doesn't coincide in the source language and in the target language: e.g. *штаб АТО* is translated as *ATO HQ*, *безпілотні літальні апарати* – as *UAVs, засоби ППО – air defence facilities*, etc.: "… Ukraine gets **UAVs** from the USA / Україна отримала партію **безпілотних літальних апаратів** від США" (http://www.mil.gov.ua).

"…As a result, two militants were killed and eight were wounded, said Col. Valentyn Buryachenko, head of the **ATO HQ**, at a press briefing in Kramatorsk. / Про це розповів начальник **штабу АТО** полковник Валентин Буряченко під час прес-брифінгу в Краматорську" (ukraineunderattack.org).

The most typical translation techniques of military terms are:

1)   loan (calque): (*польовий шпиталь – field hospital; протитанкова артилерія – antitank artillery*);

2)   adequate translation – is reached with help of selection according to native analogies and by adequate changes: (*маневрова оборона – delaying resistance , вогнева група – fire base, військове училище – military academy; стрілецька зброя – small arms, регулярне формування – active component*) (Черненко, Чиж, Карачун): "…Третє – в Україні залишається досить широкий шар **кадрових військових**, для яких реформування означає перелом «хребта» / Ukraine still has quite a considerable layer of **career troops** for whom reform would mean breaking their own spine" (The Day, 7 June, 2016). The word "кадровий" is corresponded with the word *regular*, but a translator preferred to use "career". The word "кадровий" can be translated as "professional". "…У нас фактично 99, 9% – це мобілізовані, **кадрових військових** немає / Practically 99. 9 percent came as a result of a mobilization; there are no **professional military** men" (http://www.mil.gov.ua).

3)   descriptive translation, e. g. such phenomenon in Ukraine as "військова кафедра" is absent in Europe and the USA: "…Коли вчився в інституті, в нас була **військова кафедра** зі спеціалізацією – танкіст, тому, власне кажучи, і потрапив до танкового підрозділу / …When I was studying at the institute, we had a **reserve-officer training department** with a specialization of tanker" (The Day, 15 September, 2015).

4)   transliteration: "Також до Макіївки на озброєння так званого «11-го окремого мотострілецького полку» повернулося шість самохідно-артилерійських установок "**Гвоздика**"/ Also six **Gvozdika** self-propelled howitzers were moved to Makiivka for the proxy 11th Motorized Regiment" (ukraineunderattack.org).

5)   Transformations:

– Grammatical transformations: ".23 липня бойовики здійснили спробу **штурму** українських позицій у Попаснянському районі / On July 23, Russia-backed militants attempted **to assault** Ukrainian positions in Popasna area (the noun "штурм" is translated as the verb "to assault").

"…У Музеї імені Шевченка відкрилася виставка документальної фотографії, присвячена річниці Іловайської операції, тим, хто **загинув** там, і тим, хто **вижив**" /"…Documentary photo exhibit, dedicated to the anniversary of the Ilovaisk operation, **the fallen** and **the survivors**, opens at Shevchenko Museum" (The Day, 20 August, 2015). The Ukrainian verb гинути ("to die") is translated into English as the euphemism *fallen* (adj. "died") (Holder, 2008, p. 174).

– Lexical transformations (generalization): "…На початку вересня у західних мас-медіа почали з'являться докази присутності російських військових на Донбасі. Про те, що Росія перекидає "зелених чоловічків" і **бойову техніку** на Донбас,

заговорили і у США"/ "… In early September the Western media began to show evidence of the presence of Russian troops in the Donbass. The US is also saying that Russia is sending "little green men" and **equipment** to the Donbass" (The Day, 17 September 2014). The veiling effect is achieved due to the mechanism of abstraction. The generalized word "equipment" is diluted and softens the negative connotation of the word "бойова техніка" (weapon).

In this example we can come across the loan translation: "зелені чоловічки" is translated as "little green men". It seems indispensable to give an additional explanation: *undercover Russian soldiers*. The negative pragmatic effect is achieved due to the attributes *little, green*, which discredit the Russian military men and lead to the face-threatening act.

– Lexical-semantic development, modulation, is applied in the following example: "…Я прийшов до батальйону командиром взводу. Потім, коли виникла потреба, мене поставили командиром роти, а вже потім — трошки побув замполітом, потім — зам.по **тилу**. я зам. комбата по тилу / I came to the battalion as a platoon commander. Later, when need arose, they appointed me the commander of company, later I served as a political officer for a while, and later – assistant division commander for support. I am the deputy of the commander of the battalion for **support**" (The Day, 15 September, 2015). The Ukrainian term "тил" has the dictionary translation as "rear". But a translator decided to develop its meaning and chose the word "support". In that very context he continued: "…А уявіть собі тих хлопців, які потрапили до **тилової** частини і повинні забезпечити боєздатність передового підрозділу... / …Imagine the boys who have found themselves in an **administrative unit** and who have to provide the efficiency of a frontline unit" (The Day, 21 October, 2015). In this sentence we can see one more logically-developed correspondence for the Ukrainian "тил (noun), тиловий (adj.)" — "administrative". The vector of the meaning is shifted from the geographical aspect ("rear" – where? / at the back, behind) to the functional aspect – for what? / to support, to administer).

– Stylistic transformations: e.g. "…Дуже багато прикладів того, що патріотів свідомо **кидали під кулі** / There are numerous examples of patriots being deliberately **sent to the slaughte**r" (The Day, 22 February, 2016). The Ukrainian word "куля" is generally translated as "bullet", but in this case we deal with the idiom in the meaning of "to expose someone to danger" and a translator chose the English analogue.

One of the most sorrowful Ukrainian war episode called "Іловайський котел" (Ilovaisk pot, i.e. encirclement) is translated into English as *Ilovaisk pocket*: "…**Іловайський котел** – епізод війни на сході України в серпні минулого року, в ході якого розгорнулися запеклі бої між українськими Збройними силами та підрозділами МВС з одного боку, та збройними формуваннями невизнаної терористичної ДНР і російськими окупаційними силами — з другого"/"…The **Ilovaisk Pocket** is an episode in the war in the east of Ukraine last August, which involved fierce fighting between Ukraine's Armed Forces and paramilitary units, on the one side, and the armed formations of the unrecognized terrorist organization DNR and Russian occupation forces, on the other" (The Day, 20 August, 2015).

This bloody battle is associated with pot in the Ukrainian language and with the pocket in the English one. The source nomination as well as the target one is created by a conceptual metaphor but with the shift from pot onto pocket. Only one seme, closed is transfered into the concept Pocket, the semes hot, dangerous (which describe carnage of war) disappear. Consequently the negative components of the concept Pot were replaced by more positive components of the concept Pocket leading to the positive pragmatic effect. This shift demonstrates the change of conceptual relevance of that terrible event for the Ukrainian and English speakers. Metaphor facilitates perception and recognition in translation, as it reflects a metaphorical concept and therefore it is immediately accessed. It is important to draw "links from metaphorical language to metaphorical thought" (Gibbs, 2002, p. 83). A metaphorical

term reflects a figurative mode of thinking. The comprehension of a metaphorical term and its translation is a cognitive act, the same as its creation. The translation of metaphorical terms is an applied skill that needs to be acquired and developed. As metaphors, especially innovative ones, may not trigger exactly the same connotations with everyone, it would seem that they are another device to allow for varying interpretations.

Another example of the idiom translation is: "…І не дивлячись на те, що РФ залучило широкий арсенал зухвалих, цинічних методів «гібридної війни», Україна впевнено **тримає оборону** /…Yet, despite Russia's vast arsenal of brazen and cynical methods of hybrid warfare, Ukraine is **toughing it out**" (http://www.mil.gov.ua). The Ukrainian idiom "тримати оборону" has the English dictionary correspondence as "to hold the line", but a translator used another similar idiom to be relevant to the military semantic field.

A translator should also know the syntactic peculiarities of military discourse translation: sometimes one-component Ukrainian military lexeme can be translated as a two-component English one: "… Із початком війни на сході дні танкістів, **розвідник**ів (був на початку вересня), десантників та інших родів військ стали не просто вузькими професійними святами **військових** / After the war in the east broke out, the special days of tankers, **intelligence officers** (it was marked at the beginning of September), paratroopers, and other armed forces have become not just niche specialization holidays of **military me**n" (The day 15 September, 2015).

The Ukrainian military word, rank in the plural form "генерали", is also translated as a two-component word, moreover it has two variants: staff officers (Br.) and general officers (Am.). The Ukrainian term "полігон" is translated into English as "testing ground". In its turn two-component Ukrainian military lexeme can be translated as a one-component English one: укр. комендантська година has the English correspondence "curfew".

It is worth noting there are many euphemistic military words in the English language which veil violence and aggression and which cause some translation problems: e.g. *Collateral damage* (civilian casualties and damage incidental to the bombing of military targets; any incidental, undesirable consequences), *Brilliant weapon* (advanced form of a smart weapon), *Runaway denial device* (bomb that scatters clusters of cratering bombs over a wide area to destroy air base runaways) (Wilson, online).

Conclusions

Based on the studies described in this paper, it can be concluded that the military translation strategies depend on the structure of a word. The most relevant strategies for one-component lexical units are: equivalent translation, generalization, tracing, transliteration. For two or more-component units the following translation strategies are used: explanatory translation, adequate translation, equivalent translation.

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Summary

The techniques of English-Ukrainian translation of military discourse

The article deals with the lexical, grammatical, syntactic, word-formation and socio-cultural peculiarities of military discourse. It also examines the translation techniques of military terms from English into Ukrainian. "Translator's false friends" and polysemic military words cause the specific problems among the translators. It is concluded that translation depends on the structure of a military lexical unit in the source language. The empirical material is based on the Ukrainian and English versions of the official site of the Ministry of Defence of Ukraine, of the newspaper The Day, of the website Ukraine under attack.