

Terminological Decisions And Translation: The Role Of Historical And Cultural Context In The Formation Of Military Terminology

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Abstract

This article examines the role of historical and cultural context in the formation of military terminology across Russian, English, and Uzbek. Based on a corpus of terminological units, the study identifies syntactic models, abbreviations, and simple terms as the main structural layers. The article explores several channels of terminological formation, including the basic national layer, long-term borrowing, standardization, and legal codification. Special attention is paid to differences between the Russian and English segments, revealing distinct models of terminological organization.

Keywords: military terminology, terminological decisions, translation, historical context, cultural context, Russian, English, Uzbek, comparative analysis.

The transition from a theoretical characterization of the term to the movement of specific units within multilingual systems requires a preliminary clarification of the composition of the material and the methods used to process it. The general boundaries of military terminology have been established, its semantic and structural properties described, and the principles of comparison outlined. In the present study, the focus shifts from the theoretical characterization of a term to the movement of a specific unit within three languages: Russian, English, and Uzbek.

The starting point is not the definition of the term but a specially compiled corpus for multilevel comparison. A working corpus of Russian, English, and Uzbek terminological units was selected across thematic groups using a comprehensive sampling method. The sample included only units that relate to the military subject area, possess a stable professional function, and allow comparison across the three languages. Excluded were one-off metaphors, colloquial terms, and usages not established in professional practice.

When processing the material, the author combined several analytical procedures. The basic one is comparative interpretation, which allows for establishing correspondences and discrepancies between Russian, English, and Uzbek units. Alongside this, a component analysis of meanings was used, since military terminology often coincides in terms of subject matter but differs in institutional scope. For historically marked terms, diachronic commentary was employed, while for doctrinally and normatively established terms, a contextual-functional examination of their place within the relevant military-administrative system was conducted.

The composition of the material itself already sets the direction of the analysis. Syntactic models form the largest structural layer within the corpus. The abbreviation layer also constitutes a significant portion. Simple single-word terms account for a smaller but still substantial part of the material. This distribution suggests that the focus of the comparison should be on analytical phrases, abbreviation compression, and those forms of borrowing

that are not limited to the simple transfer of a single word from one language system to another.

A distinct picture emerges in those sections of the Russian material where the military system historically developed in close contact with European military-administrative and technical traditions.

This phenomenon is particularly noticeable where a borrowed word becomes a central node for secondary term formation. From the unit *missile*, combinations such as *guided missile*, *ballistic missile*, *cruise missile*, *anti-ship missile*, and *anti-aircraft missile* are derived. Series such as *aviation* — *army aviation* — *attack aviation* — *military transport aviation*, and *command* — *operational command* — *strategic command* — *joint staff* follow a similar pattern.

From the perspective of terminological description, what is important here is not the fact of the earlier borrowing itself, but that the external origin no longer hinders internal productivity. The source turns out to be historical, while the function is entirely systemic and modern.

Borrowed terms in Russian military terminology, once fully assimilated, become productive centers for secondary term formation. Their external origin does not impede their ability to generate derivative series and integrate fully into the systemic organization of the language. This demonstrates that terminological systems can absorb external elements without losing internal coherence and productivity.

The English-language material is organized according to a different logic. Its specificity is determined not so much by the prominence of the borrowed layer as by the system's high capacity to rapidly form analytically and procedurally rich phrases. The distribution of terms alone shows that English readily embeds a new concept into a syntactic structure rather than waiting for

a separate, single-word name to become established for it.

Hence, several terms such as:

- *command and control*;
- *battle management system*;
- *concept of operations*;
- *line of effort*;
- *decision support template*.

In English, the preference for syntactic expansion over lexical compression is not a marginal feature but a core structural tendency. Where Russian might borrow a term and then derive new units from it, English typically constructs multi-word phrases that specify the concept through syntactic modification. This difference has direct consequences for translation. A single English phrase often requires either an equivalent multi-word construction in Uzbek or Russian, or, where such a construction is absent, a descriptive or functional analogue.

English military terminology demonstrates a high capacity for analytic phrase formation. Rather than relying on lexical compression or borrowing as primary mechanisms, English preferentially encodes new concepts through syntactic structures. This tendency shapes the overall profile of the terminological system and imposes specific demands on translation into languages with different structural preferences.

It is precisely here that historical and cultural context ceases to be merely an external reference. In military terminology, the origin of a term often coincides with the origin of the institution itself, the branch of service, the form of command, or the type of weaponry. For this reason, the history of the word and the history of the military institution it denotes often go hand in hand. If this background is not taken into account, the comparison quickly loses its accuracy. Formally similar units begin to appear as complete equivalents, although in reality they belong to different historical and administrative traditions.

Historical and cultural context is not an optional addition to terminological analysis but a necessary condition for accurate comparison. Without considering the institutional and historical background, formally similar terms may be mistakenly treated as full equivalents, leading to translation errors and conceptual confusion. Several main channels for the formation of military terminology are clearly discernible in the research material.

The basic national layer. This channel is linked to the basic national layer, where the most general concepts of armed struggle, defense, mobilization, training, and command are established. Terms such as *war*, *defense*, *mobilization*, and *combat readiness* belong to a general military layer that does not require a special intermediary for inclusion in professional usage. Their semantic scope across the three languages is similar, and their historical depth is such that the question of the source of borrowing takes a back seat here.

Long-term borrowing. This channel involves long-term borrowing, where a word enters the system alongside a new military institution, type of weapon, or branch of service. Borrowings often retain traces of their origin while gradually integrating into the receiving language's structural and semantic systems. The Russian material provides abundant examples of this channel, particularly in weaponry, ranks, and naval terminology.

Ongoing standardization. The third channel is driven by ongoing standardization — most often English-language — in which not individual words but entire procedural and doctrinal packages are translated into the language. This channel reflects the dominance of English as a global language of military and security cooperation.

Legal codification. Finally, legal codification occupies a special place: where a term is enshrined in law, a charter, or an

official glossary, it acquires a different degree of stability and begins to limit translation choices. Codified terms resist synonymy and variation, imposing strict constraints on terminological decisions.

The four identified channels operate simultaneously and interact with each other. The basic national layer provides continuity and stability, while borrowing and standardization introduce innovation and international alignment. Legal codification serves as a stabilizing mechanism, fixing terminological choices within normative frameworks.

Conclusion

Thus, the analysis of terminological decisions and translation in military terminology reveals the crucial role of historical and cultural context. Based on Russian, English, and Uzbek corpus data, the study demonstrates that syntactic models form the largest structural layer; in Russian, borrowed terms become productive centers for secondary term formation; in English, analytic phrase formation predominates over lexical compression; historical and cultural context is essential for accurate comparison; and four channels of terminological formation operate simultaneously: the basic national layer, long-term borrowing, ongoing standardization, and legal codification.

The study confirms that a term cannot be considered in isolation but must be analyzed in relation to the set of practices, documents, and organizational structures within which it operates. This approach provides a more accurate basis for translation decisions and terminological standardization in multilingual military contexts.

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