

Semantic Fields, Diachronic Layers, And Translation Strategies: A Multilingual Study of Military Terminology

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Abstract: This article presents a multilingual study of military terminology in Uzbek, Russian, and English through three interconnected dimensions: semantic fields, diachronic layers, and translation strategies. The study identifies the structural and semantic characteristics of military terms, proposes a three-zone diachronic model comprising current, transitional, and historical layers with corresponding translation strategies. The diachronic distribution demonstrates that the bulk of military terminology functions in active professional communication, although transitional and historical layers retain considerable importance. Equivalence analysis shows that while a substantial portion of terms possess full equivalents, a significant share requires partial, conditional, lacunar, or explanatory treatment. The study argues that military translation cannot rely on formal similarity alone; it must consider conceptual scope, legal status, institutional function, and historical context.

Keywords: Military terminology, semantic fields, diachronic layers, translation strategies, trilingual corpus, equivalence, terminography, lexicography, military translation.

Introduction: In the context of global military security, defense policy, international cooperation, and operational information exchange, the precision of specialized terminology is of paramount importance. A military term is not merely a naming device; it carries practical force in orders, regulations, legal documents, and international agreements. Inaccurate or inconsistent rendering of military terms can lead to ambiguity in command, legal misinterpretation, and operational risk. Despite extensive research in terminology studies, cognitive semantics, corpus linguistics, and translation studies, a unified model that systematically compares military terms in Uzbek, Russian, and English on semantic, diachronic, and translational grounds has not yet been fully developed. This gap is particularly evident in the Uzbek linguistic context, where military terminology combines historical heritage, and national-legal standardization. The present study aims to fill this gap by addressing four research questions: what are the semantic fields

and structural characteristics of military terms in the three languages; what diachronic layers can be identified within military terminology; what types of cross-linguistic equivalence are present in the trilingual corpus and what translation strategies are used to correspond to them; and what terminology model is most suitable for the multilingual lexicographic description. The significance of this research lies in its integrative approach, which combines semantic field analysis, diachronic stratification, and translation strategy classification within a single trilingual framework, thereby offering both theoretical insights and practical tools for military translators, lexicographers, and terminology standardizers.

In Uzbek linguistics, terminology, lexical semantics, and lexicography have been studied by scholars such as A. Khojiev, Sh. Rakhmatullaev, H. Ne'matov, R. Rasulov, N. Mahmudov, A. Nurmonov, M. Hakimov, D. Dadaboev, A.S. Saidov, G.U. Arapova, S.A. Nasirova, F.A. Abdusalomov, D.X. Aminova, I.R. Narkulova, M.D.

Norboeva, R. Ergasheva, and O.Z. Rashidov. Their works provide the methodological foundation for national terminology studies, particularly in lexical semantics, terminological nomination, and lexicographic description. However, military terminology in a trilingual context remains under-researched, as existing studies tend to focus on general terminology or bilingual translation. In Russian and CIS linguistics, military terminology and sublanguage have been explored by V.N. Shevchuk, V.P. Korovushkin, O.V. Spiridovsky, S.V. Grinev-Grinevich, and S.D. Shelov, whose studies focus primarily on Russian military discourse and bilingual translation, with particular attention to the systemic nature of military terminology and its functional layers. In global terminology studies, scholars such as E. Wüster, H. Felber, M.T. Cabré, P. Faber, M.-K. L'Homme, R. Temmerman, J. Sager, L. Bowker, and K. Kageura have developed theoretical frameworks for terminological management, corpus analysis, and equivalence. Despite these advances, a comprehensive trilingual model integrating historical, cultural, structural, semantic, and lexicographic criteria remains absent.

The study is based on a purpose-built trilingual corpus of military terms in Uzbek, Russian, and English, extracted from official legal documents of the Republic of Uzbekistan, military reference materials, NATO and US Department of Defense documents, UN international legal resources, specialized dictionaries and glossaries, and the author's working trilingual corpus. The corpus was divided into 22 thematic groups, including armaments and military equipment, military command and control, troop structure and organization, intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance, communications and information security, logistics and mobilization, defense and combat operations, military education and training, ranks and historical military institutions, international military cooperation, military law and legal terminology, engineering and fortification, medical and veterinary services, topographic and geodetic support, meteorological and hydrological support, electronic warfare, cyber operations, aerospace defense, naval terminology, special operations forces, peacekeeping operations, and military-technical cooperation. The study employs a combination of comparative and contrastive analysis, descriptive and component

analysis, contextual and diachronic analysis, structural-semantic and terminological analysis, translation studies methods, and corpus and quantitative analysis. The analytical criteria include semantic field, thematic group, component structure, contextual function, degree of equivalence, diachronic status, and terminology interpretation, allowing a military term to be viewed simultaneously in three languages and ensuring that comparison is based not on external form but on conceptual scope, normative source, and sphere of application.

The corpus analysis reveals a clear predominance of syntactic models. Multi-component terminological combinations constitute the largest structural type, indicating that military terminology tends to express complex concepts through analytical constructions. Terms such as battle management system, joint task force, and rules of engagement function as unified terminological units rather than free syntactic combinations, and their translation requires treating the entire combination as a single term. Single-word terms, by contrast, tend to belong to the historical and core general military layer, with units such as war, defense, mobilization, intelligence, staff, and regiment occupying a central position in all three languages and often approaching full equivalence. Composite and combined forms constitute a smaller but still notable group, reflecting the dynamic nature of military terminology and its openness to borrowing, calquing, and adaptation. Semantically, military terminology is distributed across fields including armaments and military equipment, military command and control, troop structure and organization, intelligence, reconnaissance and surveillance, communications and information security, logistics and mobilization, defense and combat operations, military education and training, ranks and historical military institutions, and international military cooperation. The boundaries between these fields are not always rigid, as a single term may simultaneously carry technical, organizational, and legal meanings. The semantic field of military terms is not limited to combat operations, as it includes terms related to law, training, logistics, communications, information security, cyberspace, and international cooperation, and therefore the corpus reflects a broad functional field rather than a narrow one.

The formation channels of military terminology in the three languages are not uniform. Russian combines a national general military core with a historically long-standing international layer, and terms such as война, оборона, мобилизация, штаб, полк, дивизия, and командир have different historical origins but function as internal elements of the modern Russian military system. English is characterized by a high degree of doctrinal standardization, and terms such as command and control, concept of operations, line of effort, and battle management system are not merely standard translations but designations for military planning and command procedures, so their translation must take into account the procedure underlying the term.

The analysis identifies several types of interlingual equivalence:

Full equivalence — arises when the concept, function, and institutional scope coincide. Examples include mudofaa — defense — оборона; safarbarlik — mobilization — мобилизация; razvedka — intelligence — разведка. These terms possess a relatively stable correspondence across the three languages.

Partial equivalence — arises when a term in one language denotes the same general sphere as a term in another language, but their legal or doctrinal scope does not fully coincide. An example is national guard — Milliy gvardiya — национальная гвардия. Their outward form is similar, but their functions and legal status may differ across different state systems.

Conditional equivalence — more common in doctrinal terms. Examples include concept of operations, line of effort, and decision support template. These terms may have literal equivalents when translated into Uzbek and Russian, yet their meaning is rooted in the US/NATO tradition of staff planning. Consequently, such terms require not only translation but also explanatory notes.

Lacunar equivalence — particularly characteristic of historical and cultural terms and new technological names. Examples include bahodir, sipohiy, yasovul, navkar; kiberqo'shinlar, geofazoviy razvedka, loitering munition. In such cases, the translator does not seek a direct equivalent but uses transliteration, an explanatory translation, a descriptive expression, or a combined strategy.

Zero equivalence — occurs when no equivalent exists

in the target language, requiring the creation of a new term or the use of a descriptive expression.

Translation strategies correlate with, but do not fully coincide with, equivalence types:

Direct equivalent — used when full equivalence exists. For example, mudofaa — defense — оборона; safarbarlik — mobilization — мобилизация.

Combined transmission — used when a term requires both translation and explanatory commentary. For example, concept of operations — operatsiya konsepsiyasi (with explanation of US/NATO staff planning); line of effort — harakat yo'nalishi (with explanation of doctrinal meaning).

Functional analogue — used when a direct equivalent is unavailable but a functionally similar term exists. For example, national guard — Milliy gvardiya (with a note on legal status); rules of engagement — jangovar harakat qoidalari (with explanation of legal and operational scope).

Descriptive translation — used for historical and cultural terms. For example, bahodir — heroic warrior; yasovul — court officer; navkar — military retainer.

Calquing — used when a term is translated component by component. For example, geospatial intelligence — geofazoviy razvedka; battle management system — jangovar boshqaruv tizimi.

Transcription and transliteration — used for terms that are best preserved in their original form. For example, UAV — UAV; C4ISR — C4ISR; AWACS — AWACS.

These terms do not have exact modern equivalents, as they denote a historical institution and a socio-military status, and therefore they are rendered using descriptive terms but always require explanation. The diachronic model is also useful in translation practice: if a term belongs to the current layer, a standard equivalent is chosen; if it is in the transitional layer, several options and the authoritative source are checked; and if it belongs to the historical layer, descriptive translation, transliteration, and historical commentary are used.

Conditional equivalence is more common in doctrinal terms such as concept of operations, line of effort, and decision support template, which may have literal equivalents when translated into Uzbek and Russian but whose meaning is rooted in the US/NATO tradition

of staff planning, requiring not only translation but also explanatory notes.

The study proposes a multilingual terminology entry model that integrates the headword, a phonetic or graphic variant, a subject field marker, a concise definition, equivalents in three languages, an abbreviation with full form and national variant, diachronic status, normative source, a usage example from official documents or established professional texts, and a translation commentary explaining the choice of equivalent and any restrictions on usage. This model is designed for specialized dictionaries, electronic glossaries, and translator training materials, ensuring that the term is presented not merely as a translation pair but as a unit of professional knowledge embedded in a specific legal, doctrinal, and historical context. The macrostructure of a multilingual military dictionary should also include a subject index, a list of abbreviations, a list of historical terms, a section of terms related to legal sources, and a section on new technological terms, with the subject index organizing terms by operational fields such as command, intelligence, communications, logistics, armaments, air defense, naval terms, military education, ranks, mobilization, and historical terms.

The practical value of the terminological model developed in this study lies in the fact that it resolves the most common ambiguities in translation, as a military term often appears to have a perfect equivalent, yet when the document, branch of the armed forces, normative source, or historical period changes, so does its meaning. The strength of the model lies in the fact that it serves the needs of the translator, the researcher, and the learner simultaneously, as the translator selects an equivalent, the researcher sees the term's place within the system, and the learner understands the meaning and scope of use of the term.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, military terminology in the Uzbek, Russian, and English languages constitutes a complex system of specialized professional knowledge, with units carrying legal, doctrinal, historical, and institutional loads. The three-zone diachronic model allows for assessing the stability, standardization, and translation precautions required for military terms.

Equivalence analysis demonstrates that while a substantial portion of terms have full equivalents, a significant share requires partial, conditional, lacunar, or explanatory treatment. Translation strategies correlate with, but do not fully coincide with, equivalence types, and doctrinal terms require explanatory commentary while legal terms must be presented with a legislative source and institutional function. Historical military terms do not correspond exactly to modern military ranks and require explanatory and descriptive translation. The proposed model for a multilingual military terminology entry combines the headword, definition, equivalents, sectoral note, abbreviation, diachronic status, normative source, usage example, and translation commentary, creating a practical framework for interpretation for the dictionary user. The results of the study serve as a scientific and practical basis for the standardization of Uzbek military terminology, the training of military translators, the creation of electronic glossaries and multilingual specialist dictionaries, as well as the development of comparative terminology studies and translation studies.

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